

ESF RESEARCH CONFERENCES

Rapporteur Report

Partnership:	ESF-FWF Conference in partnership with LFUI
Conference Title:	Nanotechnology for Sustainable Energy
Dates:	14-19 June 2008
Chair:	Bengt Kasemo

General Comments

Any general comments you might have concerning the conference, your role, the scientific area covered by this conference, etc.

This conference, nanotechnology for sustainable energy, brings together excellent scientists from two most important research fields in order to find new materials and solutions for energy applications.

Quality of Scientific Programme, Presentations and Discussion

Comments on the balance and scope of the scientific programme, the scientific quality of the presentations and discussions.

The scope of the conference was well covered and balanced concerning the use of nano-sized materials for future energy applications. Special sessions were appointed for solar cells, hydrogen production, hydrogen storage, batteries, catalysis, thermoelectrics. In addition, safety and ethics of nanotechnology was discussed. The invited lecturers were internationally leading scientists in their research fields, and the lectures were excellent. The contributed talks by younger scientists were well balanced to the plenary lectures.

Informal Networking and Exchange; Atmosphere

Was the schedule and the atmosphere conducive to an easy exchange of information? Was there time and space for an informal discussion? Were younger researchers integrated?

The atmosphere of the conference was most conducive to exchange of information. The poster sessions were extremely well attended with exchange of information and lively discussions. There was plenty of time for informal discussions during meals and coffee breaks. Different scientific disciplines and nationalities were usually represented in the discussions at the dinner tables and during the breaks. Although the weather was not the very best, small parties of participants were seen walking in the beautiful environment after lunch.

Balance of Participants

Was there an appropriate balance between young and senior participants? Was a balance of national groups and researchers from different (sub)fields achieved?

A rough estimate of the balance between senior and young participants is that the main part could be considered as younger scientists, and that the number of senior scientists was somewhat larger than the PhD students. Concerning the nationalities, northern Europe was well represented, but there were also scientists from almost all European countries as well as US, Canada, China, Japan and Australia. The participants represented all topics for the conference from physical, chemical and materials science point of view.

Outlook and Future Developments

Will new collaborations emerge from this conference? (How) could the conference outcomes be utilized further? Are there suitable (ESF) programmes or instruments to further the work of the conference?

The scientific discussions were creative, after the lectures and during the poster sessions, as well as during all meals and breaks. I am quite certain that new scientific collaborations already have emerged. It is my strong opinion that this conference shall be continued.

Organisation and Infrastructure

Were venue, catering and accommodation appropriate for this conference? Were participants satisfied with the on-site administration and support?

The site of the conference was at the University Centre in the small beautiful village Obergurgl in the Austrian Tyrol. The catering was well-tasting traditional Austrian food, and the service personal was nice and welcoming. The administrative support from the ESF Conference officer Anne Blondeel-Oman was excellent. I have one negative point about the lecture room. As usual in conference hotels the lecture room was not suited for lectures. The flat floor made it difficult to see the pictures and the carpet caused bad acoustics.

Summary & Overall Assessment

Was the conference successful; were its aims achieved?

In my opinion it was one of the best conferences I have been to lately. Scientists from different disciplines were brought together on this very important topic, nanotechnology for sustainable energy. I strongly suggest that this conference will be continued.

About ESF Research Conferences

The Scheme

This conference is part of the European Science Foundation's (ESF) Research Conferences Scheme. The Scheme aims to promote scientific excellence and frontier level research throughout Europe and the rest of the world. Conferences aim to provide leading scientists and other participants, including young researchers, with a platform to present their work, to discuss the most recent developments in their fields of research and to network.

Conference Format

The core activities should be based on lectures by invited speakers, who are leaders in their respective fields, followed by extensive discussion periods. An informal exchange of ideas, both inside and outside the lecture room, should be encouraged, and the number of sessions in the daily timetable should be limited in order to allow sufficient time for interaction between the participants. Time should be reserved for a 'Forward Look Plenary Discussion' about future developments in the field.

Participants can take all their meals together to encourage further contact and networking, which can be particularly beneficial to younger researchers who may be less outspoken in the formal lecture room setting. In order to gain optimum benefit from the conference, both the speakers and the participants are asked to stay for the whole duration.

Division of Tasks

The Conference Chair is responsible for ensuring the quality of the scientific programme through the selection and invitation of speakers, and through the selection of participants.

The ESF Conferences Unit is responsible for managing all the logistical aspects of the conference organisation, including the provision of an on-site secretariat.

Further information: www.esf.org/conferences