

Working Group on National Contributions to ECT*

Report to ECT Board on 17 October 2006*

At the June meeting the Board set up a working group (consisting of Jean-Paul Blaizot, Brian Fulton and Paul Hoyer) to examine the question of the financial contributions of individual countries to ECT*. The maintenance of the many ad hoc agreements with the secondary sponsors (defined here as NuPECC member states except D, F and I) is proving to be laborious and inefficient. Nevertheless, their support of ECT* is crucial for both political and financial reasons.

The WG had discussions with Carlo Guaraldo, Renzo Leonardi and Marco Traini at ECT* on 28-29 August. It was noted that the following agreements exist concerning financial support of ECT* (the agreements are available for downloading on the Board Area):

(a) Protocol of Agreement between ITC and NuPECC

The original agreement covered five years from 1.1.98, and was renewed for another five years from 1.1.03. The parties note, in particular, that "NuPECC as part of its efforts to strengthen and coordinate nuclear physics and nuclear science, will assist ECT* in its initiatives aimed at securing financial support, on an international basis, for the scientific activities of ECT*".

(b) Protocol signed on 16.1.98 by CEA, IN2P3, INFN, BMBF and GSI

The protocol states that it is reasonable for European funding agencies to support ECT* by 1.3 billion Italian lire (671 keuro) annually, out of a projected total budget of 2.8 billion lire (1.446 Meuro). Furthermore: "We, as representatives of funding agencies of the three European countries whose communities have the largest participation in the Centre, agree to attempt funding of one half (1/2) of the projected residue. This commitment is made in the expectation that the present commitments will be extended to all the European nations participating in the Centre, who would then in sum provide the remaining half of the residue."

The total budget projected in 1998 is close to the actual budget of ECT* today. France (CNRS+CEA) contributes 60 keuro + the salary of JBP, while Germany and Italy contribute 100 keuro each. Also these contributions are close to those projected in 1998. The payments expected in 2006 from all other national European agencies amount to 148 keuro, clearly below the 335 keuro aimed at in the 1998 Protocol.

(c) Memorandum of Understanding between ECT, ITC and Agencies contributing to the funding of ECT**

This MoU is based on the above protocol (b), and establishes the ECT* Joint Financial Review Committee (EJFRC). The MoU is signed by CEA, IN2P3, GSI, INFN and ITC, and is open for other funding agencies to join. Only Denmark did so (in May 2002), committing itself to contributing 50 kDKK (6.7 keuro) annually.

The MoU states the purposes of the EJFRC to be "to propose on a yearly basis and three year plan the amount of the financial support for ECT*, the distribution of the costs between the parties, and to monitor on a yearly basis the way in which the financial support is used and administered within the goals of the ECT*'s statutes. For this purpose the Board of Directors of ECT* reports on an annual basis to EJFRC on financial matters concerning this support, plans concerning the scientific programme and proposals for the development of ECT* and considers suggestions coming from the EJFRC. This report is due at least one month ahead of the according EJFRC meeting."

Conclusions by the Working Group

The WG notes that the intention to get most of the European agencies to sign the MoU and thus join the EJFRC was not realized. This led to the present situation with many ad hoc agreements. According to agreement (a) NuPECC should assist ECT* in securing financial support. However, NuPECC is not part of the MoU (c).

The WG proposes to proceed according to the following principles. Their feasibility needs further study:

- (i) An MoU which replaces (c) is drawn up, in which NuPECC takes part.
- (ii) The Finance Committee (FC) is restructured so that its members are the ITC, Primary Sponsors (PS) and representative(s) of the Secondary Sponsors (SS).
- (iii) NuPECC invites all research councils of its member states to join the FC as PS or SS.
- (iv) PS members contribute at the present level of D, F and I. The minimum contribution of an SS member is the total contribution of PS members divided by the number of member countries in NuPECC.
- (v) The tasks of the FC are similar to those of the present EJFRC.

Jean-Paul Blaizot

Brian Fulton

Paul Hoyer