

Technology Assessment (TA) Portal Eligibility and Procedural Rules

The TA Portal as developed in the framework of the PACITA project is intended to become a hub for information related to technology assessment (TA), a one-stop-service. Hence it is our aim to attract eventually the whole TA community worldwide to join the Portal and to supply data. To be consistent and transparent vis-à-vis applicants wishing to be present on the Portal, the following policy outlines the eligibility criteria and the procedures for becoming a member of the Portal.

1. Eligibility criteria

The overall aim of the following criteria is to make the Portal as useful as possible for TA practice and for the addressees of TA in the public and political spheres. Therefore the Portal should *not* include data that is only vaguely related to the assessment and governance of technologies. The Portal is neither intended to be a comprehensive academic database nor a basket for all kinds of inputs to the technology debate, but rather a *selective* TA information provider. To achieve this aim, these criteria are set:

- The applicant needs to be a legal entity in the form of an institution, organisation, institute or the like.
 - Networks of institutions or experts or other non-legal entities are nevertheless eligible *if* they are specifically devoted to TA *and if* the network is stable over time and not ad-hoc.
 - Individual persons are not eligible.
- The applicant is a TA organisation, that is, it carries out TA projects/studies or is concerned with TA methods or practice-oriented TA theory.
- Whatever the TA tradition and/or methodological approaches, for the purposes of the TA Portal technology assessment is defined as
 - dealing with *technology* in a broad sense and technology-related issues,
 - being *interdisciplinary* and *multi-perspective* (including both all relevant scientific disciplines and accounting for all perspectives and interests involved in the issue at stake),
 - being *policy-oriented* (targeted towards the appropriate political addressee, such as parliament, government, administration on different levels, including social learning processes and public discourse) and *problem-oriented* (addressing real-world issues), and
 - acting *neutral* and *independent* (non-partisan, not funded by interest groups).
- These elements of our TA definition mean, for instance, that
 - stakeholder or lobbying organisations as well as single-domain NGOs are not eligible;
 - academic institutes are only eligible, if they have a genuine interdisciplinary and multi-perspective approach;

- purely academic scholarly networks are not eligible.
- The applicant exists since at least two years.
 - An institution that ceased to exist, but has a legacy of publications and projects worth making accessible to the TA community through the Portal, is eligible.
- The applicant has carried out at least two genuine TA projects. (A TA project, as a planned collaborative activity, usually leads to one or more reports, further publications and dissemination activities.)
- The applicant uses the concept and notion of TA in its self-description.
- The applicant agrees to conform to the demands of the Portal, in particular:
 - to the technical standards set by the TA Portal, first and foremost to the JSON format for data delivery (see appendix); and
 - to delivering up-to-date data and to inform the Board (see below) immediately of any relevant technical changes on the applicant's website.
- In case the work of the applicant institution is both TA-related and not TA-relevant, the applicant agrees that it will only deliver data conform to the above definition of TA, that is, *only the TA part*.
- The applicant is prepared to contribute to the technical and administrative work to communicate with the applicant regarding data delivery and to maintain the Portal by paying an *initial fee of 500 €*. (The applicant will get a respective invoice, issued by the Austrian Academy of Sciences, no VAT displayed.)

2. Procedural issues

- Applicants address their application to Michael Nentwich (pacita.ita@oeaw.ac.at) who forwards it to the Board.
- The application includes answers by the applicant to the questions below (see point 4).
- The Board consists of five members.
 - The current members, as elected by the PACITA consortium on 4 March 2013, are: Lars Klüver (DBT, Denmark), Leo Hennen (ITAS, Germany), Benedikt Roskamp (SPIRAL, Belgium), Zoya Damianova (ARC Fund, Bulgaria), Michael Nentwich (ITA, Austria).
- The Board is entrusted to interpret the above eligibility rules in practice and to finally decide whether an institution is accepted to join the Portal.
 - The Board has the right to decline applications, which the Board finds do not comply with the intention of the above rules.
 - The Board members will review the content of the applicant's data record; they will, in particular, look at the projects and publications whether they conform to the above eligibility criteria.
 - The Board can exclude selected data without notice in case it finds it not being in compliance with the intention of the Portal rules.
 - The Board can terminate the membership of any data deliverer in case it finds that it is not in compliance with the intention of the Portal rules anymore. The initial fee will not be returned.

- The working procedures of the Board are as follows:
 - The Board discusses by electronic means and decides by circular resolution (via email).
 - The members of the Board always try to find a consensus; if this proves impossible, it can take decisions by qualified majority (four in favour).
 - Before the final decision on granting or terminating membership, the Board circulates its draft decision among all PACITA project partners. This group of TA experts may address comments to the Board within one week.
 - Decisions regarding the exclusion of selective data are taken by the Board alone.
 - The Board communicates its decision to the applicant.
 - The task team (ITA/DBT) implements the decision in cooperation with the applicant.

3. Timeline beyond the PACITA project

The PACITA project team intends to ensure that the TA Portal will continue to exist and serve the TA community beyond the end of the project (mid-2015). The team will do what it can to secure both funding and a sustainable organisational infrastructure. The current PACITA consortium will take the necessary decisions in time.

4. Ten questions to be answered in short by the applicant

1. Name of the applicant entity
2. URLs of the applicant: a. main page, b. list of publications/reports, c. list of staff, d. list of projects
3. Responsible contact person (name, phone, email)
4. Date of foundation of the applicant
5. Legal status of the applicant (e.g. foundation, public enterprise, association, informal network, university department, ...)
6. Short self-description of the applicant (mission) including a note on the sources of financing
7. Is the applicant devoted solely to TA or has it a broader scope?
8. Number of genuine TA projects carried out to date
9. Rough estimate of TA-related publications, reports, experts and projects to be delivered to the Portal initially
10. Is the applicant's website, in particular the list of publications, projects and so on, based on a database system? If so, please describe it shortly.

Appendix

JSON (JavaScript Object Notation) is a text-based open standard designed for human-readable data interchange, representing simple data structures and associative arrays, called objects. In relation to the TA Portal, the task team has developed a detailed data format specification, based on the JSON language. All data providers for the TA Portal have to prepare their data in a single text file conform to this specification and make it available at a specified URL for the TA Portal harvester. An example of such a JSON file (with only minimal data) would look like this:

```
{ "V": 22,
  "I": [
    { "E": "OeAW-ITA", "N": "Institute of Technology Assessment", "D": "research", "O": "AT", "Z": "1030",
      "C": "Vienna", "S": "Strohgasse 45/5", "U": "http://www.oeaw.ac.at/ita", "M": "tamail@oeaw.ac.at",
      "V": "http://www.oeaw.ac.at/ita/en/publications", "W": "http://www.oeaw.ac.at/ita/en/about-us/the-ita-team",
      "X": "http://www.oeaw.ac.at/ita/en/projects" }},
    { "E": [
      { "S": "Peissl", "F": "Walter", "T": "senior scientist, deputy director", "E": "wpeissl@oeaw.ac.at", "P": "+43-1-51581-6584", "D": "wp-ita",
        "X": "TA methods, ICT, Privacy", "L": "http://www.oeaw.ac.at/ita/en/about-us/the-ita-team/walter-peissl",
        "U": "http://www.oeaw.ac.at/ita/en/about-us/the-ita-team/walter-peissl/publications",
        "J": "http://www.oeaw.ac.at/ita/en/about-us/the-ita-team/walter-peissl/projects", "I": { "E": "OeAW-ITA" } },
      { "S": "Nentwich", "F": "Michael", "T": "director", "E": "mnent@oeaw.ac.at", "P": "+43-1-51581-6583", "D": "ita-mn",
        "X": "TA method, ICT, nanotechnology", "L": "http://www.oeaw.ac.at/ita/en/about-us/the-ita-team/michael-nentwich",
        "U": "http://www.oeaw.ac.at/ita/en/about-us/the-ita-team/michael-nentwich/publications",
        "J": "http://www.oeaw.ac.at/ita/en/about-us/the-ita-team/michael-nentwich/projects", "I": { "E": "OeAW-ITA" } }
    ]},
    { "R": [
      { "S": "PACITA", "L": "Parliaments and Civil Society in Technology Assessment", "D": "The PACITA Mobilisation and Mutual Learning Action Plan is aimed at ...", "T": "2011-04", "N": "2015-03", "Z": "Denmark, Germany, Austria, Netherlands, Norway, Bulgaria, Portugal, Flanders-Belgium, Spain, Switzerland, Lithuania, Czech Republic, Ireland, Hungary", "H": "http://www.pacita.eu/", "F": "TA methodology", "P": { "S": "Klüver", "F": "Lars" }, "I": { "E": "DBT" }, "M": "GAO (US Congress)", "Y": [{"E": "ITAS-KIT"}, {"E": "OeAW-ITA"}]},
      { "U": [
        { "Q": "Peissl, W., Najafi, S., 2011, PACITA Task 3.1: TA Portal, Presentation at the 2nd Consortium Meeting 7.-9.9., Brussels", "S": "", "D": "2011", "T": "presentation", "I": "OeAW-ITA", "L": "en" },
        { "Q": "Nentwich, M. (2008) Cyberscience: The Age of Digitised Collaboration?. In: Zimmermann, A.; Bos, N. (Hrsg.), Scientific Collaboration on the Internet; Cambridge/MA, London: MIT Press, S. 33-49.", "S": "", "D": "2008", "T": "book", "I": "OeAW-ITA", "L": "en" }
      ]}
    ]}
  ]}
```

As soon as an applicant is accepted as a new partner institution of the TA Portal, it will be given access to the internal section of the TA Portal with all the technical details necessary, in particular the data format specification.