



ACCESS PROTOCOL TO THE PLATAFORMA SOLAR DE ALMERÍA (PSA)



TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	Scope	3
2	Eligible Access Applicants	3
3	Facilities	2
4	Guide for Competitive Open Access Applications	4
4.1	Competitive Open Access Calls	4
4.2	Competitive Open Access Application	4
4.3	Evaluation Phases of the Procedure	4
4.3.1	Phase 1. Scientific and Technical Feasibility Assessment	4
4.3.2	Phase 2. Evaluation of Scientific and Technical Quality	4
4.3.3	Phase 3. Communication of Results and Handling of Appeals	5

1 SCOPE

This document regulates the access conditions for the research and technological community from Spanish or international institutions, whether public or private, to the facilities and services of the Plataforma Solar de Almería (PSA), with the aim of developing R&D projects.

Two types of access are established:

1. Competitive Open Access (COA):

As a competitive selection process, access proposals are evaluated and ranked by an external Access Committee based on the scientific excellence and technical quality of the proposal, following an open and transparent process.

At least 20% of the annual access capacity of each PSA facility will be allocated through competitive access.

Competitive access may include certain advantages for users accessing under this modality, for example, in relation to the fees established for access to the services provided by the infrastructure (full or partial waiver), the absence of a requirement for a bilateral agreement between PSA-CIEMAT and the requesting entity, or other conditions that may be determined.

2. Demand-Driven Access (DDA):

DDA is not associated with any open call for access, and users are not required to undergo evaluation by an external Access Committee. Users may contact the PSA Management directly at any time, and access will be granted to proposals supported by a bilateral agreement between PSA-CIEMAT and the requesting research organization or company.

2 ELIGIBLE ACCESS APPLICANTS

Applicants for access may be researchers or companies, from public or private institutions, whether Spanish or international.

All public and private organizations are encouraged to access PSA facilities through our website: <https://www.psa.es/en/gen/acceso/index.php>

3 FACILITIES

PSA has multiple scientific facilities available to groups wishing to carry out research and scientific and technological development activities.

Among them, 11 key facilities stand out. The key facilities are the core components of the infrastructure—those that justify the classification of the Plataforma Solar de Almería as a ICTS (Singular Scientific and Technical Infrastructure). In other words, they are the elements that provide the “uniqueness” of the Center:

- Central Receiver System (CRS)
- CESA-1
- Horizontal Solar Furnace (HSF)
- Vertical Solar Furnace (VSF)
- 4 Parabolic Dish units (DISTAL)
- MED facility
- CSP+D facility
- MDTF facility
- Optical analysis and accelerated aging laboratory for solar reflectors (OPAC)
- SOLWATER
- HyWATOx

For more information, please visit: <https://www.psa.es/en/gen/acceso/instalaciones.php>

4 GUIDE FOR COMPETITIVE OPEN ACCESS APPLICATIONS

4.1 COMPETITIVE OPEN ACCESS CALLS

Twice a year, PSA will open access calls to receive proposals from research groups focused on scientific and technological development research (R&D projects) wishing to access the scientific facilities. All information regarding the calls is published at: <https://www.psa.es/en/gen/acceso/convocatorias.php>

Each call will have a start date and an end date for the submission of applications. Each proposal must be submitted within an open call and will be evaluated and communicated after the closing date of the call.

4.2 COMPETITIVE OPEN ACCESS APPLICATION

Applicants must create a user account and complete the electronic access form available on the PSA website. To do so, it is recommended to contact the Access Coordinator (access@psa.es) in order to receive guidance and identify the most suitable facility for the development of their experimental plan. Once all required information has been completed in the form, it will be registered in the PSA information system.

4.3 EVALUATION PHASES OF THE PROCEDURE

In order to select the proposals that will be granted access to PSA facilities, applications submitted on time and in due form will be evaluated according to the following phases:

4.3.1 PHASE 1. SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL FEASIBILITY ASSESSMENT

Applications will be forwarded to the Facility Managers (FM) most appropriate for each access proposal, who will assess their scientific and technical feasibility as well as the operational availability of each facility.

4.3.2 PHASE 2. SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL QUALITY EVALUATION

Proposals that have passed Phase 1 will be forwarded to the Open Access Committee (OAC), composed of five independent experts, which will evaluate the scientific and technical quality of the proposals according to the established selection criteria. The OAC may request additional information from the Access Coordinator.

There are three evaluation criteria, with a maximum score of 5 points each, and a threshold of 3 points per criterion:

- Scientific excellence (originality and innovation) /5
- Overall technical quality of the project /5
- Competences and complementarity of the research team /5

This will generate a score out of 15, with only those scoring above 9 being accepted.

If access to the facilities is limited for any reason, priority will be given to:

1. Users with the highest scores
2. Users who have not previously used the requested facility
3. Users working in countries where no equivalent research infrastructure exists

IMPORTANT: For proposals originating from any competitive public call at regional, national, European or international level, in which scientific excellence and technical quality have already been evaluated, the Access Committee may adopt those evaluations and directly grant a “QUALIFIED” status to the proposal.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERION

The selected applicant must commit to submitting a report to the Facility Manager describing the work carried out and the results obtained upon completion of the stay.

The applicant must also commit to producing a scientific publication on the work carried out and the results obtained, provided that it does not compromise either party, and that access to the facility has been fully funded by a project from a competitive public call, or partially funded by PSA. The publication must acknowledge PSA for providing access to its facilities.

4.3.3 PHASE 3. COMMUNICATION OF RESULTS AND HANDLING OF APPEALS

Once the OAC has completed its evaluation, the result will be communicated to the Access Coordinator.



Based on the report prepared by the OAC, the Access Coordinator will notify each applicant of the final decision, either acceptance or rejection, including in the latter case the reasons for rejection. Applicants will have 15 days to submit any appeals they consider appropriate. The Access Coordinator, together with the relevant Facility Managers, will decide whether to reopen the evaluation process if the appeals are deemed valid, and will have 15 days to issue a final response.

The final resolution of the accepted proposals will be published on the PSA access website.