

2012 Feedback Campaign: Phase2 in Periods 88 and 89

Prepared by: Francesca Primas, Head User Support Department

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This report aims at providing some feedback, now from ESO back to the users, about the main outcome of the Feedback Campaign launched by the User Support Department (USD) in March 2012. It summarizes in graphical form the responses obtained on all major topics covered by the questionnaire (except for the free text comments which are being dealt with on a case by case basis).

Since this campaign has become a regular feature (its outcome is regularly presented at the Users' Committee annual meeting), we think it is important to close the loop on this exercise, with the community at large. In this way we thank those who took the time and answered the poll and show that Community feedback is very important to us.

Methodology and General Results

The ESO Service Mode Questionnaire is always available on-line for users to fill in but the typical rate of users doing so is less than 2 per month. However, experience shows that a targeted campaign of asking users to fill in the survey results in many more survey completions. In early March 2012, we took this approach and asked Principal Investigators (PIs) to complete a shortened, Phase 2-specific, Service Mode questionnaire by a fixed deadline.

In this targeted campaign we solicited survey responses from 304 PIs that had Service Mode runs in Period 88 and/or Period 89. A deadline was set for two weeks from the date of contact.

A total of 73 responses were received by the deadline, representing a 24% response rate¹. This number illustrates that prompting the users for specific feedback closer in time to a specific phase of their interactions with ESO is a better approach for a healthier feedback and dialogue. Also, we noticed a rapid decline in response rate after the initial contact was made.

To begin our recap of survey results, Figure 1 presents a general overview, summarizing our users' satisfaction (in percentage of responses, y-axis) on four general items:

- the Phase 2 SM process (overall);
- the Phase 2 preparation support (USD support in implementing and/or optimizing observing strategies);
- the Phase 2 review process (interactions between the USD and the users during verification of the submitted material);
- the post-Phase 2 support (USD support during execution of the observations).

¹ This is a very good response rate when compared to the average rates of customer satisfaction surveys (15-20%; cf Primas et al., 2008, SPIE Proceedings Vol. 7016; DOI: 10.1117/12.789905).

Please note that the numbers shown for this last item reflect only the input received from P88 PIs and that only 8 of them answered this question (thus, the 12% that judged the support as 'Poor' corresponds to one user only).

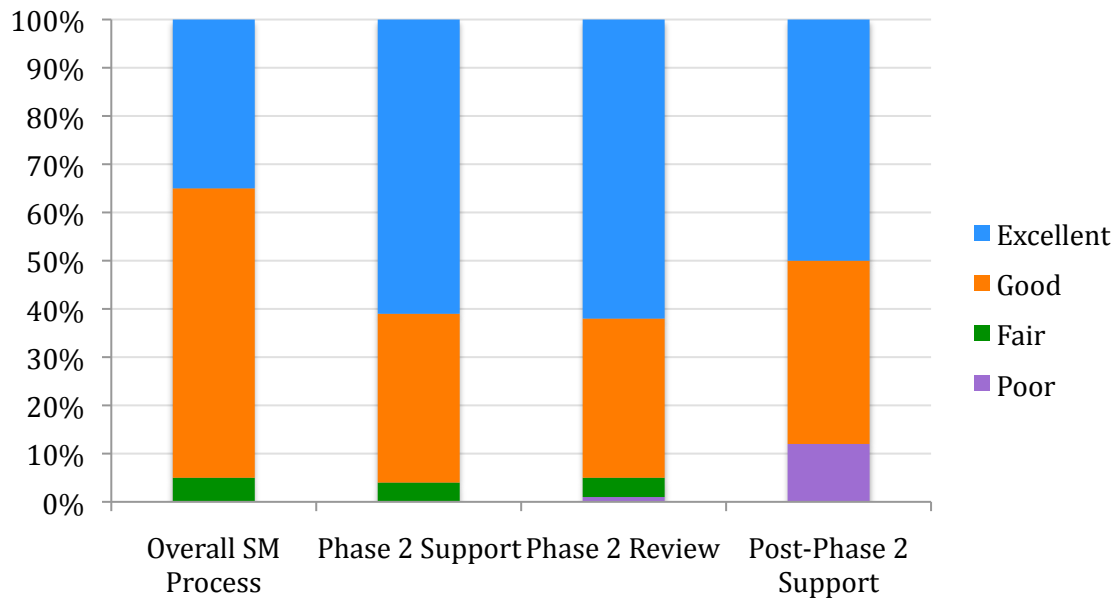


Figure 1 – Overall users' satisfaction on 4 main Phase 2 related areas supported by the ESO User Support Department.

Phase 2 Information and Tools

Below, we show the details of the feedback received on different aspects of the support we provide during and post-Phase 2, i.e. for the optimization and implementation of the observing strategies and for the follow-up during the execution of each individual run. Users' replies to the questions related to the Phase 2 Proposal Preparation tool are split between users of the new P2PP 3.2 (VISTA, VST, UVES, FLAMES, X-SHOOTER) and those still using P2PP 2.13 (the rest of VLT/I instruments). Please note that numbers shown for P2PP 3.2 are dominated by P89 PIs (only survey telescopes had P2PP 3.2 available in P88). Also, it is worth mentioning that figures shown for Observing Support Software tools reflect the responses of only 22 Principal Investigators (to be compared to the total of 75 respondents).

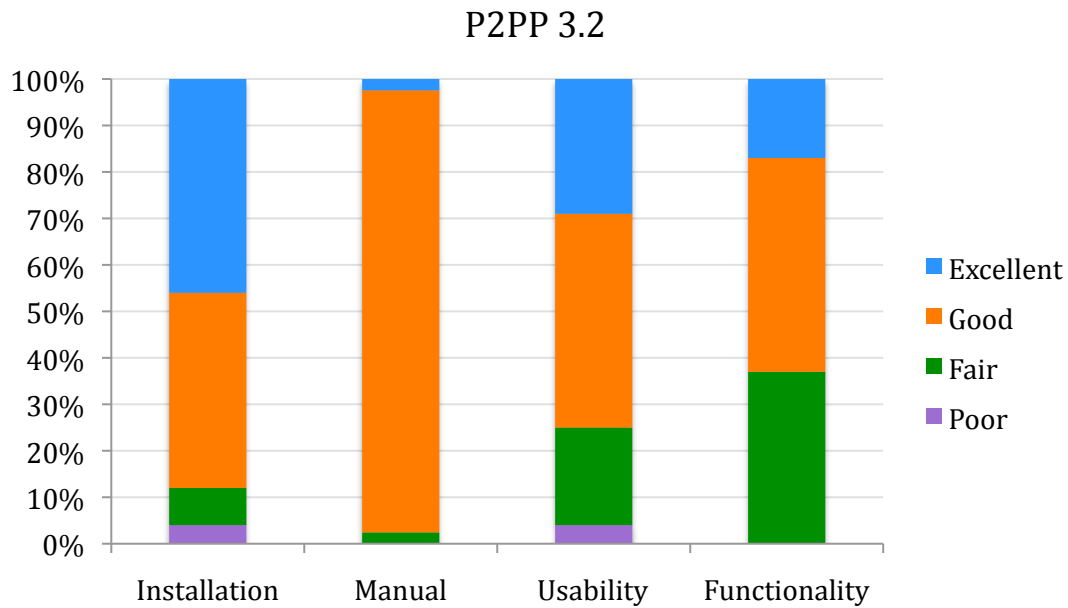
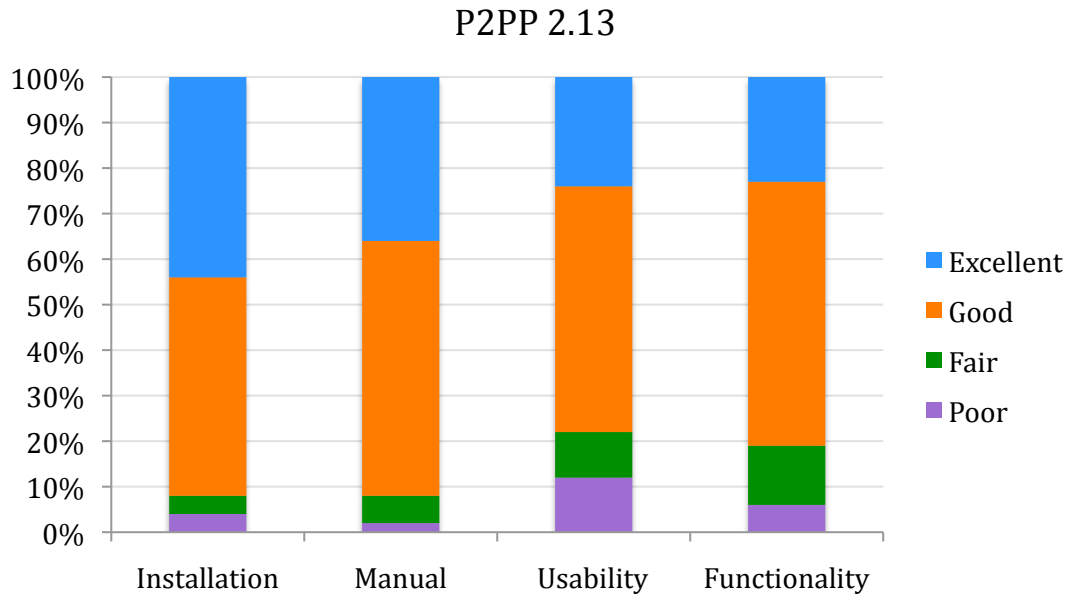


Figure 2 – Users’ satisfaction about ESO main tool for the preparation of Service Mode Phase 2 packages. Responses have been split between the ‘old’ P2PP (v.2.13, currently being used at UT1, UT3, UT4, and VLT1; *top*) and the ‘newly deployed’ version (v. 3.2, currently available at VISTA, VST, and since P89 also at UT2, *bottom*).

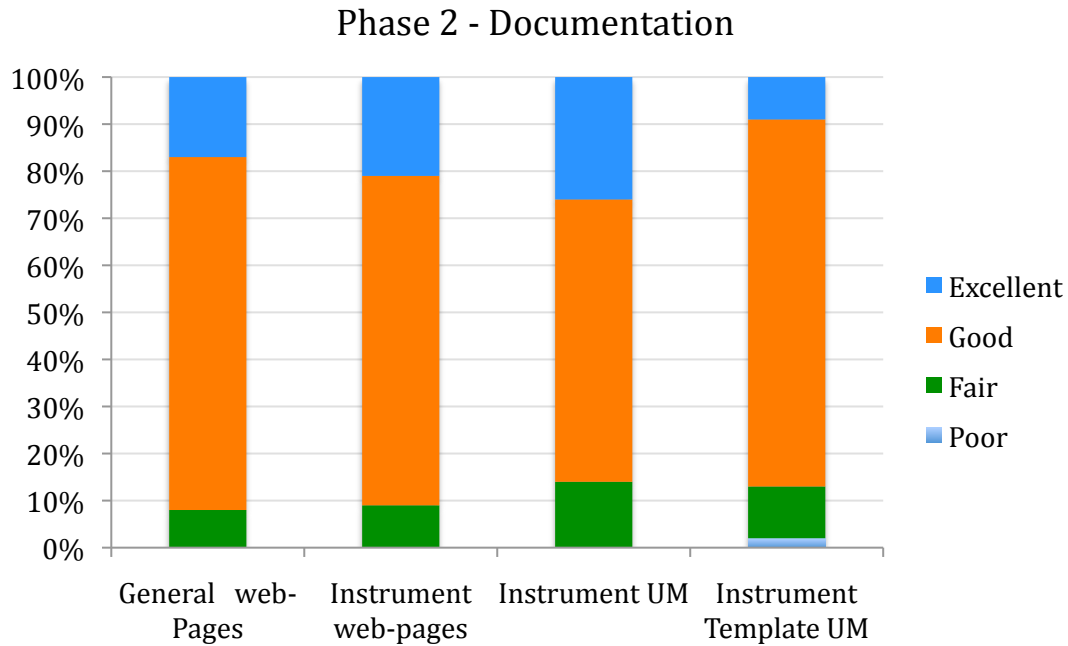


Figure 3 – Users’ responses on the quality of Phase 2 documentation available to the community.

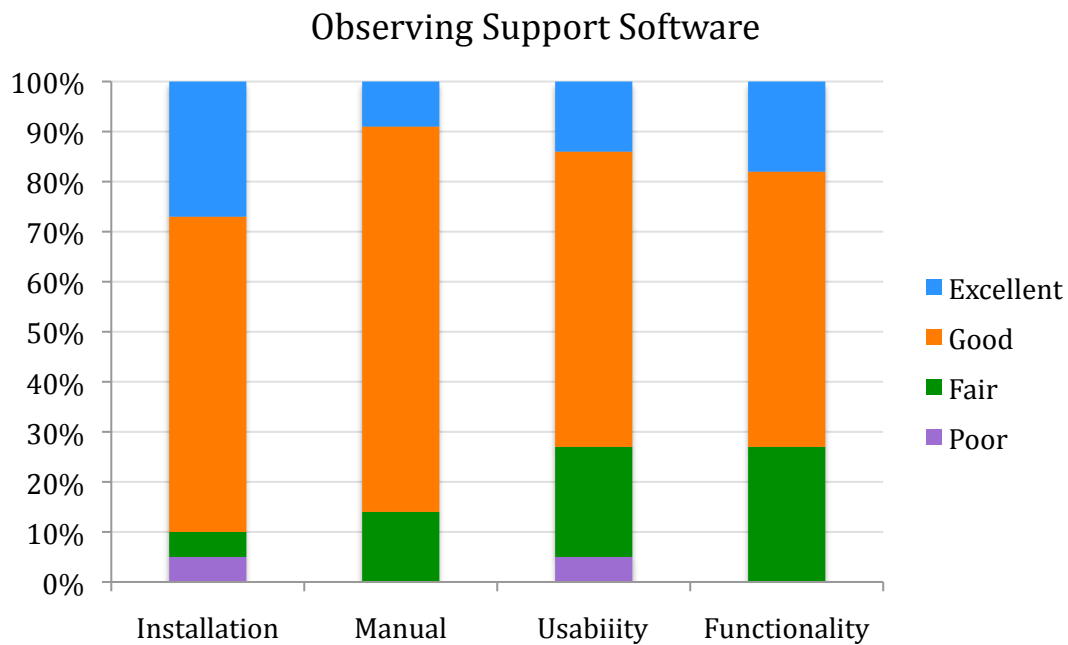


Figure 4 – Users’ feedback on observing preparation software tools (e.g. FIMS, FPOSS, VMMPs, SADT, etc).

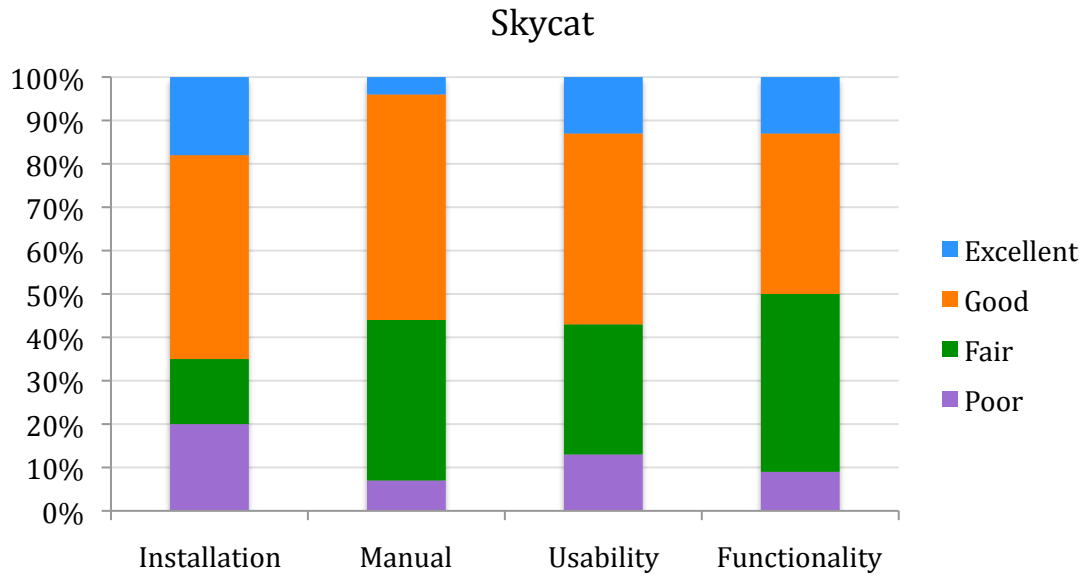


Figure 5 – Users’ feedback on Skycat, a graphical tool for the visualization of images and access to data catalogs (also used for the preparation of Finding Charts and MXU/MOS slit masks).

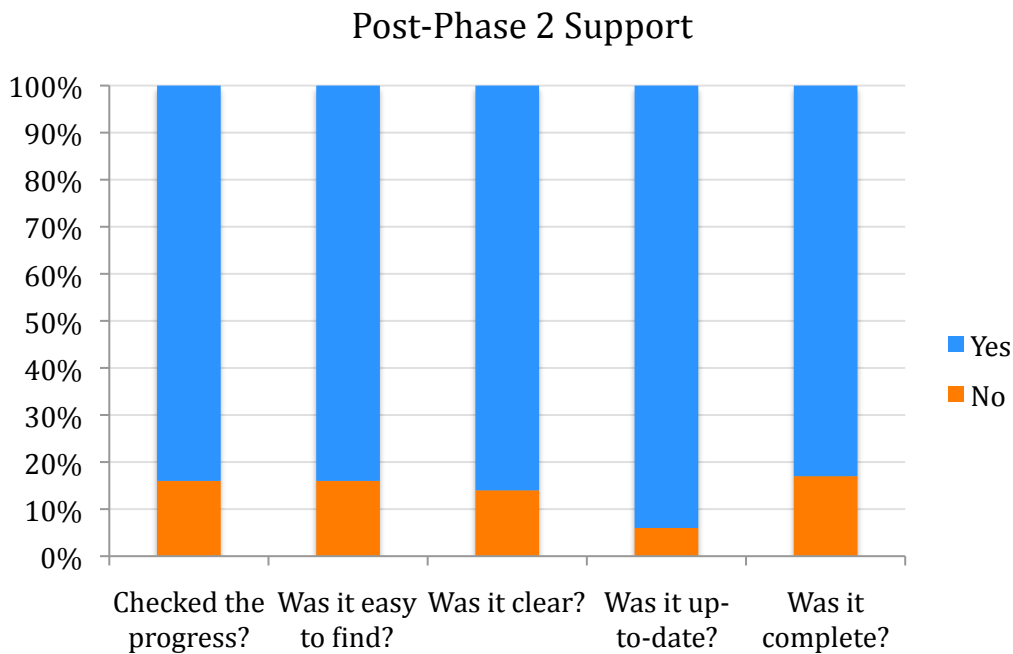


Figure 6 – Users’ feedback on various aspects of the progress report pages we provide and maintain.