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A Generic Rolling Access for Users at PETRA III \& Future PETRA IV

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Major synchrotron radiation facilities typically operate under classical access models (CAMs), which are reliable but lack agility and responsiveness for urgent, collaborative, and long-term projects. In response to user concerns, adaptations such as rapid access proposals, block allocation group proposals (BAG), and long-term proposals (LTP) have been implemented alongside the CAMs. However, bi- or tri-annual proposal calls continue to be conducted. Furthermore, a select number of facilities have adopted multiple proposal calls or a rolling access system exclusively for highly standardized, and fully automated beamlines, such as molecular or protein crystallography, and small angle X-ray scattering beamlines.

Recognizing the need for change, PETRA III and future PETRA IV are introducing the rolling procedure with a single access scheme, which could be implemented in any generic beamlines. The new access model aims to replace CAMs while meeting modern demands and preserving CAMs'strengths. A testing phase on five beamlines at PETRA III has been implemented through this rolling procedure, eliminating the bi-annual call and various access schemes (kept valid for all other beamlines). The streamlined process allows users to submit proposals at any time without any deadline and strongly reduces waiting time between proposal submission and experiment execution. The latter is adaptable during the process and will still allow longer time if requested by the users. This rolling procedure allows for scheduling throughout the year, which is advantageous specially for commercial users, and users with urgent needs. Additionally, a key feature of this procedure is the opportunity to distribute approved shifts into multiple beamtimes if multiple beamtime access is requested during submission.

The implementation of this rolling procedure could pose challenges in maintaining transparency in the rolling review and scheduling process. Unlike the Classical Access Models (CAMs), where proposals are evaluated together bi-annually and ranked for scheduling, the rolling review lacks comparison with other proposals. To address the challenges, a new review procedure has been devised, which involves a combination of independently evaluating each proposal and holding regular meetings within the review panel. A preliminary model simulation of the new scheduling scheme indicates that top-ranked proposals can be scheduled immediately, with an average wait time of three months between proposal submission and actual beamtime. The simulation indicates that unscheduled shifts would only range from 3-6%, manageable through commissioning and testing. In the practical testing phase, the process will be refined based on the results obtained and feedback received, aiming to overcome potential challenges associated with implementing a rolling procedure for large-scale user facilities.

I plan to submit also conference proceedings

Yes

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