

Director's Corner

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Barry Barish

FALC meeting in Rome

One of our most important and challenging goals for the ILC will be to develop government agreements that will underlie a true international governance for the ILC. We are a long way from achieving that goal, and I anticipate that will be done as part of bringing together multiple government commitments to the project. In the absence of having the oversight and guidance that comes with formal governance, the R&D and engineering design phase of the ILC is guided on the technical side by ICFA and its subcommittee, ILC Steering Committee, and on the government side, through the Funding Agencies for Large Colliders (FALC), an informal group of representatives of governments and funding agencies from around the world. The most recent meeting of FALC was held in Rome on 11 July at INFN Headquarters. This was an important meeting for the GDE, because we formally presented our Reference Design Report (RDR) to FALC, as well as our plans for developing an engineering design and report (EDR) over the next three years.

FALC began under the leadership of Professor Ian Halliday from PPARC in the UK, as a means of providing a forum for the funding agencies supporting ILC R&D. This forum would provide an avenue for discussing developments toward an ILC, the needs and commitments of the different agencies, and finally a role in providing guidance and oversight for the ILC design effort. The present chair, Roberto Petronzio, President of INFN in Italy, is taking a broad view of FALC's evolving role toward planning and coordinating the complexities of large international high energy physics projects. To emphasise this broader mandate, FALC has changed its name to Funding Agencies for Large Colliders and is spending efforts to understand the major commitments and time scales for the large-scale HEP projects in different countries. Clearly, all countries and major laboratories have different constraints regarding when they can commit to a new project. These obligations must be taken into account and balanced in creating a realistic strategy for planning and funding new major international projects, like the International Linear Collider.



Roberto Petronzio, President of INFN, chairing FALC meeting



GDE Director requests FALC endorsement of Engineering Design Phase

At the Rome meeting of FALC, I introduced the newly appointed GDE Project Managers (Akira Yamamoto, Nick Walker and Marc Ross). Most importantly, we presented our goals and approach to creating an engineering design. The committee endorsed this approach as outlined by Marc Ross. In my presentation, I emphasised our need to have increased engagement by FALC for the engineering design phase to insure that what we produce is what governments will need if the ILC is to go forward. We also need FALC to provide oversight in our planning and work, in terms of making realistic commitments of resources for the detailed programme we will carry out.



The properly attired GDE Project Management Troika with GDE Director at FALC

In particular, we propose to carry out the actual work during the EDR phase through a set of work package Memoranda of Understanding. These MOUs will define the tasks, deliverables, responsibilities, resources, milestones and reporting in order to achieve the milestones that will make up our EDR. At the Rome meeting, we agreed to obtain FALC's concurrence, through the FALC Resource Board review of the actual work package MOUs. We welcome this important step toward engaging FALC in the EDR.



A view of the ceiling of the conference room at INFN headquarters

I cannot end without commenting on our meeting location. It was especially inspiring to be able to spend two days holding a face-to-face GDE Executive Committee, courtesy of Professor Petronzio, and then to participate in the FALC meeting both at INFN headquarters in Rome. No ordinary office building, Palazzo Lante was built in 1513 and located in a quiet Piazza very near the Pantheon in the heart of Rome; with coffee bars and restaurants nearby that are hard to match anywhere. In the INFN office suite, we admired a wonderful feature in their large meeting room that you could say provided inspiration from up above -- a ceiling worthy of great thoughts and planning!

-- Barry Barish