



Project SOPHIA

PhotoVoltaic European Research Infrastructure

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Data Beneficiary

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WP1 “Joint management of access provision and pooling of distributed resources”

D1.2 – Transnational User Access Procedure

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1. Executive summary

1.1 Description of the deliverable content and purpose

This deliverable is entirely related to the Task 1.2 “Definition of the transnational user access procedure”.

The objective of this task is to define a transnational user access procedure including:

- the listing and the detailed descriptions of the research infrastructures open for free access,
- the application procedure for the research proposals, through an online submission system,
- the evaluation criteria and process,
- the financial conditions for accessing the infrastructure,
- the processes for logistic management and for cost management: before starting activities on the infrastructure, a contract will be signed between the infrastructure owner and the selected user team.

1.2 Deviation from objectives, corrective action

Several deviations appeared, and corrective actions were decided:

1. The online submission system was longer than expected to implement. As a consequence, the launch of the first call was delayed. This was fixed at M10.
2. The selection of the international experts of the User Selection Committee was more difficult than planned. It was decided to use dedicated experts with a higher level of expertise rather than experts with a large scope.
3. To avoid ineligible requests, some details were later added on the website, using the feedback of the first call.

1.3 Technical progress

The procedure is globally clearly defined.

1.4 Impact of the results

The procedure looks clear and logical.

1.5 Dissemination activities carried out, planned

This procedure is especially well-detailed directly on the website : www.sophia-ri.eu.

Only the main steps are reminded in the other communication tools: brochure, leaflets and presentations in conference.

2. Technical sections

2.1 A general overview of the procedure

As explained in Deliverable D1.1 on the Infrastructure Database, all the research infrastructures are listed in a user-friendly way.

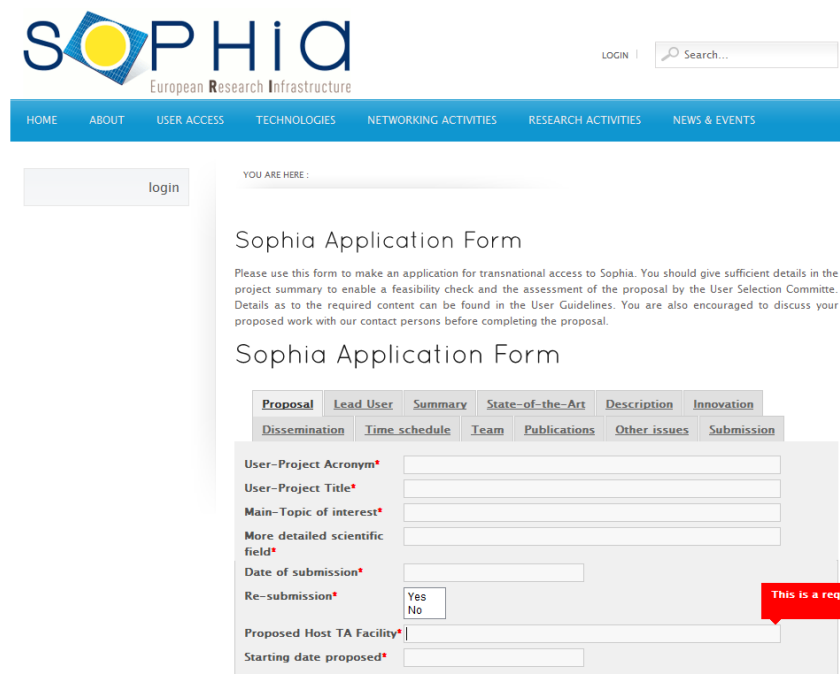
In order to get an access to a specific Research Infrastructure, a Research Team has to follow a 5-steps procedure:

1. Read the access rules :

The conditions of access are made available within specific files on the website: eligible countries, financing rules, templates of contracts between the Proposing Team and the Research Infrastructure for the logistic management and the hosting of the invited researchers.

2. Make an application:

Using the online submission tool on www.sophia-ri.eu, the proposers will fill in a form with several sections describing their research project proposals: context, state-of-the-art, objectives, proposed host infrastructures, expected innovations, potential dissemination and publications, etc. This amount of requested information represents not more than 5 to 6 pages.



The screenshot displays the SOPHIA website's application form. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for HOME, ABOUT, USER ACCESS, TECHNOLOGIES, NETWORKING ACTIVITIES, RESEARCH ACTIVITIES, and NEWS & EVENTS. Below the navigation bar, a 'login' button is visible. The main content area is titled 'Sophia Application Form' and contains a brief instruction: 'Please use this form to make an application for transnational access to Sophia. You should give sufficient details in the project summary to enable a feasibility check and the assessment of the proposal by the User Selection Committee. Details as to the required content can be found in the User Guidelines. You are also encouraged to discuss your proposed work with our contact persons before completing the proposal.' Below this, there is a tabbed interface with the following tabs: Proposal, Lead User, Summary, State-of-the-Art, Description, Innovation, Dissemination, Time schedule, Team, Publications, Other issues, and Submission. The 'Proposal' tab is active, showing several input fields: 'User-Project Acronym*', 'User-Project Title*', 'Main-Topic of interest*', 'More detailed scientific field*', 'Date of submission*', 'Re-submission*' (with 'Yes' and 'No' radio buttons), 'Proposed Host TA Facility*', and 'Starting date proposed*'. A red callout box with the text 'This is a required' points to the 'Re-submission*' field.

Figure 1 : 1st call – SOPHIA application form

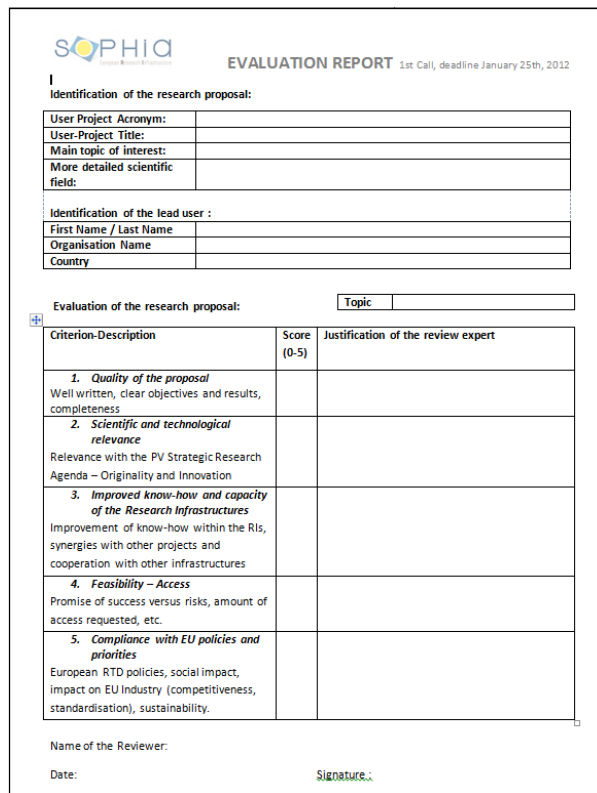
This submission procedure will be ready by M6 and the first call will be launched immediately after.

As soon as the application will be submitted, the applicant will receive by e-mail an acknowledgement of receipt of his submission.

At the same time, the project coordinator will also receive a notification of the application.

3. Go through the evaluation procedure

The scientific facility review evaluates all the applications. All the applications will be sent to at least two appropriate review experts who will have to fill in an evaluation report, of which the template can be seen hereunder:



SOPHIA EVALUATION REPORT 1st Call, deadline January 25th, 2012

I
Identification of the research proposal:

User Project Acronym:	
User-Project Title:	
Main topic of interest:	
More detailed scientific field:	

Identification of the lead user :

First Name / Last Name	
Organisation Name	
Country	

Evaluation of the research proposal:

Criterion-Description	Score (0-5)	Justification of the review expert
1. Quality of the proposal Well written, clear objectives and results, completeness.		
2. Scientific and technological relevance Relevance with the PV Strategic Research Agenda – Originality and Innovation		
3. Improved know-how and capacity of the Research Infrastructures Improvement of know-how within the RIs, synergies with other projects and cooperation with other infrastructures		
4. Feasibility – Access Promise of success versus risks, amount of access requested, etc.		
5. Compliance with EU policies and priorities European RTD policies, social impact, impact on EU Industry (competitiveness, standardisation), sustainability.		

Name of the Reviewer: _____
 Date: _____ Signature: _____

Five main criteria are used in order to rank the various applications, with a score ranging from 0 to 5:

- Quality of the proposal
- Scientific and technological relevance
- Improved know-how and capacity of the Research Infrastructures
- Feasibility
- Compliance with EU policies and priorities

The scientific facility review panel will then make the final decision on the basis of the scores given by the experts.

4. Notify the applicant:

Following the recommendations given by the scientific facility review panel, the Chair will notify all the participants about the results.

- If positive, they will be put into direct contact with the requested research infrastructure, or with another one if it seems more appropriate.
- If negative, they will be explained why it was not seen as eligible, and suggestions for potential resubmission will be given.

5. Sign a contract:

Then, the applicant and the host Research Infrastructure need to address all the details necessary to perform the research proposal, such as the main participants, the eligible expenses (travel expenses, consumables), the technical conditions, the expected planning, and the further information dissemination. Once a contract is signed between the two parties, the research work can start.

2.2 Deviations from the Description of Work: some tuning was necessary for the Scientific Review Panel

The main difficulty regarding this task appeared during the selection process of the international experts of the Scientific Review Panel, which was more difficult than planned : the “Description of Work” explains that *“The scientific facility review panel will be composed by at least 6 persons: one representative (Chair), at least 2 scientists from partners and at least 3 external experts. Panel members will be named within the project kick-off meeting”*.

It appeared that the multiple aspects of photovoltaic covered in this project, ranging for instance from organic cells to CPV cells, and from modelling to lifetime measurement, represented a difficulty: external experts able to cover such various scientific fields were simply unavailable or did not want to commit themselves to such additional tasks.

It was consequently decided to await the first applications to see which topics would be the most requested, and then to search for the relevant experts in these required topics.

The 8 applications received under the first call clearly showed that :

- Most applications were well-focused and required a detailed and focused expertise,
- One topic was well-covered with 4 applications,
- 3 topics were simply unaddressed,
- 4 topics had only one application.

Therefore, in order to save time, we decided to use both internal and external experts to evaluation these first applications, using the following rules:

- No expert from a private company evaluates a proposal from another private company,
- A minimum of two experts is required per application.
- At least one expert is seeing all the applications within one topic.

As a feedback from the first call, we also decided two additional actions and rules:

1. Add some reminders on the website to avoid ineligible applications.
2. Send the applications in parallel to the experts, on one hand, and to the host research infrastructure in the other hand, rather than doing this process in series.

3. Conclusions

This procedure is now in operation. Hands-on experience with the first call showed that some slight modifications were needed in order to facilitate the process. Additional feedback from the next calls may bring some further improvements.

4. References

The main references are to be seen on www.sophia-ri.eu.