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Dear Ken,

UK MICE AND IMICE

Over the last few weeks, as you are aware, PPARC has been subjecting the international MICE (iMICE), and its UK component to peer review through various routes. I should like to thank you for your input at meetings, and for the documentation that you have provided. As much of the process to date has already been documented and fed back to you already, I shall concentrate on updating you on the latest situation in respect of peer review, and also of the funding situation and future actions that PPARC will be pursuing.

The most recent meeting of the PPRP considered two documents from you; the paper outlining four funding scenarios, and secondly the proposal for funding in 2003/04. The recommendations made at this meeting were that the preferred option would be at the level of £12.5M, but that all other funding scenarios offered options for some level of UK involvement in iMICE. In addition it was agreed that PPRP would fund UK MICE to a level of £70K, from the seedcorn line, for workpackage 3 (construction and testing of the prototype fibre tracker) and travel. A feedback letter detailing the recommendations from PPRP has been sent to you separately.

The funding situation as you know, is that the earmarked funding in the OST Projects line amounts to £7.5M, with the Gateway process needing successful completion to access these funds. At the current time, there is no further identified funding. There is a possibility that additional funding could be made available from within PPARC and CCLRC's budgets, but this is by no means a certainty and further consideration of how funding could be realised is required.

At this stage, I should therefore like to invite you to consider how the UK could maximise its input and leadership in the project, and discuss in association with your international partners, how the project would be able to proceed on the basis of a UK contribution of either £7.5M or £10M in total (including contingency, effort and VAT.).

It is the intention that PPARC and CCLRC will jointly write to the iMICE collaboration to outline the UK situation and progress on peer review. As well as this we also plan to discuss the project with the international funding agencies over the coming weeks.

As you will be aware from the Project Board meeting held on 7 July, the timescales for progressing the proposal further are somewhat dependent on various actions including the above discussions, and importantly a costing review which is to be arranged. The next Project Board meeting in late July should hopefully see progress on some of the actions, in the meantime I hope that this letter is useful in providing a summary of the situation to date.

Yours sincerely

Lindsay Marcer
PPD

c.c Professor Richard Wade, Professor Ken Peach