

POLARIN

POLAR
RESEARCH
INFRASTRUCTURE
NETWORK

**Deliverable 2.1. Report on requisites for access and
description of the logistic evaluation
procedure**

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1. Introduction

The project “Polar Research Infrastructure Network” (POLARIN) was funded by the European Commission Horizon Europe Framework Programme (HORIZON) as a “HORIZON- Research and Innovation Action” on the topic “HORIZON-INFRA-2023-SERV-01-01 - Research infrastructure services to enable R&I addressing main challenges and EU priorities”.

POLARIN’s international network of polar research infrastructures includes a unique set of complementary and interdisciplinary top level RIs. These infrastructures have a wide geographic and typological variability, covering a wide range of polar regions. The consortium includes a large number of Arctic and Antarctic bases, research vessels and icebreakers operating in both polar regions. Furthermore, observatories, repositories and data infrastructures providing Transnational Access are also included in the consortium.

The logistic evaluation within the framework of POLARIN is essential to ensure the feasibility for implementation, efficiency and effectiveness of the proposed research proposals for Transnational Access (TA). This document outlines the logistic evaluation process carried out in POLARIN, highlighting the key phases, evaluation criteria, and tools employed.

2. The Infrastructure Operators Forum (IOF)

As initially defined in the POLARIN project proposal, the IOF (Infrastructure Operators Forum) is a forum that includes all the research infrastructure (RI) operators of the project consortium. This forum accumulates the experience and expertise of the project's infrastructure operators and, therefore, plays a key role in the logistic evaluation of the proposals selected for the TA. Given the scope of the IOF, which includes operators of Arctic and Antarctic bases, research vessels, observatories and repositories with very different access and management characteristics, it has been decided to divide it into four subgroups:

- Arctic stations
- Antarctic stations
- Research vessels
- Observatories and repositories

This division addresses the differences in access characteristics between the Arctic and Antarctic regions, the specificities of accessing them, and the complexity involved in the wide range of unique and diverse research infrastructures in POLARIN.

The logistic evaluation will be conducted within these IOF subgroups, based on the criteria agreed by all infrastructures during the initial IOF meetings with all POLARIN RI operators. The different subgroups may, however, consult each other and convene jointly, e.g. in cases where TA proposals request access to several RI types.

Each requested RI will conduct the logistic evaluation only on proposals recommended for TA by the POLARIN Scientific Liaison Panel (SLP) who first makes the scientific evaluation of the

proposals. In the logistic evaluation, RIs will specifically focus on the project's feasibility for implementation, followed by their access decision (access granted / access not granted) and possible additional requirements for implementation at the RI.

On the other hand, the IOF, as a collective of RI operators, possesses knowledge and expertise regarding access to the infrastructures and their capacities. Therefore, it can serve at any point of the TA provision chain (e.g. during scientific and logistic evaluation, or TA project implementation) by providing consultation and advice to any RI and/or WP of the POLARIN project. It offers guidance, particularly concerning the feasibility and implementation of the access proposals, logistics, available or potentially available scientific equipment, and so on. In short, the IOF can provide advice on any aspect related to the implementation of TA proposals that may need to be consulted during the scientific evaluation of proposals, or before the access decisions are made by the RIs.

Specifically, the SLP which is responsible for the scientific evaluation of the TA proposals may, during the scientific evaluation, consult the IOF on matters related to the feasibility of implementing a proposal. This information can help the SLP to substantiate its response and provide additional feedback to the applicant, aimed at improving or revising the proposal. The possibility to consult IOF during the scientific evaluation process will also help to ensure that projects recommended for access by the SLP are not only scientifically high-ranking, but also possible to implement at POLARIN RIs.

In this sense, the communication between the SLP chair, POLARIN Evaluation Secretariat and the IOF chair must be continuous and open throughout the process, both during the scientific review and the logistic evaluation, to enable these consultations.

3. Logistic evaluation procedure

The main objective of the logistic evaluation process is to ensure that the high-ranking access proposals recommended by the Scientific Liaison Panel for TA are feasible to be implemented at the selected infrastructures. Although the logistic evaluation occurs in a single phase following the scientific evaluation, as mentioned earlier, the IOF will remain vigilant to any requests from the SLP for preliminary consultations during the scientific evaluation stage regarding the feasibility of a proposal within a specific infrastructure. This is to ensure the best possible alignment between the access proposals and the capabilities of the infrastructures.

Although there are key scientific challenges and research priorities set out in POLARIN, it is also helpful to identify the synergies between these key challenges and priorities with the scientific objectives or strategies of the individual RIs to enhance the feasibility of the TA projects for implementation.

Once the SLP finalizes the scientific evaluation and submits their access recommendations in the on-line POLARIN Transnational Access Platform (TAP), the proposals recommended for access are sent to the RI for their logistic evaluation and access decisions. (Fig 1). The IOF

chair, together with the WP2 access management team, will be able to view all proposals as well.

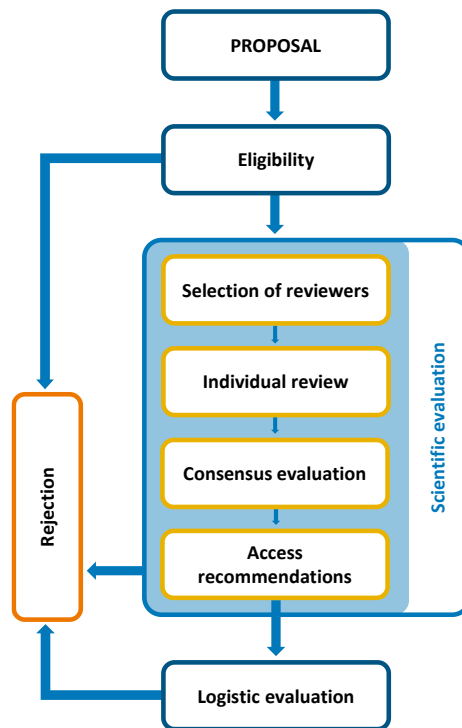


Figure 1 - Evaluation system of proposals submitted in response to the POLARIN transnational access calls.

The workflow and different steps involved in the logistic evaluation are presented in Figure 2. Each proposal directed to a specific infrastructure will be reviewed by the RI operator, focusing on the feasibility of the proposal for implementation and on the logistical aspects that allow the determination of the timing, resources, facilities and support needed from the infrastructure for the proposal's implementation. A list of criteria to aid the logistic evaluation is provided in Annex 1.

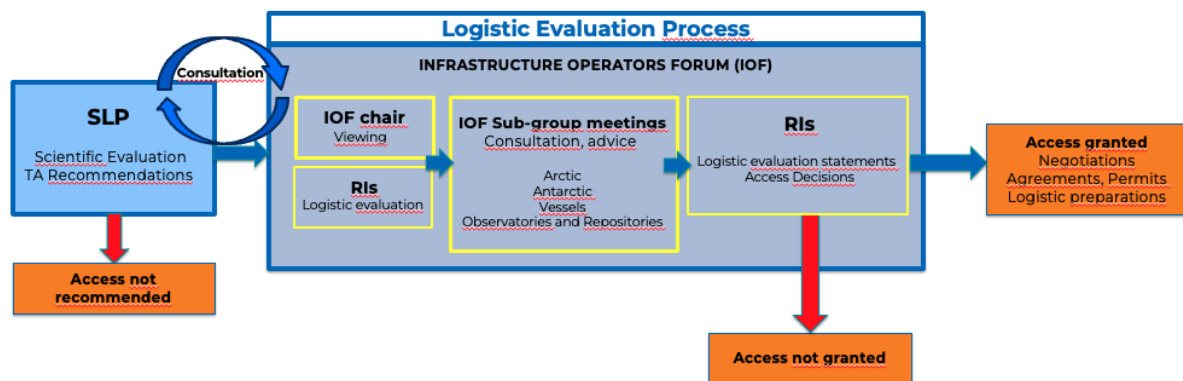


Figure 2 - Workflow and different steps involved in the POLARIN logistic evaluation procedure.

The IOF subgroups will convene when the RI operators conduct the review and logistic evaluation of the recommended proposals. At the IOF meetings, the RI operators will have the possibility to discuss any questions or concerns they may have regarding the project implementation to support their access decisions.

Furthermore, special attention will be paid to discussing proposals recommended for access to several RIs, to optimize e.g. timing and logistic support and operations.

Once the RI operators have completed the logistic evaluation, they will submit their access decisions on the proposals (access granted or not granted), together with a logistic evaluation statement, to the POLARIN TAP. They can furthermore provide additional comments to the proponents about e.g. necessary permits and/or licenses and other arrangements that are needed to implement the project at the RI.

Given the wide variety of RIs within the project, it is difficult to establish specific and, at the same time, common criteria for the logistics evaluation. To aid the RIs logistic evaluation, Annex I. contains criteria and variables that RIs can use during the logistic evaluation. The criteria and variables are based on what the RIs themselves have expressed during the preliminary meetings of the different IOF subgroups.

The access decisions, together with both scientific evaluation statements (done by SLP) and logistic evaluation statements (done by the RIs) will be provided to the proponents in the POLARIN TAP.

4. Annex I. Variables and criteria to aid logistic evaluation

TA User Group

- Group composition
- Medical check-up/certification
- Training Certification
- Insurances/Permits/Licenses
- HSE aspects
- Travels to RI and back

TA Proposal

- Description and workplan of the research
- Cost-efficiency and accuracy of the proposed costs
- Permits (EEZ, environmental, samples, etc).
- Equipment needed from the infrastructure
- Equipment provided by the TA project
- Field/vessel support. Need of technical support during the implementation.
- Number of people (TA User Group)
- Number of days required for access (minimum of days required)
- Geographical area of research

Cargo and samples

- Port/City of mobilization/demobilization
- Port/City of embarkment/departure
- Cargo
 - o Packing list
 - o Volume (total)
 - o Date for delivery to port/city of mobilization
 - o Hazardous materials, chemicals and gases
- Samples
 - o Expected number
 - o Volume
 - o Required handling and conservation

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