7th MEETING OF THE SNX COUNCIL

Bergen (Norway)
Friday 8th and Saturday 9th June 2007

In Attendance: SNX Council, Observers from RCN and SER, BL Scientists.
Mr. Chairman welcomed everyone to this meeting. Jan-Dierk Grunwaldt could not attend the meeting and is represented by Rafael Abela. Chantal Heurtebise apologized for her absence.

1. Approvals and Review

1.1. Approval of the Agenda [R. Abela]

It was decided to take item (5) before item (4).

The agenda is approved.

Appendix No. 1. Approved Agenda

1.2. Approval of the minutes of the 6th SNX Council

The minutes of the 6th SNX Council are approved by all.

1.3. Review and results of actions decided at last meeting

6.1.1. ETH is to give an answer regarding the contribution of CHF 22'700. **Contributions for 2006 and 2007 received March 2007 (each of CHF 22'700). Done.**

Post-doc position 1/3 EPFL, 1/3 PSI and 1/3 ETHZ. It was stressed that the contribution from the ETHZ presented an unusual case. The proposal for 2006 and 2007 written by Jan-Dierk Grunwaldt was accepted by ETHZ and the contribution for 2006/2007 (CHF22,700/year) has been transferred to SNX. ETHZ assumes that the post-docs will be in future funded directly by other sources as suggested in former meetings.

6.1.2. Raman Equipment. On the Norwegian side, **David Nicholson together with Kenneth Knudsen** placed the request for one million Kroner (deadline **November 2006**). NTNU got the approval for 150,000 Kroner On the Swiss side, **Jan-Dierk Grunwaldt** will place another request for the equivalent of CHF210'000 (deadline **February 2007**). **Norwegian contributions received in February 2007 (1 million Kroner and 150'000 NOK)**

Jan-Dierk Grunwaldt sent the R'Equipe proposal on 31st January for CHF 210'000.

It was noted that the funds for this equipment were made available very rapidly from Norway. A grant application has been made to the SNF involving a joint proposal from several Swiss groups and a number of supporting letters. (*Update : It was announced during the SNX meeting that a total of CHF200'000 has been approved by the SNF for this project*).

6.4.1. A quotation is to be obtained from Oxford Diffraction to develop a program for a software for the diffractometer. The quotation will have to be circulated to SNX Members for approval. **To be done by Philip Pattison. Deadline January 2007. Done.**

A quotation for the software upgrade for the KM6 diffractometer has been obtained from Oxford Diffraction, and an order placed in March 2007.

6.4.2. Hermann Emerich and Philip Pattison are to make a schedule regarding the refurbishment program and the upgrade, stating the priorities, to be accomplished over the next year, schedule to be ready by the end of this year. **To be done by Hermann Emerich and Philip Pattison and sent to the Chairman who will distribute this schedule to the SNX Members. Deadline for the schedule 31st December 2006. Done 15th January 2007.**

To be reported during the meeting.

6.5.1. A framework 4-year budget 2008-2011 is to be presented, with a grand total, for the 4 years, of 7 million CHF. **To be done by Vladimir Dmitriev. Deadline February 2007. Done January 2007.**

Martin Steinacher asked about the status of the student program, the proposed salary increase for post-docs and the various items under litigation. It was agreed that all of these items would be presented later in the meeting.

2. Report of the SNX Director [V. Dmitriev]

2.1. SNX and A-SNG operations

V. Dmitriev presented a survey of shifts delivered to users by SNBL, the in-house research beamtime and the productivity of the beamline in terms of publications and the impact factor of the publications. There was some discussion on the fact that the ESRF officially schedules a total number of shifts for users which is significantly lower than the total operational shifts of the ESRF. **V. Dmitriev** pointed out that SNBL receives instructions from the ESRF regarding the number of shifts to be scheduled.

It was agreed that both the number of SNBL publications and their impact factors compare favorably with most other CRG beamlines. The overbooking factor for beamtime (around 2.5+) is also a good indication of the performance standards of SNBL. The new referee system for SNBL proposals seems to be working well.

The Norwegian synchrotron user meeting took place 4 – 5 June 2007 in Bergen, with the SNX director in attendance. Many of the presentations at the user meeting involved work at SNBL, and there were also opportunities for additional contacts between user groups and SNBL staff.

The SNX director pointed out that the plans for a student program at SNBL has been developing. A student from Stavanger (Sølvi Natland) has been stationed at SNBL for several weeks, and an additional student is planned to come to SNBL as part of our collaboration with DUBBLE. This student will be based at the Royal Institution in London, and will be working on the use of synchrotron radiation in catalysis.

The SNBL activity report 2005/2006 was discussed, and the committee members are requested to give their comments to the SNX director. The SNX council members and the representatives of the funding agency requested in total about 60 hard copies of the report. An electronic version will be placed on the SNBL web site once it has been approved by the council.

Various collaborations between the SNBL staff and the ESRF as well as other CRG groups were mentioned. In addition to the existing Memorandum of Understanding between SNBL and DUBBLE, a developing collaboration with ID28 (Inelastic scattering) beamline staff was highlighted. The contacts with ID28 have recently led to ESRF approval for two joint SNBL/ID28 beamtime proposals.

See Vladimir Dmitriev's presentation in ***Appendix No. 2.***

2.2. Refurbishment program: current status

V. Dmitriev then reported on the progress with the SNBL refurbishment work. The plan of work concerning the general infrastructure, fluids, vacuum system, electrical supply and stepper motor controls is all on target and within budget. No additional funds are requested. **M. Steinacher** asked about the implication of the ESRF upgrade plans for SNBL. The SNX director informed the council that the work on SNBL can proceed independently of the ESRF upgrade plans, apart from the extra laboratory space which would be available once the proposed

building construction work has been completed. A request for the extra space has been given to the ESRF management, and SNBL must now wait for a final decision on the upgrade program.

See Vladimir Dmitriev's presentation in ***Appendix No. 2.***

3. Financial Matters

3.1. Audit 2006 (Income 2006)

The SNX director presented the results of the audit 2006. The conclusion of the auditors was very positive and an acceptance letter from the auditors has been received. The audit 2006 was accepted by the SNX council without further discussion. The council expressed their gratitude to C. Heurtebise for her excellent work. **M. Steinacher** pointed out that the end-of-year carry-over of unused funds (mentioned by the auditors) was only a formal issue and presented no problems for SER. However, the issue of separate accounting for financial matters relating to the collaboration SNBL/DUBBLE was an important matter, and the recommendations of the auditors should be followed.

See Appendix No. 3.

3.2./ 3.3 Income 2007 and Spending 2007

The SNX financial status as of 24th May 2007 (income, expenditure and commitment) was presented. It was agreed that the current financial situation is well under control, and the council took note of the status report. It was mentioned that the total income for 2007 now exceeded CHF2M for the first time, mainly as a result of the extra funding for the Raman project.

See Appendix No.4.

3.4. 4-Year Budget 2008-2011 [R. Abela]

A 4-year budget has been circulated to the SNX funding agencies. A modest increase in the overall budget has been proposed. This increase will cover, for example, the improved salaries for SNBL post-docs (in order to bring their salaries into line with equivalent ESRF rates). This has been agreed both by the SER and the RCN. A general increase of 1.5% per annum in the salaries for SNBL staff has also been agreed as part of the budget 2008-2011, as well as an increase in the operational funds for SNBL.

See Appendix No. 6.

3.5. Budget and Income 2008 [V. Dmitriev]

The proposed budget for 2008 was presented by the SNX director. It was noted that there would be a general balance in the budget allocation for the two SNBL branch beamlines.

See Appendix No. 6.

4. Status of the SNBL operations

Presentations were made by P. Pattison and H. Emerich which summarized the status of operations on BM01A and BM01B, and the developments over the last 6 months.

4.1. Beamline A: Operations [P. Pattison]

- Introduction and review of beamline operation
- BM1A – Beamline problems
- Recent developments on BM1A
- An example of in-situ experiments with the Mar345
- Priorities for upgrading BM1A
- New experimental opportunities

See Philip Pattison's presentation in ***Appendix No.7.***

4.2. Beamline B: Operations [H. Emerich]

Hermann Emerich presented the recent changes and improvements referring to a "list of activities in 2007" that he sent to the chairman at the end of 2006.

Most of the planned activities have already been carried out:

Implementation of the new Raman system, including two laser systems

Widening of the energy range of the new Si 111 monochromator, demonstrated on the case of successful EXAFS measurements performed around the Ti K-edge (around 5 keV)

The new Si-311 monochromator is now also operational, successful measurements have already been performed.

Various smaller improvements like an Ion chamber gas filling system, gas distribution lines and various alignment stages

Remaining activities are the improvement of the monochromator feedback system and the installation of a second "small" monochromator based on a channel-cut monochromator. Another ongoing improvement is the new vacuum control system plus a complete electrical re-wiring of both beamlines.

Two weeks of commissioning time after the summer shutdown were requested in order to take the new vacuum system into operation, to commission the "small monochromator", and to perform some changes to the A-monochromator.

5. Future of SNBL

5.1. MoU for 2008-2011 (RCN – SER) [A.M.Hundere and M.Steinacher]

It was agreed that no major amendments to the existing texts would be required, but that minor adjustments would be sufficient. For the Norwegian side, the MoU would provide an adequate legal framework for the annual payments within the four-year period. No special meeting would be necessary for revising the text of the MoU. The appendix to the MoU concerning the equipment and infrastructure of SNBL would have to be updated

7.5.1 : **A. M. Hundere and M. Steinacher** to coordinate the preparation of a revised MoU for signing by 1st October 2007.

7.5.2 : **V. Dmitriev** to provide an updated appendix to the MoU concerning the equipment and infrastructure of SNBL.

5.2. CoA for 2008-2011 (RCN – SSC) [A.M.Hundere and G. Chapuis]

The agreement between RCN and SSC (Swiss Steering Committee) concerning the Swiss-Norwegain Beamlines would be extended to cover the period 2008-2011.

7.5.3 : **A. M. Hundere and G. Chapuis** to coordinate the preparation of a revised agreement for signing by 1st October 2007.

5.3. Funding Request for the four years according to the 4-year budget 2008-2011 [R. Abela]

The SNX Council agreed to the budget 2008-2011 as presented by the SNX Director. **M. Steinacher** pointed out that the proposed budget formally concerned only expenditure. It was agreed that the funding request would provide an income which matched the proposed expenditure of slightly more that CHF7M over the 4-year period.

5.4. Performance contract SER with SNX for the 4 years 2008-2011 [M. Steinacher & R. Abela]

M. Steinacher explained that SER would require a Performance Contract between SER and SNX for the period 2008-2011 as a legal framework for the funding. The existence of such a contract would avoid the need for an annual request for funding.

7.5.4 : **V. Dmitriev** to prepare a Performance Contract between SER and SNX for the period 2008-2011. **M. Steinacher** to provide a template contract and details of the requirements of SER in formulating such a contract. A contract should be ready for signing by 1st October 2007.

In the discussion concerning the future of SNBL, **A. M. Hundere** took the opportunity to mention the good reports which she received concerning the operation of SNBL and the fact that the Norwegian users expressed their satisfaction with the cooperation between users and the SNBL staff.

6. Any other business [R. Abela]

6.1. Student Training

H. Larsen presented the status of actions in Norway aimed at promoting student training at SNBL. A meeting on the subject took place about 1 year ago in Norway, and a strategy plan will be ready after the summer break in 2007. It was also a topic for discussion at the recent Norwegian Synchrotron Users Meeting in Bergen. The goal is to create a course-based study program combined with activities and training at various synchrotron facilities. It was agreed that it would be best to begin with a pilot project. **A. M. Hundere** mentioned that a request for funds could be made to the RCN, if additional financial resources were required for such a pilot program in education at synchrotrons.

6.2. "Evaluation of the Swiss Membership in the ESRF after 10 years of Operation" by Prof. Henk Schenk (NL), Executive Summary [M. Steinacher]

M. Steinacher presented the report prepared on behalf of SER by H Schenk concerning the evaluation of Swiss membership of ESRF. The report recommends that Switzerland continues its involvement at the ESRF. It considers also the SNBL activities within the terms of reference of the report. In particular, under item 2 of the recommendations, the report states that "***Switzerland should continue its important and productive collaboration with Norway in the very successful SNBL beamline***". **G. Chapuis** welcomed the report, and concluded that a separate review of SNBL by the Swiss synchrotron committee would no longer be necessary. **V. Dmitriev** pointed out that the next regular review of SNBL by the ESRF has been provisionally scheduled for the spring of 2009.

6.3. Legal Cases

G. Chapuis and V. Dmitriev brought SNX council up-to-date concerning the legal cases involving the previous SNBL director and the beamline technician.

See ***Appendix No. 8.***

7. Discussion of Proposals [Shepherds]

The total amount of shifts available for scheduling by the SNX council is 151 shifts for the next period (Aug 2007 – Feb 2008). After deducting the shifts for the long-term-proposals approved in previous rounds, the backlog for the last run and the extra shifts requested for commissioning, then the available shifts for BM01A were 103 and for BM01B were 121 shifts. After some discussion of the appropriate procedure for handing the carry-over of shifts from one run to the next, it was agreed by the SNX council that there would be **no carry-over in future**. This means that beamtime lost for whatever reason could no longer be rescheduled in the following run. Instead a new proposal would have to be submitted. A mechanism for urgent proposals already exists, in case a user group who has lost beamtime needs replacement beamtime quickly.

The scientific evaluation and the shift allocations for the beamtime proposals for BM01A and BM01B for the current round are attached to these minutes.

All the proposals with Grade A will get beamtime
Requests and Allocations of Beamtime, see ***Appendix No 9.***

8. Summary of actions to be taken

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7.5.2 : **V. Dmitriev** to provide an updated appendix to the MoU concerning the equipment and infrastructure of SNBL.

7.5.3 : **A. M. Hundere and G. Chapuis** to coordinate the preparation of a revised agreement for signing by 1st October 2007.

7.5.4 : **V. Dmitriev** to prepare a Performance Contract between SER and SNX for the period 2008-2011. **M. Steinacher** to provide a template contract and details of the requirements of SER in formulating such a contract. A contract should be ready for signing by 1st October 2007.

9. Concluding remarks [R. Abela]

R Abela reminded the council members that the "hard-luck" principle applies in future to lost beamtime. There would be no more carry-over of regular proposals from one run to the next. He also emphasized the need for a very critical review process for beamtime applications, in order to allow sufficient time for innovative and explorative experiments. The chairman thanks the staff of SNBL for their efforts and the good progress which is being made. He encouraged the Director to use the available financial flexibility in order to support interesting technical developments which might come up in future. The budget which has been agreed for the next 4 years is tight, but nevertheless includes a modest increase in funding. Finally, he encourages the SNBL staff to explore possible industrial collaborations and funding, which might also generate extra resources.

The next meeting of the SNX council will take place in Grenoble on **28 and 29 November 2007**. The emphasis will be on future developments at SNBL over the next 4 years.

List of Appendices, showing the page number on which they appear int he minutes.

Appendix A are available only to the SNX Members and Observers
Appendix B are available to all.