

MEMORANDUM of SNX Council

The subject of refereeing proposals and on the definition of Long Term Proposals arose during the 15th SNX Meeting and was debated because it was felt that there is now a need to review and revise the current procedure. This has been done and the present memorandum is the result of exchanges of views between SNX Council Members.

Conclusion

A. External Refereeing

The following action is to be implemented in time for the next round of beamtime proposals with allocations being decided at the 16th SNX Meeting, December 2011:

- A new list of potential referees should be compiled by Council inviting users to submit names of scientists qualified in the respective areas. The Director and Council members may also submit names. This list should be updated reasonably often.
- SNX members also function as shepherds (i.e. internal reviewer) and these together with the other SNX Council members have the final say in the grading. Note: It may sometimes be advisable to co-opt a shepherd from outside Council; in such cases confidentiality must be stressed.

B. Long Term Proposals

In the past Council has been restrictive about designating proposals as long term and assigning beam time accordingly. Council notes that some users submit a collection of proposals, under the appellation LTP, that are loosely connected to a common theme. Obviously, beam time granted in such cases is to the detriment of other users unless the user community gains from the project (significant financial or instrumental contributions) and so Council has to be restrictive. In other words, Council needs to be convinced that the proposed research is of sufficient quality that no further review is required during the lifetime of the LTP and that there are tangible gains also for the user community.

The criteria used by Council to filter out applications for LTPs are that the project is coherent – a clearly thematic- and that the user community benefits –a strategic benefit - and that only a given percentage of beamtime may be reserved to LTPs. The intention of this memorandum is to signal to users that Council recognises the need to ensure that these criteria be followed and that they be more clearly defined. (We note that the ESRF has implemented a similar policy which also includes guaranteed economic contributions to the relevant beamline.)