

High grades for HiGrade

It's the age of electronic mail, but in the last weeks Eckhard Elsen from DESY took several trips per day to his snail mail in-tray down the corridor because he was waiting for an important letter. Then finally a letter and an email arrived from Brussels saying that contract negotiations for a six-lab proposal managed by Elsen will start soon. ILC-HiGrade, or "International Linear Collider and High Gradient Superconducting RF-Cavities" is a proposal for the EU's Seventh Framework Programme (FP7), which is asked to prepare for contract negotiations with a funding sum of up to five million Euros.

From an earlier letter from Brussels Elsen knew that their proposal had received high grades in all areas - 14 out of 15 possible marks. Six institutions have come together for the project: CERN, DESY, INFN, IN2P3/LAL, Oxford and CEA/Daphnia. One half of the proposal goes into activities aimed at actually realising the ILC, for example a detailed siting study for Europe. The other half, which gives the proposal its name, is supposed to go into technology - the consortium proposed to build 30 cavities, complete with couplers and tuners, using FLASH/XFEL infrastructure at DESY to demonstrate that the ILC's design gradient can be achieved. "We're aiming for synergy at its best," says Elsen. "An acceptance would mean a huge step forward for Europe because of a coordinated approach to the siting question and optimum use of all resources."



The main objective of the proposal is to create 30 cavities to demonstrate the high gradient.

The original proposal had asked for seven million Euros, so the group has to convene quickly to find ways to save money or reduce the scope. "We have already started, and the first million isn't too hard if the labs agree to shoulder a bit more," he smiles. "The next one will be much harder." A possible change could be a reduction to 26 or so cavities instead of 30 and another close look at areas that were highlighted by the EU. The new proposal has to be ready by mid-September because the negotiation stage is supposed to end on 28 September.

The ILC is one of the projects identified by the ESFRI (European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures) roadmap as an important project for the future of science in Europe, and ILC HiGrade is probably one of approximately 50 projects that will be accepted out of a total of 71. The evaluators were clearly impressed. Some quotes from the Evaluation Summary Report: "The proposal is clear and appropriate to make crucial progress towards the realisation of the ILC infrastructure, which is of greatest relevance to science and to Europe. (It) will greatly contribute to European excellence. ... The proposal makes an important contribution to the realisation of the ILC by addressing critical issues and complementing the efforts made by non-European partners."

-- *Barbara Warmbein*