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DELIVERABLE REPORT

D2.1
Detailed procedures for integrated TA

Due date
M6

PROJECT DETAILS

PROJECT ACRONYM	PROJECT TITLE
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101007417	RIA - Research and Innovation action

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WORK PACKAGE LEADER

Cristina Africh (CNR)

DELIVERABLE DETAILS

DELIVERABLE ID	DELIVERABLE TITLE
D – D2.1	Detailed procedures for integrated TA

DELIVERABLE DESCRIPTION

Submission, work flow for evaluation, procedures and ceiling for user's travel and subsistence reimbursement, user's and provider's feedback

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NATURE

☒ R – Report

☐ P – Prototype

☐ DEC - Websites, Patent filing, Press & media actions, Videos, etc

☐ O – Other

DISSEMINATION LEVEL

☒ P – Public

☐ PP - Restricted to other programme participants & EC: (Specify)

☐ RE - Restricted to a group   (Specify)

☐ CO - Confidential, only for members of the consortium

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CONTENTS

PREFACE

NFFA-Europe (www.nffa.eu) offers to European and Third Country[1] scientists from both academia and industry the possibility to carry out comprehensive projects for multidisciplinary research from the nano to the microscale. Activities are performed in six different types of *Installation*:

- Lithography and nano-patterning (Litho)

- Growth and synthesis (Growth)

- Structural and Morphological nano-characterisation (SM Charact.)

- Electronic, Chemical and Magnetic nano-characterisation (ECM Charact.)

- Nano to Micro/Macro (NtM)

- Theory and Simulation (Theory)

Each type of *Installation* acts as a single distributed installation and includes laboratories located in different NFFA-EU sites; furthermore, when needed, access to co-located Large-Scale Facilities (LSF) for Fine Analysis is offered as part of the access to Litho, SM and ECM characterisation with some limitations[2].

Proposals are totally created online and submitted through the Single Entry Point (SEP) (https://nffa.eu/new-application) choosing from an online catalogue that presents the whole offer distributed on the European territory (https://nffa.eu/offer/). Proposals can be submitted at any time but are collected quarterly for scientific evaluation, namely on 1st March, 1st June, 1st September and 1st December (extended to the next working day should the official deadline fall on a non-working day) each year.

The backbone of NEP access management is the Technical Liaison Network (TLNet), providing a wealth of skills and technical information across the multidisciplinary and multi-site research infrastructure. TLNet supports the full lifecycle of user proposals, from first explorative contact by the users to the technical feasibility evaluation, giving feedback to requests and questions by users and liaising with contact scientists for specific instruments.

This document summarises all the internal rules and procedures established for granting users transnational access to NFFA-Europe facilities. Before the detailed presentation of all steps in Sections 2 – 4, the route towards their definition is briefly mentioned in Sect. 1, to highlight differences with the previous NFFA-Europe project (http://nffa-europe.nffa.eu/). Finally, in Sect. 5 the temporary internal procedures necessary for a smooth management of the first calls are described.

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[1] Access for Third Country users is limited to 20% of the total amount of access provided throughout the project.

[2] NFFA-Europe is not an alternative vehicle to access Analytical Large-Scale Facilities (ALSF) with respect to the standard ALSF access procedures proposed by each facility. Access to beamtime (SR, neutrons) for characterization may be granted by NFFA-Europe, but is limited to six shifts/proposal, where a shift is the usual quantum of access to the specific Large-Scale Facility

1. ROUTE TOWARDS THE DEFINITION OF NEW PROCEDURES

NFFA-Europe Pilot builds on the experience of NFFA-Europe. All procedures optimised for NFFA-Europe were therefore used as starting point in NEP and further developed to take into account the increased complexity of the new consortium and infrastructure. All the procedures were re-validated and in this section we briefly list the main critical elements that were thoroughly discussed and agreed by the Interoperable Distributed Research Infrastructure Axis Coordination Board (IDRIN-ACB) – the body responsible to manage, develop and upgrade the NFFA-Europe distributed infrastructure:

- Timeline of the Calls: while keeping the four-calls-per-year scheme already implemented in NFFA-Europe, a new timeline for proposal collection deadlines and evaluation was established.

- Update of the catalogue: whereas the old techniques and the related descriptions were preserved unchanged and simply moved to a new data base (see below), general descriptions and technical information for the new techniques were collected with the help of the User Access Axis Coordination Board (UA-ACB), in particular the leaders of the different TA WPs (PSI for lithography, CSIC for synthesis, KIT for SM characterisation, FORTH for ECM characterisation, CSIC for Nano to Micro, CNR for theory).

- Database and access management system: a single database (DB) platform for the storage of all data collected during the TA workflow (users' registration, proposal submission, technical feasibility evaluation, scientific evaluation, scheduling, access, users' and providers' reports) was developed by eXact lab and Promoscience. An innovative interface for the management of information flows between users, access providers and central coordination operated by the TLNet is currently under development. It will include different front-ends for the usage by and for the interaction between different DB end-users. In particular, a dedicated front-end is being implemented for the interaction between access providers, users and central TLNet for the evaluation of the technical feasibility of the proposals.

- A new user's registration form was designed for the acquisition and storage in the DB of the necessary personal data. Registration in the DB allows access to the Single Entry Point for proposal submission and all the subsequent steps in the TA workflow. Attention was paid to the definition of a suitable privacy policy.

- The proposal form has been revised in depth, taking into account several criticalities previously evidenced at the levels of technical feasibility and/or scientific evaluation. Furthermore, it now extends more on safety issues, especially concerning nanostructured materials and/or nanoparticles.

- New Terms and Conditions for the use of NFFA-Europe facilities were established and published on the website.

- A new user declaration agreement was drafted and approved. The main differences with respect to the previous one are the introduction of new paragraphs (about users' access rights to background intellectual property, contribution towards travel and subsistence expenditures incurred by the users and users' post-access rights and obligations) and the specification of more details about communication of dissemination activities, open data policy, insurance coverage by the users' organization and safety rules and policies.

- Ceilings for travel and subsistence were rethought and finally raised in order to cope with potential higher costs for mobility in COVID-19 time.

For a quick start of the TA activities and a smooth transition to the new procedures, the IDRIN-ACB also agreed on temporary procedures for the first calls (see Section 5).

In the following, all key-elements and procedures for transnational access to NEP facilities are described in details.

2. THE ONLINE CATALOGUE

As NEP is the prosecution of the NFFA-Europe H2020 project, the web-based catalogue (https://nffa.eu/offer/) expands and updates the previous offer. It contains now four hierarchical levels of description for more than 180 techniques (nanolab & LSF; compared to NFFA-Europe that offered 80 techniques) provided by more than 600 instruments (200 before), distributed on the 6 types of Installations defined in the GA. The four levels are the Installations themselves (level 1), in which the techniques are divided in families of techniques (level 2) that gather together tools with similar technology principles or applications. Within each family, the single techniques are listed and briefly described (level 3). The fourth level, still to be implemented, will allow users to compare technical specifications of the selected technique provided in the different sites. Details are provided in Deliverable 2.2.

Similarly to the previous version, when browsing the catalogue users can highlight their favourite techniques and create their own wish list that can be used as a starting point for drafting their proposal.

3. PROPOSAL FORM

3.1 Registration on the nffa.eu portal

In order to submit a proposal, the user must first register on the website entering the following data: first name, last name, email, gender, nationality, affiliation (university/institute/company, country, city, address, legal status), professional data (job and research role). Before proceeding, the NFFA-Europe privacy policy (https://www.nffa.eu/apply/privacy/) must be read and agreed. The collection, processing and storage of personal data provided during the online registration are GDPR compliant (see Deliverable 1.1 – Data Management Plan). With the NFFA credentials, every user has also access to NFFA Datashare, a file share and collaboration platform hosted on a local server at CNR-IOM beneficiary. This instrument offers to NFFA-Europe users a secure mean of data storage and retrieval and gives the possibility to access and process scientific data, collaborating in real time with other team members.

Other personal data, such as date of birth or personal address, are asked to the user only in case the proposal is accepted and in-presence access is granted. Additional data, e.g. bank account details, may be requested for the reimbursement of travel and subsistence costs. The central storage of all data in the NEP DB is thought as a means to facilitate and speed-up access procedures for

recurrent users or users accessing more than one facility as they have to enter the same information just once for ever.

3.2 Proposal structure

After the registration on the website, users can either click on the "submit your application" button present on the top right of the homepage, or enter their wishlist (if any) and from there click on the "login and draft your proposal to access these tools" button.

In both cases, they are redirected to the proposal form page. A banner encourages users to read the guidelines, before starting the compilation. The guidelines are a pdf file containing screenshots of the online form with some hints and comments regarding the specific fields; they are available at the following link:

https://nffa.eu/media/268148/proposal_application_guide.pdf

The user can then start filling in the application form that includes:

- <u>General info on the proposal</u>: Title, scientific domain, ERC sectors, material system, application, keywords, abstract, state of the art, objectives (including the relation of the proposal to Horizon Europe missions, if any). Up to five references relevant to their work can be added and figures can be uploaded to complement the description. Acceptable formats are jpg, png, bmp, gif.

- <u>Work-plan section</u>: a table has to be completed for each research step in the wish list. The table includes eight fields to facilitate the preparation of successful proposals and the evaluation process:

  ✓ *Laboratory or Large Scale Facility*: If the technique is available both in laboratory and at a LSF, a tick box will appear to allow users to choose which of the two options they need to access.

  ✓ *What the purpose of this specific research step is*: users are asked to explain the scientific goals they intend to achieve by accessing this set-up/method, how it relates with previous/following steps and what they expect to learn. This field is particularly important for the scientific evaluation of the proposal.

  ✓ *What their measurement/process plan is*: users are asked to describe how they plan to conduct the experiment (e.g. sequence of single measurements/processes with that technique). The timeline of the specific step can be outlined: do they plan to start immediately after the previous step or they need to postpone it (why and for how long?). This field is particularly important for the scientific evaluation of the proposal.

  ✓ *Technical specifications and ancillary techniques needed:* users have to briefly describe the main technical specifications of the instrument/method they chose that are needed to successfully accomplish their experiment (e.g. resolution, source, detection mode, …). They must also specify if they need to access ancillary techniques, i.e. side control measurements (e.g. SEM for FIB, XAS or XPD for XMCD, RHEED for MBE), materials or processes for surface preparation or device fabrication. An ancillary technique is never considered as a separate research step. This field is particularly relevant to check the technical feasibility of their proposal. For access to lithography, users have to tell whether they plan to work out electronic files for direct writing lithography methods during their stay or they plan to bring their own files. Physical lithographic masks should be provided by users.

- ✓ *Sample and/or target material details:* users are asked to specify number of samples to be measured, including also dimensions when provided by them, details on the specific samples and/or target materials they plan to use, including also the physical dimensions when appropriate. This field is particularly relevant to check the technical feasibility of their proposal.

- ✓ *Equipment:* A tick box allows the user to inform providers of the intention to bring own equipment (e.g. evaporators, targets, detectors, etc.). Should this be the case, a brief description to check compatibility and safety issues must be provided.

- ✓ *Estimated Units of Access (UoAs):* the user is asked to give an estimate of the units of access needed for each research step. The TLNet can be contacted to make an educated guess, but in any case estimate is not binding for NFFA-Europe. The actual number of UoAs allocated to each research step will be determined by the TLNet after the feasibility check. 1 UoA = 8 hours for experiments, 1 UoA = 1 project for theory.

- ✓ *Preferred sites to conduct their research:* A preference for access to a specific NFFA-Europe site can be indicated by the users, although this information is not binding for the NFFA-Europe scheduling. The preferred NFFA-Europe site can be chosen from a list and the reasons must be explained.

- – <u>Other related open-access grants:</u> If users have already obtained by other means other open access grants (such as beamtime at a Large Scale Facility co-located with NFFA-Europe sites) for complementary work on the same scientific topic, they must activate the corresponding tick-box and specify open access program and location when prompted. The info will be taken into account for an optimized access scheduling in case of acceptance of the NFFA-Europe proposal.

- – <u>Gender dimension:</u> If there is any gender dimension in the proposed research (e.g research findings affect differently females and males), the corresponding tick-box can be activated.

- – <u>Previous works:</u> Up to five references to previous user's works can be added.

- – <u>Additional notes:</u> Further information on the proposal can be filled in the "additional notes" field.

- – <u>Composition of the user group:</u> the main proponent will be automatically added as user group leader. To add other team members, a search must be carried out in the data base. If not yet registered on the website, the potential users will receive an automatic message at the email address provided by the user group leader with instructions for registration and connection with specific proposal(s).

- – <u>Industrial involvement:</u> with industrial we mean any economic activity - private, public or mixed - that participates in the research project, or that finances it, or that accesses the data produced in agreement, or under contractual terms, with the proposers. These data are necessary to assess the industrial impact of NFFA-Europe. In the "industry involvement" section the user has to highlight any links of his/her research with industry or commercial opportunities indicating: 1) if one or more members of the team is an employee of an industry or of a Public-Private Partnership; 2) if the industry involvement is a collaboration; 3) the type of industry involved. The industrial partner may remain anonymous if needed, but its existence and typology should be declared.

- – <u>Sample and safety issues:</u> technical specifications for each sample and information about safety issues must be added.

- – <u>Resubmission or continuation:</u> the user must declare if the current proposal has any relation with previous proposals by their research group (as a resubmission or a continuation). In this case, the user must indicate the previous ID and add any comment he/she whishes to be shared for the evaluation of the proposal. For continuation proposals, the submission will NOT

be evaluated until the final Questionnaire and Report (see below) of previous proposals are sent.

− <u>Terms&conditions</u>: Users are asked to read and accept the terms and conditions for proposal submission and legal notices, available at the link https://www.nffa.eu/apply/conditions.

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4. PROPOSAL WORKFLOW

The workflow for NFFA-Europe Pilot proposals, from submission to reporting is summarised in Figure 1 and described in details in the following sub-sections.
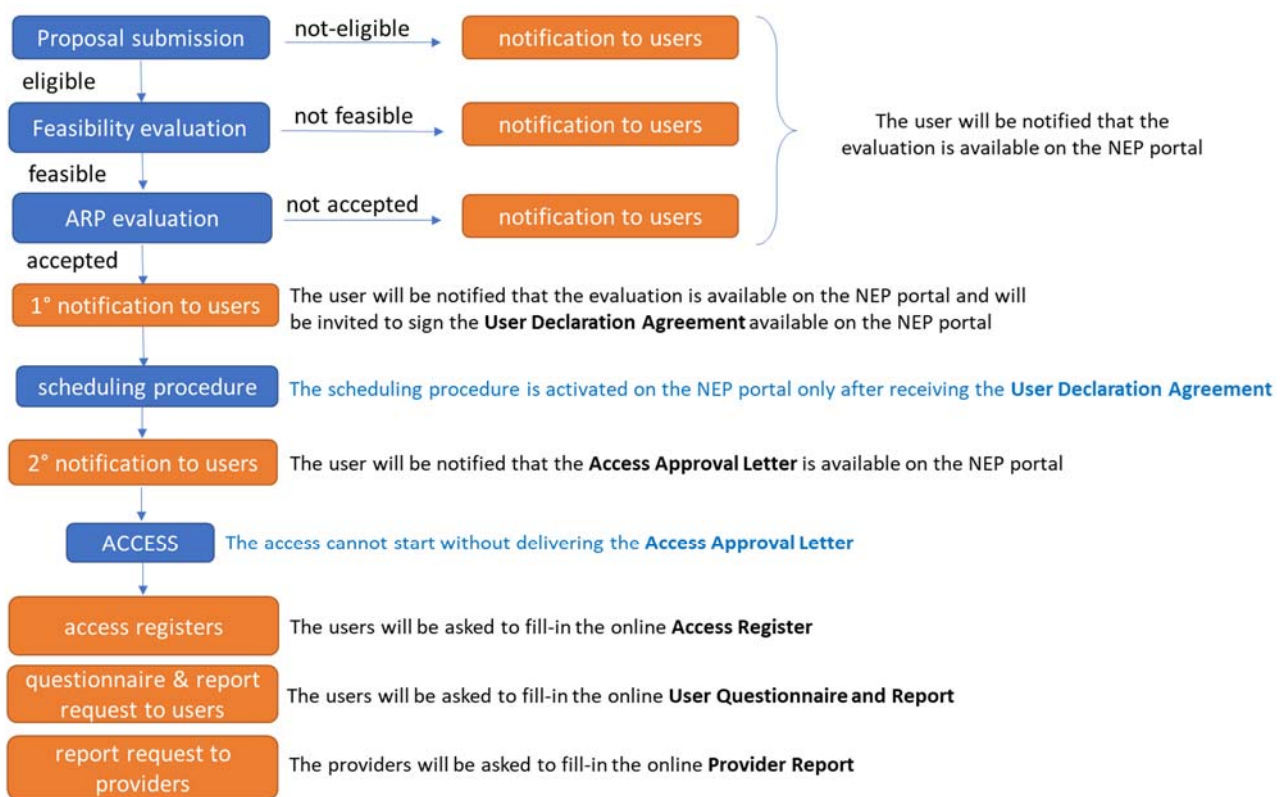

Figure 1: Proposal workflow

4.1 Proposal submission

The user submits the proposal through the SEP on the NFFA-Europe website. Proposals can be submitted at any time but will be quarterly collected for scientific evaluation. The general timeline of all access related procedures can be found at the following link: https://nffa.eu/media/268143/nep-timeline.pdf

Proposals have to comply with the following **requirements**:

– NFFA-Europe proposals must include access to <u>more than one type of Installation</u> (Litho/Growth/SM Charact./ECM Charact./Nano to Micro-Macro and Theory). Exceptions to this rule are the following:

  o Proposals that request access only to the Installation Theory & Simulation (single installation) are considered eligible if (i) they address recent experimental results obtained by the users at facilities other than NFFA-Europe's ones or (ii) they are submitted by theory users who request assistance on multi-scale/multi-physics simulations involving at least two independent computational methods (e.g. electronic ground-state and excited-state approaches, molecular dynamics and electronic structure, structural and spectroscopic properties...). However, it must be stressed that proposals to jointly access experimental and theoretical NFFA installations (standard access rules) will have the priority.

  o Proposals by SMEs requesting access to just one installation are always eligible.

– Access to <u>Fine Analysis methods only is not allowed</u> as it is directly provided by the Large-Scale Facilities, except for proposals employing both neutrons and synchrotron radiation. This latter case is eligible even when the requested techniques belong to the same installation.

– Access to Fine Analysis at Large-Scale Facilities by NFFA-Europe proposals that request access to ALSF techniques in the SM and the ECM characterisation installations is <u>limited to six shifts/proposal</u>, where a shift is the usual quantum of access to the specific Large-Scale Facility (eight shifts/proposal in well-justified cases only).

– A <u>maximum number of 20 UoA</u> is advised for any user project. Proposals claiming for more resources should provide due justifications.

– A maximum cumulative usage for a given technique/installation at a given provider by the same user group is set at 50%. When such usage is exceeded, the user will get the appropriate message and proposals from that group will no longer be eligible. In any case, such users will be able to apply in the last two nffa calls if there is still remaining capacity. This limit will not apply to those techniques locally offered in such low numbers that a reasonable access by the user will consume it anyway.

Access is granted to user groups, i.e. teams of one or more researchers, led by a user group leader, according to the following **eligibility criteria**:

1. *Transnationality:* The user group leader and the majority of the users must work in a country **other** than the country(ies) where the installations are located. This rule does not apply: if access is provided at INL and JRC partner facilities; in case of remote access to a set of installations located in different countries offering the same type of service.

2. *EU and Third Country users:* In case of positive proposal evaluation, access for user groups with at least half of the users working in a EU or associated country is granted within the capacity of

NFFA-Europe; access for user groups with a majority of users not working in a EU or associated country is limited to 20% of the total access provided by NFFA-Europe Pilot.

3. *Dissemination of the results:* only user groups that are allowed to disseminate the results generated within NFFA-Europe Pilot can apply, unless the users are working for SMEs (see below).

4. *Industry:* Users working for or with industry of any size are very welcome to apply for NFFA access either alone or in partnership with academic teams. Access is granted free-of-charge provided results are published with the exception detailed below. Industrial users may also opt for a proprietary access where all work and results remain confidential, with no external peer review evaluation. Industry interested in such a fee-based access is invited to contact TLNet directly for a full explanation of the relevant H2020 project rules.

5. *SME user groups:* Users working for SMEs are exempted from the obligation to disseminate the results generated within NFFA-Europe. Proposals submitted by users working for SMEs will undergo technical feasibility check and scientific evaluation as for all NFFA-Europe proposals.

The TLNet verifies that the above requirements and eligibility criterion 1 are met for the submitted proposals and, if they are not verified, the user will be notified that a message of non-admission of the proposal is available on the NEP portal. If proposals are submitted well before the collection deadlines, possible issues related to the above criteria and technical problems can be promptly identified and solutions worked out and proposed to the users, who can resubmit before the deadline.

4.2 Technical feasibility evaluation

For eligible proposals, the technical feasibility of each research step is assessed by the TLNet.

A dedicated front-end of the DB platform will soon be available for the interaction between access providers, users and central TLNet for the evaluation of the technical feasibility of the proposals.

In a "matrix" the access providers will enter technical comments for each proposal step for which the central TLNet requests an evaluation. For each cell of the matrix, corresponding to a single step of the workplan for a certain proposal that could be carried out at a particular site, a colour coding system is used: white with a "x" prompt for steps to be evaluated, grey for steps temporarily in stand-by, violet for steps not eligible, blue for steps to be also considered as standard service to be provided in remote, green for positive evaluation, red for negative evaluation and yellow for conditional evaluation. For conditional evaluations, in case of need of further information (more detailed explanations, confirmation on type and number of samples to measure, etc...) users can be consulted. Once the matrix is duly filled in by all the access providers, the TLNet will make a tentative assignment for each proposal to the most appropriate site: whenever possible access will be assigned in a single NFFA-Europe site for all research steps, access to more than one site for a given proposal will be considered only when technically or scientifically justified.

In case of not-feasible proposals, the users will receive an official notification from the TLNet, with the technical comments provided by the involved access providers. This notification will be available for the user on the DB platform.

4.3 Scientific evaluation

Feasible proposals are evaluated and ranked according to their scientific merit by an external panel of reviewers.

The Access Review Panel (ARP) consists of sixteen experts in nanoscience (including a Chairperson) covering all necessary competences foreseen by the NFFA-Europe Pilot access programme, including representatives of the Large Scale Facilities to warrant alignment of the selection criteria for optional limited beam time.

As of August 2021, the ARP is composed by:

Lithography: Artur Erbe, Javier Martinez

Growth: Alexej Kalabukhov, Jacobo Santamaria, Jolien Dendooven

Characterisation: Michèle Sauvage (Chairperson), Kristian Temst

Nano to Micro: Matjaz Spreitzer, Eva Valsami-Jones, erman Van Tilbeurgh

Theory: Matteo Gatti, Jean Philippe Colombier

In case of proposals requiring competences not available in the ARP, the Chair can ask for the support of external experts. As far as industrial proposals are concerned, the ARP Chair may ask for the support of industrial experts identified by the ICONET.

The main criteria followed by the ARP in the evaluation process are:

- Scientific merit, evaluated in terms of:
    - scientific relevance for nanoscience
    - appropriateness of the experimental/theoretical programme
    - expected impact of the results
- Demonstration of the need for the use of the NFFA-Europe infrastructure
- Innovation potential and industrial interest will be considered as added value.

In case of competition between proposals at equal level of scientific ranking by referees, a preference will be given to

- proposals with female proponent(s)

- user groups who have not previously used the specific NFFA-Europe installations and who are working in countries where no equivalent research infrastructure exists.

Rejected proposals are always accompanied by a written report explaining the reasons for rejection. Where appropriate, the report also includes recommendations and suggestions for improvement and possible resubmission of a new proposal.

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4.4 Scheduling and access

The best-ranked proposals are assigned to the most appropriate NFFA-Europe site/sites, guaranteeing free access (to the experimental and theoretical installations; a contribution is possible for travel and subsistence expenditures – see below) to the most appropriate combination of methods and instruments.

The user group leader is notified by the TLNet of the positive results of the technical and scientific evaluation and of the assignment to one or more specific NFFA-Europe access sites. All users are asked to accept and undersign the NFFA-Europe User Declaration Agreement (https://nffa.eu/media/268152/nep_user_declaration_agreement.pdf); with this document, all users declare that they are explicitly aware of the conditions that apply to the provision of transnational access at NFFA-Europe facilities and of their obligations in this respect. Given the importance of this document, NFFA-Europe does not schedule any research activity before the signed forms from all members of the user group are received by the TLNet.

The user group leader is contacted by the specific access site/s to agree on a scheduling and to be instructed on specific procedures for access.

Research steps are not necessarily consecutive (multi-leg access). If users need time to perform further work at their home Institution before continuing their research at NFFA-Europe, the motivation of their choice and the related timeline have to be justified at proposal level. If the justification is accepted and the proposal is granted access, the scheduling will take into account these needs.

After defining the proposal's scheduling, the user receives the official Access Approval Letter (the official document authorizing the user to access the assigned site(s)) signed by the Project Coordinator.

Access may be performed both in-presence and remotely. Remote access may be offered by the specific facilities when possible and/or necessary, and could be mail-in or with a higher degree of involvement of the user, the so-called Interactive Remote Access (real-time cooperation or remote control). Regardless of the access modality, an Access Register (a document that certifies that access was provided) must be compiled.

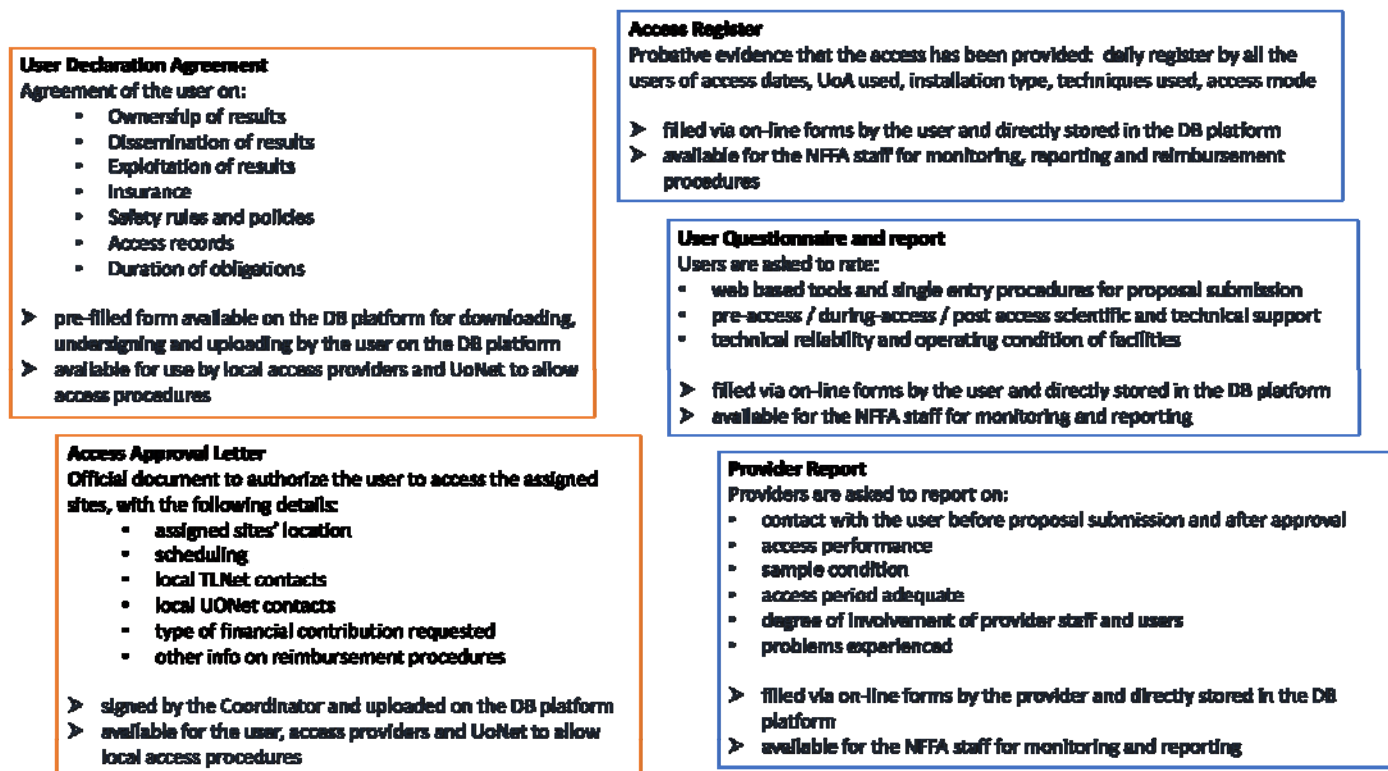Details on the aforementioned documents can be found in figure 2:

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User Declaration Agreement
Agreement of the user on:
- Ownership of results
- Dissemination of results
- Exploitation of results
- Insurance
- Safety rules and policies
- Access records
- Duration of obligations

➤ pre-filled form available on the DB platform for downloading, undersigning and uploading by the user on the DB platform
➤ available for use by local access providers and UoNet to allow access procedures

Access Approval Letter
Official document to authorize the user to access the assigned sites, with the following details:
- assigned sites' location
- scheduling
- local TLNet contacts
- local UONet contacts
- type of financial contribution requested
- other info on reimbursement procedures

➤ signed by the Coordinator and uploaded on the DB platform
➤ available for the user, access providers and UoNet to allow local access procedures

Access Register
Probative evidence that the access has been provided: daily register by all the users of access dates, UoA used, installation type, techniques used, access mode

➤ filled via on-line forms by the user and directly stored in the DB platform
➤ available for the NFFA staff for monitoring, reporting and reimbursement procedures

User Questionnaire and report
Users are asked to rate:
- web based tools and single entry procedures for proposal submission
- pre-access / during-access / post access scientific and technical support
- technical reliability and operating condition of facilities

➤ filled via on-line forms by the user and directly stored in the DB platform
➤ available for the NFFA staff for monitoring and reporting

Provider Report
Providers are asked to report on:
- contact with the user before proposal submission and after approval
- access performance
- sample condition
- access period adequate
- degree of involvement of provider staff and users
- problems experienced

➤ filled via on-line forms by the provider and directly stored in the DB platform
➤ available for the NFFA staff for monitoring and reporting

Figure 2: List of documents used during the workflow

4.5 User's travel and subsistence support

EU funding, up to the maximum budget available, will be allocated to travel and subsistence support to NFFA-Europe users, according to the following criteria:

- NEP reimburses up to two users per proposal.
- The maximum contribution per person per site accessed is 500€ for travel expenses, meaning that the refund is capped to the upper ceiling if the travel costs incurred exceed this limit or is equal to the cost incurred if lower. The user must provide evidence of the cost incurred (ticket invoice/receipt).
- The maximum contribution per person per day is 100€ for subsistence.
- A proposal may be assigned multi-site access. In such a case, each of the two users can benefit from the standard reimbursement terms and conditions for each geographical site accessed.
- A proposal may also be granted multi-leg access sessions to one single access site. In such a case, the overall maximum contribution for travel expenses will not exceed 500€ in total. Conversely, the two users shall receive the daily full subsistence refund for each access leg session following the total number of units of access (UoAs) assigned.
- The overall duration of each access must be consistent with the number of UoAs assigned.
- More detailed guidelines, specific to the assigned NFFA-Europe site, are provided once access is granted. The user group leader of the awarded proposal is contacted by the local coordination of access activities for further instructions.

4.6 User's and provider's reports

At the end of the access sessions, the user group leader is requested by the NFFA-Europe management to fill in the NFFA-Europe Satisfaction Questionnaire and the NFFA-Europe User Report. Providers are requested by the NFFA-Europe to fill in the NFFA-Europe Provider Report.

In the NFFA-Europe User Questionnaire, users are asked to rate:

- Scientific and technical support received before the access
- Scientific and technical support received during the access
- Reliability and operating condition of the Provider facilities
- NFFA-Europe Web pages and the guidelines
- Technical information provided on the website
- Single Entry Point usage
- Assistance received for the organisation of the access
- After Experiment service in organising and archiving the data and in providing tools for data analysis

Users are also asked to write an overall evaluation of the access and a suggestion on what NFFA-Europe should do to improve user support in the future.

In the NFFA-Europe User Report, users are asked to write:

- List of objectives
- Scientific system/sample/material description
- Details and success rate for each step of the work-plan
- Reason for incomplete success
- Information about Data files (format, volume, software platform or application used for data handling/analysis)
- Conclusions that can be drawn on the basis of the results obtained, and progress made in the research of the group thanks to the access to the NFFA-Europe platforms

A similar procedure is envisaged for access providers, who are asked to compile the NFFA-Europe Provider Report. In detail, the providers are required to report on:

- Contact with the user before proposal submission for advice
- Contact with the user for access refining after approval
- Match of user objectives during the access with what was described in the proposal
- Match of samples and processing conditions with what was described in the proposal
- Technical smoothness of access
- Problems of access scheduling
- How was the work mostly done (user hands-on, lab staff or mix)
- Degree of involvement of the provider staff
- Overall evaluation of the access performance
- Problems experienced and suggestion on what NFFA-Europe should do to improve user-provider interaction
- Short description of the work carried out
- Details and success rate for each step of the work-plan
- Reason for incomplete success
- Information about Data files (format, volume, software platform or application used for data handling/analysis)

4.7 Dissemination of the results

NFFA-Europe Pilot must be acknowledged by the users in any dissemination action resulting from the proposal (peer-review articles, conferences, book chapters), by including the sentence "This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101007417 having benefitted from the access provided by ...access provider (i.e. Institution)... in ...access site (i.e. City)... within the framework of the NFFA-Europe Pilot Transnational Access Activity, proposal IDXXXX." Moreover, it is expressly recommended to include the NFFA-Europe staff members who ensured the access support in the acknowledgements.

Before proceeding with the publication of results obtained within NFFA-Europe Pilot, users should notify (with at least 20 days prior notice) NFFA-Europe management and provide at least the tentative title, list of authors and abstract, by sending an email to: userdissemination@nffa.eu.

Likewise, users are requested to notify the presentation of scientific results coming from NFFA-Europe access giving a prior notice at least one week before the presentation.

5. TEMPORARY PROCEDURES

In this section procedures used to cope with the initial stages of Transnational Access activities in NEP are described.

5.1 Call 0

Upon authorisation by the EC, a Call0 was introduced in the NEP project in order to complete the provision of access assigned within the previous project NFFA-Europe but interrupted or not executed mainly due to the pandemics. Taking advantage of the fact that the NFFA-Europe project ended on February 28th 2021 and the NEP project started on March 1st 2021 without any interruption, the agreed period for access provision in Call 0 is March-November 2021 (i.e. before the start of access provision for new proposals).

The urgency of starting access provision and the particular circumstances, led to the identification and application of slightly modified procedures for proposals in Call 0. In particular, for these proposals there was no resubmission and no technical feasibility check, as this was already performed within the previous project. A scientific re-validation was ensured by the NEP ARP Chair in March 2021 on the basis of the evaluation made by the NFFA-Europe ARP at the time of submission and confirmed in February 2021. Attention was paid to the consistence of the NFFA-Europe ARP composition with the new NEP Consortium, in agreement with the EC rules established in the Grant Agreement. Instead of 2 official notifications (one for the communication of the positive evaluation of the proposal with the request to sign the User Declaration Agreement and the second one with the attached Access Approval Letter and details on assigned sites and scheduling dates) a single notification was sent to the user group leader with the request for signature of the new User Declaration Agreement approved by the IDRIN and the attached new Access Approval Letter also approved by the IDRIN for the new NEP project.

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5.2 Call 1

Call 1 opened on June 28th 2021 and closes on September 8st 2021 (deadline exceptionally postponed by one week due to physiological minor technical problems at the first run of real operation of the new submission system). Users submitting proposals in this Call can already browse the online catalogue and use the Singe Entry Point. The online catalogue includes the whole offer, although currently the description of some techniques is incomplete and more details at individual site level will be introduced soon. For the time being, the users can contact the TLNet for further technical information.

Since the DB platform for the management of access is not ready yet, a tool similar to the one used in the previous project will be temporarily adopted: a shared matrix containing all the information about work-plan steps of proposals, listed step-by-step and site-by site. The matrix, designed by the TLNet, is hosted on a GDPR-compliant collaborative platform. In particular, interaction with the users will take place by email exchange at all stages (evaluation results, scheduling, etc.); the evaluation of the Technical Feasibility will be carried out in a shared Matrix as described above; the User Declaration Agreement will not be downloaded and uploaded on the portal but will be sent by email to the TLNet; similarly, any other project documents, such as questionnaires and reports, will not yet be filled on-line but exchanged by email.