

Recommendations of the Referees**Overview**

This is a periodic gathering organised by the International Union of Crystallography. As a general society meeting, training is not the main goal. The meeting should be top level and the dissemination of information to young participants should be good. The topic is fundamental for research in the EU. The impact of crystal growth studies and their characterisation is obvious and the topics of interest in the conference are described carefully and convincingly. The educational value of this large meeting is very good; the organization is established and the support goes primarily to young researchers. This meeting is expected to attract up to 2500 participants of whom about 150 would be eligible for funding. For a conference of this scale special career opportunity sessions are recommendable and the organisers should consider this.

1. Scientific Quality of the Project**score 4.5**

The scientific content of this proposal is hard to fault. This is the general meeting of the IUCr and top level scientists are going to be in Florence. The meeting is usually large and all the major topics in the field are going to be covered. Crystal growth studies and their X-ray characterisation are developing fast and an update of knowledge in this area is a good reason to organize the next large conference of the same type as in 2003. The topics of interest in the conference are described carefully and convincingly. The congress has connections with two satellite meetings and together all meetings form a useful platform for presenting the progress in crystallography. 29 plenary lectures and about 100 micro symposia are proposed. Additionally the range of proposed programmes is far-reaching and novel.

2. Quality of the Research Training**score 4.5**

This meeting is planned so that it will be possible for young scientists to get in contact with top scientists in the field, and to create contacts in order to foster their early careers. The size of the meeting could cause some dispersion. Various forms of training will be used and a special focus on young researchers is shown. Hands-on courses are included. A meeting of scientific authorities with a young audience is planned. The skills of the researchers should be improved as a result of participating in this conference. One suggestion is that in addition to the Nobel Q&A session, an informal reception could be arranged between the Laureates and the young researchers.

3. Quality of the Host**score 4.5**

The host has a good track record and logistically there are no foreseeable problems. The host has expertise in the subject of the conference as well as in organising similar meetings and he has been involved in the organisation of this meeting since it was awarded in 1999 to the Florence team. The Florence congress centre will be used as the venue for the meeting and all necessary infrastructural facilities will be available there. Florence has a number of hotels that can be used.

4. Management and Feasibility**score 4.5**

The meeting is a periodical gathering of scientists in the field and the format is the usual. The organisation of this meeting has been underway since 1996 and Florence was awarded the conference in 1999. Several of the collateral activities look well planned and two satellite meetings will increase the chances for young participants to get involved in different aspects of the field. Dissemination plans are well described. Support will aid 130 early stage researchers and 28 experienced ones. Financial aspects could be treated less generally. Scientific and local organising committees have been established though full details are not contained in the proposal itself. A professional company has been booked to manage the logistics of the conference, necessary considering the number of participants. Publicity for the event will be through mail, press and e-mail and the media have been informed and will be kept up-to-date about the general interest sessions. Press conferences will be organised during the event. Selection of eligible researchers will be done by the international committee but no details are contained of the process used. Proceedings will be published in a book edited by the organisers and as a supplement of Acta Crystallographica. Abstracts will be on the web. The funds will only be used to cover registration fees for eligible researchers due to the scale of the conference and the limit on funds that may be applied for.

5. Relevance to the Aims of the Action**score 4.5**

This is a typical large conference relevant to the objectives of LCF, in a fast developing field where Europe boasts very good tradition and has several new findings. European contributions to the field are significant with typical European

participation of 40% at previous meetings. The educational aspects are the focus of the conference, the organization is very good and the support of EU is directed to help the youngest researchers participate in the meeting. Europe has the opportunity to host this meeting once per decade and funding for eligible researchers will allow a reasonable number of European researchers to partake. The benefits to the organisers are commented on particularly with regard to acquisition of organisational skills to facilitate future conference hosting.

6. Community Added Value

score 4.5

The added value for the community is high, the topics are important, and the possible results and spread of knowledge high. This is a typical large conference in terms of organisation in a field well recognised as well developed in Europe. New findings/ new instrumentation and methodologies should be transferred to the younger audience and this conference forms a good platform for such educational purposes. Micro symposia will be organised for the public interest to illustrate crystallography for the whole culture. The organisational committee has about 50% female participation. A comment is made that the list of speakers, distribution of bursaries and so on will respect equal distribution between genders; this should be adhered to.