

LASSIE-ITN Plenary Members Group Meeting

22nd August 2012

Golden Tulip Hotel, Leiden



Minutes

Attendance

Present:

HWU:	Martin McCoustra (MMcC), Mark Collings (MC)
AU:	Liv Hornekær (LH)
OBSParis:	Boutheina Kerkeni (BK)
UM:	Helmut Zacharias (HZ), Gerhard Wurm (GW)
LUO:	Harold Linnartz (HL), Herma Cuppen (HC)
Chalmers:	Dinko Chakarov (DC)
UGot:	Gunnar Nyman (GN)
UCL:	Serena Viti (SV)
OU:	Nigel Mason (NM)
SU:	Helen Fraser (HF)
ESR:	Steven Cuyllé (SC)

1. Minutes of Previous Meeting.

Minutes of the PMG meeting held on 31st August 2011 were accepted.

2. Proxy Members of PMG.

Academic attendees who are not the LASSIE PI of their institution are welcomed and accepted as representatives of their institution where the PI is not present.

Should a vote on any decision be necessary, each of the 10 institutions represented at the meeting will have a single vote.

3. Helen Fraser's move from SU to OU

- No objections were raised to Helen Fraser moving from the University of Strathclyde to the Open University, along with LASSIE researchers and commitments.
- Completion of the legal and administrative changes necessary with the REA will not take place until after the 1st Periodic Report has been fully accepted.

4. Review of Financial Situation

4.1 Status of the 1st Periodic Report

- The queries made by the Financial Officer regarding each institution's financial submissions in Form C are currently being finalised by the institutions involved.
- It is at present not clear whether the other scientific and administrative aspects of the report have been accepted, or whether these will be dealt with after the financial matters.
- It is vital to complete the dealings with the 1st Periodic Report as soon as possible, to allow the Helen Fraser's move to the OU to be legally and administratively approved, and to enable the transfer of the second period of funding into LASSIE accounts.

4.2 Travel Allowance Funding (Column B)

- The initial costing of the LASSIE project conservatively allowed for €1,000 per year per researcher. This assumption was not conservative enough, as there is an overall deficit in Travel Allowance funding.
- Final costings can not be made until the final appointments are completed, however:
 - 8 institutions are expected to show a deficit.
 - 3 institutions are expected to break even.
 - 2 institutions are expected to show a surplus.
- It is allowable to transfer funding throughout the network within the column, but an overall deficit of ~ €14,750 is expected.
- Similarly, a deficit of €2,000 is expected in the Career Exploratory Allowance (Column C), since one additional ESR over the originally planned number will be appointed.

4.3 Mobility Allowance Funding (Column A)

- The initial costing of the LASSIE project conservatively assumed that half of the ESR appointments and all of the ER appointments would qualify for the higher family rate of mobility allowance. In fact, only 3 appointees qualify.
- Final costings can not be made until the final appointments are completed, however, all institutions except for UGot are expected to show a surplus on Mobility Allowance.
- An overall surplus of ~ €124,000 is expected.

4.4 Participation Expenses (Column D)

Research, Training, Knowledge Transfer Expenses (Column E)

Management Expense (Column G)

- Some institutions have 'itemised' their accounts to produce the value to claim in these columns in Form C. Other institutions have simply claimed the full amount allowed in these columns. Both methods have been accepted by the REA.
- By the end of the project, most institutions will have exceeded the threshold for external auditing. Full itemisation of the accounts will be necessary for auditing.
- It is difficult to assess the overall financial state of the project without itemised calculations in each column. However, a general impression is that Column D might be overspent, and column E might be underspent. Careful consideration of how the spending is categorised might allow a more even spread of costs.

5. Recruitment

5.1 Plan for delivery of remaining ESR/ER months.

- AU: have a French candidate to appoint for the remaining 12 ESR months.
- UM: have 2 Indian candidates to appoint; one of these will take the LASSIE project with the remaining 8.5 ESR months; the decision will be made after they arrive.
- Chalmers: will make an appointment in conjunction with OU; the appointee will be employed as a research fellow with the remaining 15 ESR months, and will then complete a PhD at the OU; the involvement of the OU is therefore independent of LASSIE.
- UGot: will appoint Pavel Elkind for the remaining 12 ESR months. Dylan Drake Wilhelm has resigned from the LASSIE ER position after 15 months of employment; a suitable candidate to accept the remaining 9 ER months has been identified and will be appointed.
- LUO: intend to appoint a Costa Rican candidate with the remaining 12 ESR months.

5.2 Use of spare funding

- MC and MMcC confirm that the REA have provided tentative approval to use spare funding to create additional ESR months.
- Additional ESR months could be used either:
 - to create additional short term ESR positions to fill gaps in LASSIE's scientific output;
 - to extend the contracts of appointed ESRs whose contracts are both less than the maximum of 36 months and finish before the end of the LASSIE project on 31/01/14.
- Given that most of the training activities provided by LASSIE have already been completed, it was the agreement of the meeting that extension of existing ESR contracts will be more effective in terms of the overall training provided, and more likely to be given approval by the REA.
- ESRs who could potentially benefit from contract extension are:
 - Demian Marchione (HWU) – 5.25 months
 - Ischraf Oueslati (OBSParis) – 3.5 months
 - Rachid Tchalala (OBSParis) – 3.5 months
 - Marco Minissale (OBSParis) – 1 month
 - Siyi Feng (MPG) – 4.5 months
 - Ewelina Szymanska (OU) – 12 months
 - Binukumar Nair (OU) – 12 months
 - Aleksu Suutarinen (SU) – 2 months
 - Other ESRs yet to be appointed, depending on the timing of their appointment.
- MC presented costings showing that the full contract extension for those ESRs already appointed requires ~ €159,000 in living/mobility allowance and €7,750 in travel allowance.
- Upon adjustment of the contract extension to a maximum of 6 months, the requirement ~ €114,500, which is roughly what is spare assuming that travel/career exploratory allowance deficits and extensions can not be paid from mobility allowance surplus.
- NM commented that a rapid decision on this matter is necessary, because Binukumar Nair will shortly have his work visa changed to a student visa.

6. ESR / ER Concerns

- Supply of laptops using LASSIE funding: concern has been expressed because laptops have been supplied to ESRs / ERs at some institutions and not others.
 - Marie Curie regulations allow the purchase of laptops provided that the institution's own regulations allow such an item to be treated as a consumable.
 - LASSIE as a whole has no policy on the matter.
 - Since laptops should be purchased using Column D or E funding, and these portions of the budget are managed by the institution PI, the decision rests with the PI.
- Some ESRs are concerned that they will not be able to complete their PhD within their LASSIE contract, and fear that their LASSIE funding might be withdrawn.
 - Although completion of a PhD is a desired outcome, it is not a requirement of the Marie Curie regulations or of LASSIE. Extension of the PhD research beyond the LASSIE contract is a matter for the individual institutions.
- Confusion remains regarding the funding of travel and subsistence during LASSIE secondments – see item 10.

- Questions have been raised regarding certification of LASSIE training events – see item 10.3.

7. Events

7.1 2012

- Young Astrochemists Meeting (YAM) is scheduled for October-November at HWU. Effort will be made to avoid clash with other meetings.
NB – since the PMG meeting, it has been agreed that UCL will host this meeting rather than HWU.

7.2 2013

- AstroSurf will take place as a Special Session within the International Vacuum Council (IVC) meeting in Paris, 9th-13th September, 2013.
 - This conflicts with the European Planetary Science Meeting at UCL, but changes are not possible.
 - Wendy Brown is the session chair, with Helen Fraser and Francois Dulieu as co-chairs.
 - A registration fee will have to be applied, but a special package has been negotiated for AstroSurf.
 - LASSIE funding will still be provided via the budget at UCL.
- Summer school is scheduled, to be hosted by Paris.
 - NM reports that expressions of interest have been invited for an astrochemistry summer school in Grenoble, sometime between May and September 2013. The subjects covered in this proposal are very wide.
 - MMcC comments that duplication of other meetings and events by LASSIE should be avoided.
 - Organiser of this summer school will be contacted to discuss the possibility of LASSIE collaborating.
- Desire expressed for a second training event, similar to that held in Leiden, with focus on career development skills.
 - NM comments that there is considerable funding available within the COST budget that could be put toward such a meeting, provided that it can take place by March-April 2013.
 - TCG will commence with planning.
- Attendance of LASSIE events by ex-LASSIE ESRs / ERs.
 - LASSIE has no obligation to fund the attendance at LASSIE events of ESRs or ERs whose contracts are complete. However, former LASSIE researchers should be encouraged to attend, and maintain involvement, wherever funding permits.

8. Website

8.1 Status

- The website is operating well. The home page could do with being more dynamic; perhaps a “recent news” link

8.2 Catalogue of publications

- LASSIE publications are currently catalogued by year and by research group.
- It is necessary to catalogue them by research theme also. A commitment to this has been made in the 1st Periodic Report. The sub-themes form the ‘milestones’ for the delivery of research objectives by the LASSIE project. The REA require a means to see that milestones have been ‘ticked off’.
- In addition to the change in the webpage structure, the publications already posted need to be categorised by research theme – this will be best done by the authors.

8.3 Open access of publications

- EC policy on open access publication as it applies in FP7 is not clear, although the requirement for full accessibility (with the additional funding) as will be implemented in FP8 does not apply to LASSIE.
- Publications are presently posted either as a mixture of authors' pdf files, pre-print files and weblinks to journal pages.
- A standard procedure for posting papers on the LASSIE website is desirable. The meeting agreed that DOI links are the easiest method. (Posting papers on research group websites own websites is a separate matter.)

8.4 Notes from LASSIE events / summer schools

- Posting lecture notes and presentations from summer schools and training events on the LASSIE is desirable, where appropriate and with the authors permission.
- It will be desirable to maintain the LASSIE URL beyond the end of the project, for at least the 5 year period for which LASSIE is contractually required to be able to provide data for evaluation of impact, *etc.* The actual host server could change as necessary.
- Making sure that the LASSIE website is linked on other sites; *e.g.* www.astrochemistry.eu; is important.
- ESRs /ERs should be asked to keep their online profiles up to date. Short descriptions (1 paragraph) of the purpose and outcomes/success of academic and industrial secondments should be made available.
- ESRs and ERs should make a final up date of the profile upon completion of their contract, in association with their leaving questionnaire (see item 10.5).
- Although not a specific requirement of LASSIE, a record of successful PhD defences and possibly links to theses will be of value.

9. RCG Matters

9.1 Collaborative research projects

- The importance of collaborative research remains high. HL comments that since academic secondments have started to take place, collaboration has improved.
- In general, research is progressing well, although some areas are better than others.
- It is important that the LASSIE website record of progress is kept up to date, since assessors can easily check Web of Science to get an independent view.

9.2 Legacy meeting – Faraday Discussion

- A proposal to hold a Faraday Discussion in astrochemistry has been submitted and accepted.
- The proposed venue is Leiden, scheduled for April-May 2014.
- Although this is after the completion of LASSIE, it may still be possible for LASSIE to contribute financially from management funds if there is any surplus.
- A special issue of Phys. Chem. Chem. Phys. to coincide with will also be proposed (probably edited by MMcC and HL) to cater for excess papers that are not accepted for the Faraday Discussion, and others.
- A first call for the Faraday Discussion will need to be issued within the next few months. The submission deadline for Faraday Discussion papers would be around November 2013, and for Phys. Chem. Chem. Phys. Papers early 2014.
- There are restrictions on the 1st author submissions by members of the SOC, therefore relatively few of the LASSIE academics have been invited to join the SOC to allow maximum LASSIE participation.

9.3 Legacy book

- Given that there will be a Faraday Discussion volume, and that there are several other astrochemistry review books in preparation, the need for the previously proposed legacy book is questioned.
- A final decision about proceeding with such a book will be left until later in the LASSIE project.
- HF also commented that the Protostars and Planets VI Conference will take place next year and that there have been significant developments in laboratory astrochemistry in the last 7 year cycle. Therefore, submission of a proposal for a review chapter (deadline 15th September) would be valuable.

10. TCG Matters

- Funding for secondments.
 - Accommodation, subsistence and daily travel expenses are not covered by LASSIE funding. Travel expenses (*e.g.* flights to and from the location of the secondment) can be claimed from LASSIE funding (Column D).
 - This is a decision of LASSIE. There is nothing in the Marie Curie ITN regulations that prevents the support of researchers during secondments. The decision is made for financial reasons – put simply, to cover accommodation and subsistence expenses with LASSIE funding would require such a large portion of the relevant section of the budget that the research and training objectives of LASSIE would be seriously inhibited.
- Feedback on secondments.
 - It is necessary to obtain feedback from both researchers and hosts as to what work was done during secondments and how successful this was.
 - ESRs and ERs can do this by updating the profiles on the website.
 - Hosts will be asked to provide a comment (~1 paragraph) – an appropriate area of the website will need to be created to allow this.

10.1 Academic secondments & external visits

- Academic secondments must take place within the LASSIE network.

10.2 Industrial secondments

- Industrial secondments are not limited to the industrial partners – if other appropriate hosts can be found, secondments can be arranged with them. There may be some paperwork necessary to grant them Associate Partner status within LASSIE.

10.3 Certification

- LASSIE to produce a certificate.
 - This will have the appearance of a Diploma, listing LASSIE-wide courses, but not showing marks.
 - Course credits can be shown if and where appropriate – careful checks will be necessary to ensure consistency.
 - Certificates have been made available for the training event in Leiden and the summers schools in Bologna and Nijmegen.
- A second page of the certificate can show locally attended courses. This can be ESR / ER generated.

10.4 ER representative on TCG

- Jérôme Lasne was approved as the ER representative on the TCG without objection, to replace John Thrower who has finished his contract.

10.5 Completion questionnaire and future contacts

- A leaving questionnaire will be produced by LASSIE, in addition to that required by the REA.
- It is a contractual requirement to maintain contact with ESRs and ERs for 5 years beyond the completion of LASSIE. This is to allow the REA to gather data on impact.
 - Storing contact details on a secured non-public section of the website is suggested.

11. OPG Matters

11.1 Outreach events 2013

- NM suggested that LASSIE contribution to an outreach exhibit produced by the Europlanet Network for an event in Strasbourg, summer 2013. Steve Millar is coordinating this exhibit.
- MMcC commented that HWU plan to contribute to the Edinburgh International Science Festival, April 2013. ESR / ER participation in this event would be welcomed.
- NM commented that the Stars 'R' Us exhibit, currently in storage at the OU, can be rolled out for use if required.
- Records of outreach presentations *etc* should be posted on the LASSIE website.
- The ESOF meeting (Dublin, July 2012) was commented on favourably, and is a possible focus for future Outreach events (although as a biannual conference this would be in the legacy phase of LASSIE).

12. Any Other Business

- The possibility of a follow up bid to LASSIE was raised.
 - November 2012 is the deadline for the final round of calls under FP7.
 - NM commented that in the past there has been a high amount of funding available in the final call.

Actions

5.2 MC to distribute an Excel file outlining surplus and deficit in mobility allowance, travel allowance and career exploratory allowance budgets, and describing how the spare funding could be used in the extension of ESR contracts.

5.2 MC to contact the Financial Officer to check whether surplus mobility allowance budget can be used to fund extensions of ESR contracts, and or deficits in travel allowance and career exploratory allowance budgets.

7.1 MC will circulate a request for dates to avoid in the scheduling of YAM.

7.2 NM, MMcC to contact Jean Louis Lemaire and investigate the possibility of LASSIE collaborating with the summer school at Grenoble.

7.2 TCG to start organisation of training event for March-April 2013.

8.1-3 MC to coordinate with Jean Louis and the webmaster to change the webpage structure regarding publications, leaving profiles and other changes.

8.3 MC to coordinate with the various research groups to have papers re-categorised, and DOI links provided.

9.3 HF to circulate proposal for Protostars and Planets VI review chapter.

10 MC to contact Jean Louis and the webmaster to create a page for secondment feedback.

10 MC to contact researchers and secondment hosts to get feedback on secondments.

- 10.2 MC to investigate whether there is any requirement to register additional companies as associate partners to allow them to host industrial secondments.
- 10.3 TCG to start the production of the LASSIE certificate.
- 10.5 TCG to produce a LASSIE leaving questionnaire.
- 11.1 NM to circulate information and dates for the Strasbourg outreach event at which the Europlanet Network will be exhibiting.