

1. OBJECTIVE AND AREA OF APPLICATION.....	2
2. SCOPE	3
3. GENERAL SERVICES OFFERED	3
5. APPLICATION OF ACCESS POLICY	5
6. FUNDING ACCESS	6

1. OBJECTIVE AND AREA OF APPLICATION

1.1. The objective of this document is to establish guidelines for managing access to the facilities and equipment that PLOCAN offers to potential users, in line with the purposes of the Centre.

1.2. According to the agreement that gave rise to the PLOCAN consortium:

The Oceanic Platform of the Canary Islands is an initiative that mobilises general marine science and technology towards a search for international business socio-economic competitiveness stemming from access to the off-shore marine space. An oceanic platform containing a set of experimental facilities and laboratories has been built and is operating, located on the edge of the continental shelf to boost stable oceanic occupation and operation. It also provides access to the deep ocean, using all kinds of submarine vehicles, machinery and instruments, either connected to the base, or remotely, to observe, produce, harness resources or install services at depths that until now were only possible for the hydrocarbon prospection and extraction industry; all with sufficient environmental guarantees and in a socially-acceptable manner.

This Outstanding Scientific and Technological Infrastructure (ICTS, in Spanish) was conceived to focus and drive existing major regional and national capabilities that required an initiative of this kind to reach international state-of-the-art status that this ICTS guarantees.

PLOCAN is a uniquely located national ICTS, in the category of Sea, Life and Earth Sciences established to pursue the following basic objectives:

- To offer outstanding scientific-technical capabilities. Provide the scientific-technological community with the most effective conditions and means in the international context to conduct and/or test observations, experiences and trials at increasing depths.
- The best international test bed. Provide business with the best, and often only test bed for deep-water activities with sufficient environmental guarantees.
- Base. Make the deep-water vehicle and instrument base operational and permanently available for all and any tasks that require devices of this kind.
- Scientific-technical environment of excellence. Offer a unique meeting point between the best and most dynamic of the scientific-technical community and the most innovative companies in the field of access to understanding and using the deep ocean.
- Highly specialised training. Offer a set of training programmes, from occupational training to post-doctorate level, including specific training and education in the use of the facilities and working devices and access to the deep ocean.
- The main lines of work conducted on PLOCAN since it came into operation are:
 - To contribute to the understanding, modelling, predicting and mitigating processes related to global climate change
 - To study ecosystems and biogeochemical cycles
 - To promote the characterisation of the regional environment (the Eastern Central Atlantic Ocean) and its contribution to global processes

- To promote the study and development of renewable energy in the marine environment
- To contribute to marine and chemical bioprospecting of marine natural products
- To encourage the development of offshore aquaculture
- To support the improvement of the integrated management of the oceanic and coastal zones
- To improve the understanding of marine mammals
- To improve knowledge, evolution and management of geological risk and resources
- Marine structures and substructures
- To favour the development of new materials
- Marine Energy Converters, installation, maintenance and Marine Energy evacuation technologies
- To foster the development of sensors and marine technologies for detecting and monitoring the environmental state of the oceans
- To promote the use of advanced Information Technologies for the treatment of scientific and oceanic data

1.3. This policy attempts to set action guidelines for implementing a clear, simple and effective system of open access to the facilities and equipment that guarantees:

- Compliance with the purposes for which the Centre was created and for which the Consortium is funded
- The security and integrity of the facilities and staff
- Access to the highest quality proposals, pursuant to criteria such as scientific and technical excellence, opportunity, innovation potential, technological transfer, socio-economic impact, availability of resources, technical feasibility and compliance of the objectives of the Centre
- The selection of projects that can be implemented within the limits of the budget programmed, especially those that are nationally or internationally subsidised accesses,
- Optimum management of the resources available

2. SCOPE

2.1. This access policy, drawn up by the PLOCAN senior management, will be used provisionally until such time as the access protocol is approved, and it will be applied to all PLOCAN facilities equipment and services.

2.2. Information on the services and the facilities and equipment that comprise these services will be published and disseminated (www.plocan.eu).

3. GENERAL SERVICES OFFERED

Based on the European, national and regional policies established in the area of scientific research and technological development and innovation, preference will be given to lines

prioritised by such policies and by the Centre's Strategy Plan and Scientific Programme, paying special attention to:

- **Data supply.** The observational capabilities of PLOCAN provide a set of data and information from its facilities that are available for users. This service is free. Besides, users can demand specific data or information that can be measured using the resources of the ICTS in the scope of the integrated observatory (coastal, oceanic and extended). The cost for the use of vehicles, equipment, premises and technical support, is equal to the result of adding to the direct costs, a 25% of indirect costs (approved by EC on May/2013).
- **Hosting.** This service comprises the hosting of equipment, devices and marine technologies, for testing activities, experiments or other resources of the users in any of the installations of the ICTS. The housing services imply rights and regulated conditions to use the facilities, as well as associated services such as transport, installation, maintenance, monitoring, decommissioning, permits, accommodation, and insurance among others. The cost for the use of vehicles, equipment, premises and technical support, is equal to the result of adding to the direct costs, a 25% of indirect costs (approved by EC on May/2013).
- **Operations.** Operation of the multipurpose offshore platform, vehicles, instruments and other marine devices. This service uses the operational resources and capabilities of PLOCAN to make available to users the multi-purpose offshore platform and unique vehicles, under regulated conditions. They may involve associated services related to installation, operation, maintenance, transportation, insurance, decommissioning or others. On May/2013, the Executive Board approved the daily cost for the use of an underwater glider for a minimum access of 3 weeks and which includes insurance, operation (deployment, piloting and recovery), data processing and the technical support necessary for its operation. For the rest of vehicles, equipment, premises and technical support, the rate is equal to the result of adding to the direct costs, a 25% of indirect costs (approved by EC on May/2013).

4. OPEN ACCESS PROTOCOL

All PLOCAN resources, facilities, instruments and personnel are permanently available in each annual call for the scientific-technical community who may need them to develop scientific methodologies with complex marine-maritime operational needs, to accelerate and bring science and technology of excellence to enhance theories by converting them into socio-economically-useful elements or market products.

In general, the PLOCAN infrastructure offers technological support where there is a need for high-technology instruments, multiple operational procedures, spaces and locations in the marine environment in special or unusual depths, conditions and distances that generally require the support of highly-qualified and well-trained personnel.

All the requests to access PLOCAN have a competitive nature, meaning they will be submitted to an evaluation and prioritisation process according to their alignment with PLOCAN's

objectives, their technical-administrative feasibility and scientific quality, always within the principles of transparency, equity and impartiality. Open character accesses will be those which evaluation is done with the additional participation of renowned experts, external to the infrastructure, in the areas of Ocean, Life and Earth sciences, and associated technologies.

The originality, complexity and the approach as accelerator of the scientific-technical processes that are given support in order to reach final scientific or socioeconomic values, constitute a novel offer in the National and European science systems. Therefore the model of well-known infrastructures by the community of users is of limited use in PLOCAN. In our case, the model of information and promotion allowing the users to access capacities and services of the infrastructure that were inconceivable until the beginning of its operation, is predominant (this is particularly surprising for the R&D business initiatives).

In order to guarantee the efficiency in the presentation of the services, as well as the transparency, equity and impartiality principles, it is established a guarantee that the 25% will be offered in an Open competitive Access mode. In the rest of the cases, when surpassing the alignment to the Consortium objectives, the technical-administrative feasibility and the scientific quality, a criterion of date of entry order will be applied.

The Executive Committee will report to the Board of Governors in the Annual Report.

5. APPLICATION OF ACCESS POLICY

5.1. COMPETENCES OF THE DIRECTOR

Direct and administer the Centre and ensure its scientific and technological excellence. The Director eventually authorises the access requests proposed by the Access Committee. The Director proposes approval, modification or suppression of the tariffs or prices of the different services provided by PLOCAN to the Executive Board.

5.2. ACCESS COMMITTEE

The Access Committee is the Director's advisory body concerning applications for competitive access to PLOCAN. It shall be comprised of an odd number of members with a basic minimum of 3 members. This committee shall submit a prioritised list of the applications, with arguments, to the Director, based on the scientific and technical quality of the proposals submitted.

Its composition, functions and operating methods are explained in greater detail in the "Access Committee regulations".

5.3. ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Assessment criteria must be consistent with European, national or regional R+D+i policies and strategies and with the access policy itself.

Assessors shall be selected on the basis of their specialisation, knowledge, scientific-technical quality and experience.

Proposals that contravene fundamental ethical principles shall be excluded.

The criteria applied by the Internal Access Committee and by the Access Committee will be as follows, although any other criterion considered important for the proper assessment of proposals will also be applied:

- Technical feasibility assessment criteria: shall be applied exclusively by the Internal Committee to assess all applications submitted. Aspects such as technical feasibility, availability of resources and safety/security shall be analysed.
- Scientific and/or technical quality assessment criteria: shall be applied by the Internal Committee and by the Access Committee. Their analysis shall include aspects such as the scientific and technical quality or excellence, potential impact, promoting talent, opening up to new users and compliance of the objectives of the Centre.
- Specific criteria: Furthermore, to assess certain proposals, consideration may be given to other assessment criteria, such as urgency or other criteria established in the call for proposals.

6. FUNDING ACCESS

The PLOCAN Consortium Executive Board shall approve, modify or suppress the tariffs or prices of the different services provided by PLOCAN. On this point, the possibility of establishing special tariffs for users from any of the institutions that comprise the Consortium will be considered, bearing in mind in their calculations that the contributions made to the consortium are already funding part of the cost of the access provided to these users.

All calls opened annually for competitive access to the infrastructure will give a detailed list of general conditions and, when appropriate, funding and possible financial aid, if any, that users can receive should their application be approved.