SWEDEN

New Funding Mechanism

It is fairly unusual that a major new instrument for funding science appears on the horizon. But this is the case for Sweden's Foundation for Strategic Research, which in the words of I. Lindgren, its Executive Director, is "a great idea that offers a chance to do something new". The previous government established before leaving office a series of foundations to distribute each year for 20-25 years some 10% of the proceeds resulting from payments by industry to a fund set up about 10 years ago to promote development.

Remarks by the newly elected government to wind up the foundations and divert the funds to social needs are unlikely to take root as these steps would require new legislation. However, discussion is needed to ensure that other funding channels are not affected.

The Foundation for Strategic Research is the largest of the new foundations and it has some 600 MSKR to distribute each year in three principle activities (information technology, biosciences and basic technology). Each area is run by a committee, but proposals in all areas must be approved by the Foundation's Board which includes among its 11 members, two physicists and three members from outside Sweden. Programmes will target specific topics, be mainly university-based, and typically involve 20 MSKR for 5 years with significant amounts of graduate studies and basic research involved. Several hundred thousands of SKR have already been distributed equally between the three areas as planning grants to prepare proposals. There is, in principle, formally no close coupling with the European Union's Framework programme (as a way to "lever" funding), although the international context is considered in evaluating proposals.

Adding Value with Electronic Publishing

Paris, 2-3 March 1995

Several different strategies are being adopted in electronic publishing, and decisions will influence not only the way physicists access information but also their role in the entire publishing chain.

The Publications Committee of EPS at its last workshop on electronic publishing aimed to harmonize implementations of Document Type Definition Tables (DTD) used by the Standard Generalized Mark-up Language (SGML) to define the structure of articles.

The "physics" DTD, released recently by the International Standards Organisation as an ISO Standard, has been adopted by some publishers. The workshop, in seeking ways to generalize the trend, will ask publishers to summarise developments. A round-table discussion following presentations by leading authorities covering databases, electronic journals, preprint servers, networks, and browsers will then consider the interest to authors in "adding value" by submitting SGML texts.

Participation is limited and by invitation only. If you are interested in participating, please contact: Franck Laloë, Laboratoire Kastler Brossel, Département de Physique, ENS, 24, rue Lhomond, F-75005 Paris Cedex [tel.: +33-1-47 07 54 13; fax: +33-1-45 35 00 76; e-mail: laloe@physique.ens.fr].