European Laser Research Infrastructures serving Science and Industry

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WP 1

D1.2: 2nd General Assembly

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About Lasers4EU

Lasers4EU incorporates the major laser research infrastructures, in a large number of European member states, into a comprehensive virtual distributed laser research infrastructure that offers to a broad user community, from academia and industry, access to an exceptional portfolio of technical and scientific capabilities. This unique set of instruments together with the specific scientific expertise at the host facilities allows Lasers4EU users to carry out high-level research in an extremely wide range of high-impact topics in life sciences, materials nano-processing, etc.

Laser technology has experienced remarkable advances and breakthroughs in the last 60 years and is now a key innovation driver for highly diversified societal applications and products, thereby substantially contributing to economic growth and to solving challenges in the areas of health, environment and energy. Through its strategic approach, Lasers4EU aims to strengthen Europe's leading position and competitiveness. It facilitates long-term coordination of the laser research activities within the European Research Area and provides concerted and efficient services to scientific, industrial and medical researchers. The main objectives of Lasers4EU are to:

- provide coordinated access to high-quality services based on a coherent and comprehensive consortium of 27 leading European laser installations offering to users from academia and from industry cutting-edge performances at the forefront of the laser technologies,
- structure the European landscape of laser Research Infrastructure through enhanced access, extended geographical coverage, novel science diplomacy activities, improved synergies with other European networks and projects,
- increase European human resources in the field of laser science by implementing training activities towards researchers from new domains of science and technology and from geographical regions where laser communities are still less developed.

1 Objectives

The objective of WP 1 is to manage the overall project with respect to administrative, contractual, legal, 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.

2 Second General Assembly Meeting

The second Lasers4EU General Assembly took place on 27 May 2026 at ELI ERIC in Dolní Břežany, Czechia, jointly organised by Laserlab-Europe, HiLASE and ELI ERIC. It was attended by 38 participants in person and 14 remotely, with almost all partners represented.

Scientific Coordinator Sylvie Jacquemot (CNRS-LULI) opened the meeting with an overview of second-year progress and implementation.

3 WP1 Management

Neide Pedro outlined responsibilities, procedures and deadlines for the first technical and financial periodic reports to the European Commission, due on 30 November 2026.

She recalled that deliverables are submitted separately from periodic reports: seven of the project's 27 deliverables fall due by Month 24. A postponement of D3.1 (Intermediate Access Report) to 30 November 2026 had been requested to align access and financial data.

The internal financial procedures established in the Consortium Agreement were also reviewed.

4 WP2 Communication and Outreach

The task leaders presented the progress achieved to date for each task. Key discussion points

included:

• **Communication, Dissemination and Exploitation:**

Ramona Landgraf presented an overview of the project's communication and dissemination activities, highlighting the continuous development of the Lasers4EU website, including improvements to information on access routes, pre-project training and the online search tools for scientific and industrial users.

She reported positive developments in social media engagement, particularly on LinkedIn, where regular and diversified content has contributed to an increase in visibility and followers. The Laserlab Forum newsletter continues to be published twice a year, with Issue 39, Lasers for Catalysis, released in December 2025 and the next issue, Young scientists in the lab, planned for June 2026.

She also highlighted the two complementary webinar series established under Lasers4EU:

Lasers4EU Webinar Series, addressing topics at the intersection of laser science, research infrastructure, innovation and research services. The next webinar, focusing on the use and impact of artificial intelligence in research and innovation, was scheduled for September 2026.

Laserlab-Europe Talks, a monthly series presenting scientific developments and applications enabled by laser-based technologies.

Future communication will place more emphasis on access-project results, testimonials and educational material. Partners were encouraged to provide content and acknowledge EU funding appropriately.

• **Science Diplomacy and Outreach:**

Zsuzsanna Major reported on progress in establishing a network of national points of contact to promote Lasers4EU activities and access opportunities outside the consortium. Approximately half of those approached had responded positively, and partners were encouraged to suggest further contacts. A dedicated webpage is planned to support the network.

She also presented the online inventory platform for second-hand scientific equipment, which is operational but has attracted limited interest. Further promotion is planned to increase its visibility.

Finally, she highlighted the first Lasers4EU User Meeting, dedicated to industrial users and organised alongside the General Assembly and Laserlab-Europe Annual Meeting. The programme included presentations, a poster session and a round-table discussion to identify user needs and better align access services with industrial requirements.

5 WP3: Access

Olivier Uteza, Deputy Chair of the Access Board, presented the Month 19 results and Month 24 forecasts. Although access provision remained below the planned level, the monthly provision rate was expected to increase from 48.6 to 55.1 days, reducing the projected shortfall from 267 to 181 days. The General Assembly endorsed postponing any redistribution of access units until after the submission of the mid-term report, when updated access provision figures would be available.

Progress was also reported on the development of the different access routes. For the multi-instrument access route, the General Assembly approved recommendations to clarify eligibility requirements and introduce a mandatory pluriannual work plan in the ARIA application process. Regarding the industrial access route, significant progress had been made with the development of a dedicated webpage and an Industry Search Tool. The General Assembly also endorsed recommendations on confidentiality arrangements and additional promotional measures to increase the route's visibility.

The status of joint experiments and pre-project training was also reviewed. By Month 19, 13 joint experiments had been completed or were ongoing, accounting for 125.5 access days and involving 55 users. However, uptake of the pre-project training scheme remained limited. The General Assembly therefore approved additional promotional measures, including clearer information in the ARIA application form, a dedicated flyer and user testimonials.

Finally, partners were reminded to monitor travel budgets, report access days and acknowledge EU funding in resulting outputs.

6 WP4: Cross-facility services

The Work Package Leader, Joachim Hein, together with the Task Leaders, presented the progress achieved during the second year of the project and outlined the next steps for the different tasks. Key points included:

- **Short-term R&D:** The 2025 and 2026 calls received 11 proposals; five projects were selected for co-funding of up to €8,000 each for travel and consumables.
- **Joint experiments:** In addition to continuously submitted curiosity-driven experiments, annual calls supported work on standardised procedures and calibration; two of three proposals were selected.

- **Staff exchanges:** Ten exchanges were selected from 13 proposals. Huzefa Bhanpurwala (HiLASE) illustrated the transfer of expertise gained during his exchange at CLF.
- **Standardised performance assessment:** Three clusters, *Diffuse Correlation Spectroscopy*, *Transient Absorption* and *Characterisation of Ultrashort Pulses*, are developing common protocols and recommendations based on good practices.
- **FAIR data:** A consortium survey identified differing levels of maturity in data-management practices among the partners. A simplified user-experiment DMP, the FAIR network and helpdesk are being developed further, with RDMO piloting and training planned.

The presentations were followed by discussions on the implementation of the different activities and the priorities for the next reporting period.

7 WP5: User Training

The Task Leaders presented progress on training schools and an online software tool.

- **Training schools:** The first call supported three completed events with 76 participants (60 women and 16 men); two further events were scheduled for June and July 2026. Co-funding and positive participant feedback were highlighted**.**
- **Online tools:** Panagiotis Loukakos and Giorgios Tsibidis (FORTH) demonstrated a pilot tool for planning and analysing laser experiments, including simulation of femtosecond pulses interacting with thin metal films. Partner testing and publication through the Lasers4EU website were planned.

8 Progress by the end of the first reporting period, Month 24 (post-meeting update)

The General Assembly met in Month 20. The following update covers progress up to 30 September 2026 (Month 24), based on information that became available after the meeting and was therefore not formally assessed by the General Assembly.

The access provision figures are preliminary, as the Access Board is still collecting and consolidating data for the mid-term report. However, since most partners have already submitted their figures, the

available results have been included in this deliverable to provide an overview of progress at Month 24.

WP2 — By Month 24, the Lasers4EU website had attracted 26,291 visitors, while the LinkedIn page had reached 1,340 followers. Three Lasers4EU webinars had attracted 183 participants, and 19 Laserlab-Europe Talks had reached 1,015 participants. Outreach activities continued through scientific talks, newsletters and the network of national points of contact.

WP3 — By Month 24, approximately 1,369 access days had been delivered, representing 45.5% of the overall target of 3,008 access days. These figures remain preliminary. The final access statistics, including the number of projects, users, joint experiments and projects benefiting from pre-project training, will be presented in D3.1 (Intermediate Access Report), which is due for submission by 30 November 2026.

WP4 — By Month 24, five short-term R&D projects and two standardisation/calibration joint experiments had been completed or were underway, while four staff exchanges had been completed. The three performance-assessment clusters had made progress in developing their procedures. FAIR data activities included the DMP template, the RDMO pilot, and ongoing support through the FAIR network and helpdesk.

WP5 — By Month 24, six training events had been held, bringing together 306 participants from at least 22 countries. The online tool developed by FORTH had also been made available on the Lasers4EU website.

9 Summary

The second Lasers4EU General Assembly meeting provided a valuable opportunity for consortium partners to review the progress achieved during the second project year, discuss challenges and agree on priorities for the next phase of implementation. The in-person format facilitated exchanges and discussions among participants, strengthening collaboration across the consortium and providing a better understanding of activities carried out within the different work packages.

The presentations demonstrated continued progress towards the project's objectives, particularly in the provision of transnational access, the implementation of cross-facility services, the development of training activities and the expansion of communication and outreach efforts. The meeting also provided a forum for discussing implementation challenges and adopting recommendations to improve the effectiveness of project activities.

The results achieved by the end of Month 24 further demonstrated the consortium's progress,

providing a solid basis for the second reporting period. Particular attention will be given to increasing the rate of access provision, strengthening the uptake of less frequently used access routes and services, and consolidating the outcomes of cross-facility activities to ensure the successful implementation of the project in the coming years.

Figure 1. Group picture

Agenda

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   1.1 Progress on project activities
2. **WP1: First report to the EC**
   2.1 Deliverables
   2.2 Mid-term review
3. **WP2: Communication & outreach (status & 2026 forecast)**
   3.1 Communication activities
   3.2 Reporting of communication and dissemination activities
   3.3 Second-hand laser equipment
   3.4 Network of Contact Points
4. **Provision of access and expertise to users**
   4.1 Status of the access programme
   4.2 Reallocation of Access Units
5. **WP4: Cross-facility services (status & 2026 forecast)**
   5.1 Results of Calls for proposals
   5.2 Staff-exchange HiLASE – CLF, Huzefa Bhanpurwala
   5.3 Upcoming Calls
6. **WP5: User training**
   6.1 User training schools
   6.2 Online software tools
7. **AOB**