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## NMI3: New Funding, New Project

The integration of European neutron facilities has a long history. Its hour of birth can be associated with the Neutron Round Table under the European Union 5<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme (FP5), from 2000–2003. Under FP6 the integration effort took on a different dimension, with the launch of NMI3 (Integrated Infrastructure Initiative for Neutron scattering and Muon spectroscopy). Ever since, NMI3 has been a main driver of European Research, and has contributed to nurturing excellence in European neutron scattering and Muon spectroscopy.

Under FP6, NMI3 was the largest of all the I3 (Integrated Infrastructure Initiative) projects, with 21 million Euros funding. The introduction of a funding ceiling of 10 million Euros applied to all I3, during the FP7 call in 2009, was a real stress test for NMI3. The Access Programme had to be reduced considerably in scope, and it was decided that the funds would be used over a period of two years only. All networking and collaboration

projects (Joint Research Activities or JRAs) were downsized and many partners increased their contributions to make the project viable despite the severe budget reductions. This

demonstrates the determination of the consortium to stand together to brave bad weather. Fortunately for neutron and Muon users the skies are starting to brighten. The EU opened a second call



The NMI3 Management Team (left to right): M. Förster (Project manager), ILL, H. Schober (coordinator), ILL and J. Savin (information manager), FRM II (photo by Serge Claisse, ILL).

within FP7 and neutrons were entitled to bid for 15 M€. The submitted NMI3 follow-up proposal was successful. The new project aspires not only to restore NMI3 activities to their original level, but also to add innovative changes.

In the upcoming project, which will run from February 2012 to 2016, NMI3 will further intensify efforts to foster the advancement of neutron and Muon science. NMI3 will comprise 18 partner organizations, including 9 facilities in 12 countries. As in the past, all NMI3 activities will revolve around improving the service to the users. NMI3 will make sure that European researchers have access to the most advanced facilities. Particular attention will be given to the integration and harmonization of access procedures to neutron beamtime.

NMI3's Joint Research Activities focus on areas of strategic importance, with a large potential for innovation and

immediate impact on the services provided to the users. Hence, the collaborations to be started next year will concentrate on advanced methods and techniques for new instrumental set-ups, structural and magnetic imaging at the micro and nano-scale, advanced neutron tools for soft and biomaterials, as well as neutron detectors and Muon technologies.

Ensuring the training of new users remains one of the principle NMI3 objectives. Renowned neutron schools will be supported under a common umbrella. The newly established European Neutron and Muon School (ENMS) will become a label of excellence in teaching as it will be seconded by e-learning modules on the NMI3 website's education corner. Based on modern e-learning tools, the NMI3 education corner should in the long run become the number one support

for teaching in neutron scattering and muon spectroscopy.

In line with the ambition of the new project, the NMI3 website ([www.nmi3.eu](http://www.nmi3.eu)) will be completely redesigned. With improved navigation and clearer architecture, the new website will offer relevant and up-to-date information about neutron and muon research in Europe to the community and the general public.

We hope that our users will welcome the services provided; we are looking forward to receiving their feedback.

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## ISIS Scientist Wins Neutron Prize for Novel Nanoscience Technique

Robert Dalglish from the ISIS Neutron and Muon Facility has been awarded the prestigious BTM Willis Prize for neutron scattering in recognition of his development of novel neutron techniques that are opening up new areas of fundamental and applied research in nanoscience. He has built the new instrument Offspec on the ISIS Second Target Station (see NN 22.2, p. 15) that is designed to look at microscopic structures such as those found in polymer blends (plastics) and surfactants (soaps and detergents). By labelling neutron trajectories with spin-echo techniques, the Offspec instrument is able to study structures across a surface and to access bigger particle sizes such as those found

in complex aggregate structures which are of particular interest to researchers from the Netherlands, which contributed funding for the construction of Offspec.

The BTM Willis prize is sponsored by the Institute of Physics and the Royal Society of Chemistry. It is named after Professor Terry Willis, one of the pioneers of the use of neutron scattering in the United Kingdom. The prize is awarded bi-annually by the Neutron Scattering Group of the Institute of Physics (IOP) and the Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC).

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*STFC Rutherford Appleton  
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Robert Dalglish (left) receives the Willis Prize Award from Ali Zerbakhsh, Chair of the IOP/RSC Neutron Scattering Group.

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