

Rules of Procedure for the HZB Scientific Selection Panel (SSP)

Preamble

The Helmholtz-Zentrum Berlin für Materialien und Energie (HZB) operates the large scale facility BESSY II, for providing a national and international user community with synchrotron radiation infrastructure for research. Beamtime at the facility is granted in the framework of a peer-reviewed proposal system. HZB has established a Scientific Selection Panel (SSP) for an objective and competent selection of projects to be supported.

Membership

- The members of the SSP are nominated by the Scientific Advisory Committee of HZB and appointed by the HZB Board of Directors. The tenure of their track is 3 years. Reappointment is possible. The maximum continuous duration of membership is limited to 6 years.
- The members serve on a voluntary basis on the panel. HZB reimburses their expenses for travel and subsistence for participation in the meetings according to the HZB Rules of Usage and the respective German regulations (Bundesreisekostengesetz).
- For scientific fields not covered by the permanent members, external specialists can be involved by the HZB User Coordination. These referees are asked to provide a written assessment as a complement to the rankings of the permanent panel members.

Structure of the Scientific Selection Panel

- Colleges: For covering the broad scientific spectrum of applications the SSP is subdivided into scientific colleges which have to deal with the applications from their respective science fields. The definition of scientific colleges and the number of members in the respective colleges is based on the long-term averaged amount of proposals.
- Speakers: Each college elects/appoints a speaker and a deputy speaker among its members. Their tenure is two years, re-election/reappointment is possible. The speaker function is intrinsically linked to the SSP membership.
- SSP Board: The College Speakers form the SSP Board, which represent the SSP towards the HZB Board of Directors. The SSP Board elects/appoints a speaker and a deputy speaker. Their tenure is two years, re-election/reappointment is possible. The chair position is intrinsically linked to the SSP membership.

Tasks, Responsibilities and Interactions of the Scientific Selection Panel

- The SSP advises the HZB Board of Directors on provision of beamtime based on the scientific merit of the applications.
- All non-proprietary applications are subject to the evaluation process by the SSP. HZB in-house research proposals are included for information and comparison with the external projects.
- Based on the deadlines of the application periods, the SSP meets twice a year for discussing and assessing the collection of proposals.
- The SSP-colleges provide a priority ranking of the proposals and give advice on the appropriate amount of beamtime to be granted for the specific projects.

- The rankings are understood as a fundamental basis for the distribution of the beamtime at the different experimental stations. The explicit allocation under consideration of beamtime quota regulated by contracts is worked out by the HZB User Coordination and finally approved by the HZB Board of Directors.
- The SSP members are obliged to keep the content of the proposals and the discussions strictly confidential.
- The evaluation results and the SSP members' comments are not communicated in detail to the applicants. Explicitly authorised comments can be communicated. Only if the applicants insist on a detailed assessment report, the referees will be asked by the HZB User Coordination to provide such a document. The communication with these applicants is coordinated by the HZB User Coordination via the corresponding College Speaker to guarantee the privacy of SSP members. The applicant can contact the speaker of the SSP Board if this communication seems to be insufficient.
- Results of the selection process will be communicated exclusively by HZB User coordination.
- The SSP College Speakers collect information from their colleges to be discussed in the “Feedback and Conclusion” rounds of each panel meeting and conveyed to HZB Board of Directors.

Organisation of the Panel Meetings

- The SSP meets on a semi-annual basis. The exact dates are related to the proposal submission deadlines. In the previous meeting the SSP members agree upon a date for the next meeting.
- The proposals are made accessible to the SSP members at least 3 weeks in advance of the scheduled meeting. In addition to the information provided by the applicants, information on the technical feasibility assessed by the HZB User Coordination and/or the instrument and beamline scientists will be made available.
- SSP meetings are organised as closed sessions. Only SSP members, the staff of the HZB User Coordination and HZB staff acting as college secretaries are admitted. On demand of the SSP College Speakers representatives of the scientific units of HZB, who are involved in user service at BESSY II, can be invited as guests by the HZB User Coordination
- In a general assembly, which precedes the college sessions, the SSP is informed by HZB on recent progress in instrumentation at the large scale facility and on general issues for the evaluation process. In the general assembly an overview of the beamtime distribution of the previous round is presented.
- In the college sessions the proposals are discussed and assessed according to a defined ranking scheme. The discussion is moderated by the college speakers. Each college is assisted by two college secretaries, who keep the minutes. Their role is restricted to provide information concerning technical aspects of the proposal such as specific experimental infrastructure. The college secretaries are HZB staff nominated by the HZB User Coordination.

Procedure for composing the Members of the SSP Colleges

1. Composition of Members in the HZB SSP Colleges

The members of the Scientific Selection Panel of the HZB (SSP) are nominated by the HZB Scientific Advisory Committee and appointed by the HZB Board of Directors. 50% of Members are to be replaced every three years, in order to ensure certain continuity to the applied evaluation criteria of the committee. Alternatively, one to two referees can be continuously exchanged per college each semester.

2. Proposal of candidates

Proposal of candidates are suggested by the members of the SSP, the HZB Scientific Advisory Committee, the HZB Board of Directors, and by the HZB User Coordination. They are compiled and processed by the HZB User Coordination.

3. Criteria for potential candidates' selection

Following conditions are observed in selecting suggested candidates,

- active scientist
- covering of expertise in the colleges
- workload feasible to participate in the evaluation process
- cost and time requirements for the participation in the SSP meeting are acceptable for the candidate
- minimal or no conflicts of interest (not to close relation to the HZB or to other synchrotron facilities and other Helmholtz Centers)

4. Selection of candidates

- A list of prioritized candidates is to be worked out by the HZB User Coordination.
- The list will be presented to the HZB Board of Directors. They have the option to reject candidates within two weeks.
- The revised list will be presented by the HZB Board of Directors to the HZB Scientific Advisory Committee for approval.

5. Approach of the candidates

The candidates of the approved list will be asked by the HZB User Coordination to collaborate in the SSP.

6. Appointment

The appointment of candidates is carried out by the HZB Board of Directors for the duration of three years.

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