



LASERLAB-EUROPE

The Integrated Initiative of European Laser Research Infrastructures V

Grant Agreement number: 871124

Work package 1 – Management

Deliverable D1.2
2nd Annual Meeting

Lead Beneficiary: 1 – CNRS

Due date: Month 24
Date of delivery: Month 24

Project webpage: www.laserlab-europe.eu

<i>Deliverable Type</i>		
R	Document, report	OTHER
DEM	Demonstrator, pilot, prototype	
DEC	Websites, patent fillings, videos, etc.	
OTHER		
ETHICS	Ethics requirement	
ORDP	Open Research Data Pilot	
DATA	data sets, microdata, etc.	
<i>Dissemination Level</i>		
PU	Public, fully open, e.g. web	PU
CO	Confidential. restricted under conditions set out in Model Grant Agreement	



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement no. 871124.

2 Objectives

The objective of WP 1 is to manage the overall project with respect to administrative, contractual, legal, ethical, financial, and technical issues to ensure highest quality of service and completing deliverables according to the time frame and budget foreseen. A particularly important issue is to monitor the progress of the project and the reporting to the project bodies in order to be able to take corrective action if necessary.

The aim of the annual meeting of the General Assembly of the project is to assess the progress of past activities, to decide on implementation plans for the following year and to create common understanding and awareness of the activities among all project participants.

3 Second annual meeting

Laserlab-Europe General Assembly meeting, 3-4 November 2021, video conference

Due to the still ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, the annual General Assembly meeting took place as video conference for the second time, organised during the mornings of two consecutive days.

In total, 55 participants attended the Laserlab-Europe Annual Meeting. The Coordinator Sylvie Jacquemot, CNRS-LULI, opened the meeting and welcomed the participants. In her Coordinator's report, she presented Laserlab-Europe activities at the management level and progress during the second year of the project.

Networking

The chair of the Networking Board, Jens Biegert, and the networking work package leaders presented the progress to date of each work package. A few examples of discussion items are presented here:

- Following the delays caused by the COVID-19 restrictions during the first year, several activities have adapted their formats to allow for continued interaction within Laserlab-Europe and with the scientific community, e.g. online tutorials following up on the Science@FELs conference, in which Laserlab-Europe is invited to participate.
- The NEILS *Network on Extreme Intensity Laser Systems* has implemented a new format and topics for an all-online workshop in November 2021 that provides an opportunity to share the experiences gathered at the different facilities during the past almost two years, in which operation and scientific activities have been strongly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The NAIS *Network on Data Analysis in Imaging and Spectroscopy* held a virtual meeting in March 2021, attended by 45 participants from 19 Laserlab-Europe partner institutions, out of which several joined in the efforts to organise an online hands-on user training event on data analysis in imaging and spectroscopy (WP4).
- The NEDA *Network on Data Management* organised an online workshop on "Better Data for Better Science" in October 2021 in collaboration with ELI and PaNOSC, providing examples of use cases of data management in different facilities and fields of application and discussing common issues.
- As partial replacement for hands-on training events in the labs, a first online training event has been organised by ILC in May 2021, addressing "Data Analysis in Time-Resolved Imaging and Spectroscopy", consisting of online lectures, followed by hands-on training by remote access to ILC computer workstations running FLIM data analysis software.
- A user meeting was held online, organised by CLPU together with the User Representatives in November 2021, including talks by users, two keynote talks and four presentations by new access providers.



- A position paper has been produced that gives an overview of the capabilities of Laserlab-Europe and of the services the consortium can offer to the user community, to potential collaboration partners and to address the Horizon Europe missions.
- A list with National Contact Points (NCPs) for each country has been established who will be asked to collect information about national roadmaps and planned infrastructure upgrades for a laser landscape analysis (WP6) and to collect contact names from the national user community for a survey on user needs and requests regarding access opportunities.
- A Memorandum of Understanding has been drafted with LaserNetUS that will ensure closer collaboration between Laserlab-Europe and laser research infrastructures in the US.
- In the work package on Innovation Management and Industry Relations, Laserlab-Europe acts mainly as a facilitator for promoting local and/or national access opportunities for industrial users. A search tool for service and collaboration offers for industrial users has been launched on the Laserlab-Europe webpage as well as a number of case studies of successful collaboration with industry.
- A Laserlab-Europe Symposium “Lasers Fighting Cancer” has been held online in May 2021, focussing on medical and industrial application of lasers in the diagnosis and treatment of cancers, attracting scientists from Laserlab-Europe laboratories and from European and international medical institutions as well as representatives from several companies developing medical laser systems.
- The presentations were followed by discussions about the current status of each work package and further development of the defined tasks and objectives.

Joint Research Activities

The chair of the JRA Board, Philippe Zeitoun, gave a summary of the scientific progress and highlights of the two JRAs:

- PRImary and SEcondary Sources – PRISES (Coordinator: Joachim Hein HIJ)
- Advanced Laser-based Techniques for Imaging and Spectroscopy in material science and biomedicine – ALTIS (Coordinator: Francesco Pavone LENS)

In both JRAs, some tasks are facing delays due to the Covid-19 lab closures, requiring the postponement of two deliverables by 10 and 12 months, respectively. Scientific progress is good, but collaboration of the groups within a task has been strongly affected.

The participants in the meeting were reminded about the contractual requirements to acknowledge the EU-funding through Laserlab-Europe, to publish with open access and to make the data available with open access.

Access Activities

Pascal D'Oliveira, the chair of the Access Board, presented the Laserlab-Europe V access programme and the achievements so far.

Being initially exclusively based on physical access, the access activity has been strongly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and travel restrictions. At month 22.5, the access programme is 14 months behind schedule (1015 days), with a large backlog of access days from accepted proposals (~1050 days). The number of projects and users are statistically in line with the access days provided. Savings on travel and subsistence have been possible thanks to remote access (~100k€).

Statistics at month 11 show an increase in access provision since month 7, which seems due to the introduction of remote access, which represents 53% of the access provided from 1 June to 31 October 2020. Remote access, which has been predominant from 09/20 to 05/21, has allowed boosting the access provision. Since June 2021, physical access has considerably increased (x4). Still, access provision is behind target but is improving.



User feedback

The analysis of user questionnaires received until month 22.5 shows that the services of Laserlab-Europe are considered “good” or “very good” by a very large majority of our users. As compared to previous Laserlab-Europe projects, the user satisfaction for the present Laserlab-Europe V is highest. Feedback on projects performed remotely was very positive.

Access providers’ feedback on remote access

Several advantages, besides the reduction of the Carbon footprint, are noted by the access providers:

- Remote access allows maintaining the TNA activity during the travel restrictions.
- Remote access may save time in some cases, e.g. if no training of users is needed prior to the experiment.
- Remote access is well adapted for service experiments.

Drawbacks have to be stated as well:

- Experiments take longer and are more demanding and expensive for the host staff.
- Training of users and interaction are reduced.
- Performing experiments remotely is especially difficult for new users.

The access providers are ready to continue providing remote access beyond the pandemic, but generally consider it more difficult and less rewarding than in-person access. The General Assembly agrees that remote access will become a permanent, but optional, feature of the access programme; the Access Board suggests, however, that in-person access be favoured whenever possible.

Administrative issues

The first periodic report, covering 18 months from December 2019 until May 2020, was due and submitted on 31 July 2021. The financial statements and the report currently are under assessment by the EC with repeated revision requests for financial explanations.

The budget status after 18 months, corresponding to 37.5% of the project’s duration, shows that JRA expenses are almost on track, while all other activities were strongly affected by COVID-19 restrictions.

A project review meeting took place online on 17 September 2021. The agenda consisted of an overview of the project and its objectives, an analysis of the issues caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and a summary of the achievements of the first reporting period. Reports on the activities were presented by the persons in charge, followed by a discussion on impacts. Finally, the project officer and the experts presented their comments and recommendations. In general, the experts stated that the scientific achievements of Laserlab-Europe were fully satisfactory. The majority of the experts’ questions aimed at collecting additional information on Laserlab-Europe’s industrial relations, on the geographical impact and on data management and have been answered satisfactorily. Criticisms addressed the lack of visible progress in data management and the fact that some reported publications were submitted before the start of the project. The review report reflects these findings, and the participants have discussed them.

A process for an amendment of the grant agreement regarding the postponement of deliverables in networking and JRAs as well as regarding an extension of the project’s duration by one year is under preparation.

4 Summary

The Laserlab-Europe Annual Meeting 2021 was a very successful meeting, even though the meeting was held as virtual meeting for the second time, with less opportunities for discussion and interaction as compared to a meeting in person.



The participants have made every effort to complete all of the required deliverables and milestones to date and showed that, where possible, they have well adapted to the constraints, with a few exceptions due to the still prevailing restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Annual Meeting was also an important opportunity for the participants to learn more about the WPs and activities in which they are not personally involved.



Group pictures taken during the web meeting



5 Agenda

1. Welcome and formalities

Attendance, rules of procedure, agenda

2. Status of Laserlab-Europe V - Coordinator's report

3. Report on Networking

3.1 WP8 Innovation Management and Industry Relations

3.2 WP2 Publicity, Dissemination and Community Support

3.3 WP3 Scientific and Technological Exchanges

3.4 WP4 Training and Development of User Communities

3.5 WP5 Access Management and Monitoring Infrastructure-Users Connections

3.6 WP6 Foresight and Sustainability Activities

3.7 WP7 International Relations

4. Report on JRA

5. Report on Access Activities

6. Administrative issues (D. Stozno)

6.1 Comments on the first periodic reporting exercise

6.2 Recommendations from the EC following the first review meeting

6.3 Amendments of the grant agreement

7. AOB, date and location of next meeting

