EUCALL Exchange Program

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Foreword

On May 4th, 2017, several beamline scientists from different FEL facilities worldwide met in a satellite round table at the PhotonDiag2017 workshop in SLAC (California, USA) to discuss critical aspects related to the organization, operation, and support of user beamtime. Several issues were discussed, going from different schemes of pre-beamtime organization (installation, testing, and collection of high-quality scientific data), to serial operations (i.e., more than one instrument running at the same time), to user communities' requirements of more complex and reliable setups to take maximum advantage from those novel powerful sources. Besides that technical discussion, an important point arose during the round table: how to give the best-possible practical training to young beamline scientists, PostDocs, and PhD students. The question came out since, on average, only few experiments (or even just one) can run on the same day at an FEL facility. This situation, very typical for an FEL facility, limits the training time of young researchers. An envisioned solution would be the establishment of an exchange program involving the current available and under commissioning FEL beamlines, together with synchrotron and high-power laser beamlines. In this way, young scientists would be given the opportunity to develop a technical and instrumental background participating as visitors during periods of commissioning, internal, or users beamtime at different facilities. Of course, that would be beneficial not only to FEL beamline scientists but also to synchrotron and laser scientists who would have the opportunity to work in different environments not always easily accessible (especially at FELs). This initiative would thus allow to improve the average know-how of young scientists giving them the unique opportunity to maturate personal experience on different energy ranges from optical, to XUV, to hard X-rays, facing different problems related to different classes of experiments (diffraction imaging, scattering, femtochemistry, atomic spectroscopy, etc.). A second important aspect of the establishment of this exchange program would be the boosting of cooperation among local scientific staff at different facilities.

This idea was presented by Marco Zangrando and discussed during the EUCALL Steering Committee meeting at the Annual Meeting held at the ESRF in June 2017. A general positive feedback was received and a request for a formal proposal was raised. With respect to the original idea, it was decided to allow for an extension of the targeted scientists from not only young scientists but to the whole community (young scientists will have, in any case, the priority).

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Proposal

Target: establishment of an Exchange Program (EP) among EUCALL partners to promote training and cooperation of scientists.

Beneficiaries: scientists of the EUCALL partners. No age or scientific background limitations are applied but, in the evaluation of the candidates, young scientists (PhD students, Postdocs, Scientist in the early stages of their careers, e.g., holding a PhD obtained less than 4 years before) will be given priority.

Locations: the EP is intended to sponsor exchange activities where a scientist (from a EUCALL partner) spends some time (typically a week) in another facility. The receiving facility belongs to EUCALL. In exceptional cases, selected destinations (like, for instance, American or Japanese facilities) not being partner in EUCALL may be proposed. In these cases, the application requires explicit evaluation by the EP Evaluation Committee using the criteria age, gender, benefit to applicant and sending EUCALL partner, etc..

EP Evaluation Committee: this committee receives the candidatures and evaluates them in terms of scientific interest and feasibility. It is composed by the following members: Marco Zangrando (Elettra), Graham Appleby (European XFEL), Sakura Pascarelli (ESRF), Kai Tiedtke (DESY) and Jakob Andreasson (ELI).

Candidatures: in order to submit a candidature for the EP, the proponents must present the following material:

- A letter of motivation by the applicant (1 page)
- A brief description (2 pages) of the activities at the sending institution and at the receiving institution. A brief explanation of the expected benefits of this exchange should be included
- An updated CV;
- An estimate of travel and living costs during the exchange period requested through this program.
- A brief letter of support of the sending institution acknowledging and confirming the application;
- A brief letter of support of the receiving institution acknowledging and confirming the application;

The material should be sent by email to the EP Evaluation Committee Members.

Evaluation: the EP Evaluation Committee collects the candidatures and evaluates them. Initially the applications are reviewed upon submission, however if a large volume of applications is received, we consider holding a review every 60 days. Priority is given to young scientists (PhD students, post-docs, newly hired personnel) and to the scientific merit of the proposed exchange. Once evaluated, the candidatures are granted the funding depending exclusively on the judgment of the Committee. Upon receiving a large volume of

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applications, the maximum number of candidatures to be funded each 60-days call will be decided by the EP Evaluation Committee in conjunction with EUCALL project leaders. In case of rebuttal, a candidature can be re-submitted for the successive 60-days call.

It is recommended to submit the candidatures well in advance with respect to the proposed period of the exchange so to let the evaluation process to be carried out properly and in time.

Admission to facilities: the admission of the scientist to the receiving institution should be taken care of solely by the scientist and the receiving institution. EUCALL does not take part in this process, and only cover the costs of the exchange. The stay in the receiving institution should be regulated by the institution rules and procedures. Generally speaking, the stay has to be treated as any other stay of a guest in the hosting (receiving) institution.

Reimbursement: the cost of travel and accommodation during the exchange will be covered by the EUCALL EP provided that it is properly documented through receipts. The practical information about reimbursements will be published together with the call for candidatures.

General rules:

1) one single roundtrip travel is allowed, from the home to the hosting facility, and back;
2) all the tickets (flights, trains, buses, etc.) should be bought in economy class;
3) the use of taxis is not allowed unless approved by EUCALL EP coordinator
4) facility guesthouses are preferred for accommodation; if not available, non-luxury hotels should be used (3 stars maximum) with a maximum nightly rate defined by EUCALL on a case-by-case basis;
5) participants must book their travel and accommodation costs with personal payment, rather than by charging the costs to their facility. EUCALL cannot reimburse travel costs directly to one of its partner facilities, but only to individuals;
6) all the expenses should be documented with receipts;
7) reimbursement of travel and living expenses will be operated by EUCALL after the end of the exchange period upon the presentation of a reimbursement application form with the original receipts.
8) All accounts must be settled by 30/09/2018, therefore any exchange program must be concluded in time for this (30/06/2018 at the latest).

Outcome: the scientist who completes the EP will submit a report (within 4 weeks after the completion of the exchange) to the EP Evaluation Committee describing the activities carried out during the exchange period.

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