

Class III (Insufficient), with the appropriate subclasses.

3. allocate at this moment support only to Class I proposals, but to let all Class II proposals participate in the next round (July 15) without the need for resubmission;
4. fix Research Grants in the republics on the territory of the former USSR at DM 400/year, i.e. at about the level of the current local salary there, and proportionately higher in other countries;
5. allocate the same Research Grants to all successful applicants, irrespective of their positions at the C&EE institutes, and to give no more than one Research Grant per person, even if an applicant has more than one successful application;
6. provide standardized computer equipment in the form of 486 PCs with appropriate accessories (at DM 4,500 per computer), and normally only one per institute;
7. make the Principal Investigators (PIs) of Type A programmes responsible for the use of allocated equipment, especially PCs, and to insist that it is made available to other institute staff, as far as possible;
8. not support conferences which are not organized and/or sponsored by ESO, but to leave this field to IAU, EAS, etc.; and
9. have all applications involving observing time at La Silla first pass through the normal OPC evaluation and only provide support if observing time is indeed allocated.

The Committee then evaluated the 284 proposals according to the above-mentioned criteria, and with the result that 68 of these were classified in Class I and will therefore receive support. They involve 243 applicants, so that more than one quarter of all applicants will receive support already in the first round. About half of the applications will again be considered in the second round. A total of about DM 270,000 was allocated from the 1993 budget.

The main data have now been entered into a STARCAT-based archive which permits efficient and time-saving programme administration. Miguel Albrecht and Olivier Hainaut, both at ESO Headquarters in Garching, have provided very significant help for this. This made it possible to send individual reply letters to all 936 applicants within two weeks after the Committee meeting. By the end of May, the first responses to these were being received at ESO, as expected in particular from satisfied applicants who will now receive support within this Programme. The Committee is presently investigating the best ways of transferring the promised support.

ESO Visitor Programme at Garching

In order to promote closer interactions between the astronomers in the ESO astronomical community, ESO has a Visitor Programme in which experienced astronomers from the member states spend periods ranging from a few months to a year working at ESO headquarters in Garching.

Major activities at ESO Garching include the design and development of the VLT and its instrumentation, activities related to the La Silla observatory (including remote observing), the development of data analysis software, and the European Coordinating Facility for the Space Telescope (ECF). The scientific research of the staff astronomers, fellows and students at ESO and the ECF covers a wide range of astronomical subjects. The ESO headquarters building is located on a research campus together with several other institutes including the Max-Planck Institutes for Astrophysics and Extraterrestrial Research.

Visitors are expected to take an active role in the scientific life of ESO, giving seminars and interacting with ESO staff on scientific or technical matters. They are given appropriate financial support to help cover travel and living expenses in Garching. ESO has a number of modern apartments in Garching to accommodate its visitors.

Persons interested in this Visitor Programme may submit a request to ESO at any time. Enquiries regarding application procedures should be addressed to:

European Southern Observatory
Visitor Programme
Karl-Schwarzschild-Str. 2
D-85748 Garching bei München
Germany

The deadline for the next round is July 15, 1993, but already now (beginning of June), more than 50 new applications have been received. Although it is not yet possible to anticipate the total number, it may again be substantial.

2. Preliminary Conclusions

The rather impressive response to the announcement of the ESO C&EE Programme shows that its existence has quickly become well known among C&EE astronomers and that it effectively responds to a real need. It is also gratifying that there have been quite a few expressions from various sides about a positive psychological impact of this Programme.

An analysis of the applications to the first round shows that while salaries for scientists in many C&EE countries are very low, many serious C&EE scientists with excellent research proposals consider that their activities and efficiency are first of all limited by the fact that they only have access to outdated equipment. It therefore appears that at least for the time being – and until the expected and probably unavoidable further cuts in the institute budgets are made by the national funding bodies – these astronomers are best helped by making more modern equipment available at their places of work, e.g. PCs for computation and instrument control. In this way, they will have the opportunity to produce front-line science and thereby to collaborate with Western colleagues on a much more equal level, with the obvious mutual benefits. Still, it

is also clear that many excellent, but very poorly paid (especially younger) astronomers will be greatly helped in their daily lives and personally stimulated by the modest Research Grants now allocated.

The first experience has also shown that the scientific merits of the received proposals to some extent depend on the institutes of origin and the distribution of support in the first round has therefore not been completely uniform in geographical terms; this is also not the intention. Nevertheless, almost all major C&EE institutes have submitted proposals which were rated in Class II, and it is therefore likely that more of them will be successful in the second round.

Already in the first round, the ESO C&EE Programme has been able to provide support to a significant number of C&EE astronomers and the impact will soon be felt at many institutes.

A meeting between the ESO Executive and Professor Paolo Fasella of DG XII of the EC will take place in Brussels on July 13, 1993. On this occasion, ESO will inform about the early results and experience of its C&EE Programme and also how this organization is obviously in a good position to judge the true needs of C&EE astronomy. The initial response to the ESO Programme has clearly shown that the overall resources which are needed to provide efficient help to deserving C&EE astronomers are demonstrably much larger than those which can be mustered by the ESO Programme. It will therefore be interesting to explore the possibility of