

Minutes of the SGN/SNSS GA 2024

Date/Location: May 27, 2024, 15:00 / Hybrid meeting in the Auditorium at PSI and via Zoom
Participants: 23 in Person and 11 online, in total 34

1. Welcome

Marc Janoschek, president of the Swiss Neutron Science Society, welcomes the participants to the general assembly 2024. The date was moved from autumn to spring, into the SINQ shutdown period, therefore the reporting time period is unusual short. The Agenda of the Meeting was accepted unanimously.

2. Minutes of the General Assembly 2022

The minutes of the general assembly of the SNSS/SGN from 23.11.2023, published at the Webpage of the Society (<https://sgn.web.psi.ch/sgn/minutes2023.pdf>) were accepted without any dissenting vote.

3. Annual Report of the Chairman

Marc Janoschek reports on the activities of the SNSS/SGN since the last GA:

a) News and Changes:

- SNSS is formally a member society of SCNAT as of January 1, 2024. Notably, being part of SCNAT results in synergies with other member societies that have common goals and interests (such as CHIPP, SPS, SGK/SSCr), for example, for the national roadmap process. We will also be able apply for funding from SCNAT to promote our society via activities such as summer schools/workshops, travel funds for members, and educational measures.
- In March, we received a formal mandate to provide an update of the Neutron Science Roadmap published in 2021. We will provide details later today. This is an opportunity to refine our plans for the future.
- Daniel Mazzone from PSI (and one of the SNSS Auditors) has been awarded with the 2024 Erwin Félix Lewy Bertaut for his outstanding contributions in the field of quantum effects in strongly correlated electron materials, employing cutting-edge X-ray and neutron scattering techniques. Congratulations!
- Since January 1, 2024, we have two new board members: Fanni Juranyi and Romain Sibille (both from PSI), and one seat vacant (see later).
- 1 new issues of Swiss Neutron News was published recently, the 2nd will be sent out in Fall. Thanks to Viviane Lütz Bueno! The Community provides deviating feedback from “I enjoy to read it” to “please do not send it anymore”. Maybe the format should be changed in the future.

b) Membership and payment:

Presently we have 285 members, 10% increase by 24 members in 5 months and 45% increase over the last 1.5 years! The large increase is due to our new membership model. Nevertheless, there are many more benefiting from neutron science in Switzerland. We are now making a push with regards to soft matter, radionuclides (radiochemistry + medical research) and nuclear research. Members are asked to help recruiting. The number of authors with CH affiliation on neutron science publications between 2015-2020 is over 500. As advertised previously, SNSS now offers the possibility to pay the membership for all members of a group/department/institute. New members (individuals and groups) can register by expressing their interest in E-mail (sgn@psi.ch), see our Website. Furthermore, individual members can now conveniently pay now the membership also using TWINT (code is provided on our Webpage and in the Swiss Neutron News). The membership is free for Bachelor-, Master-, and PhD-students.

c) SNSS Young Scientist Prize 2024:

This year the SNSS Young Scientist Prize is awarded for a notable scientific achievement in the form of a PhD thesis. Next year, biannually, the call will be open also for PostDocs, i.e. for an exceptional track record in neutron science established within 5 years after the PhD. The Prize is kindly sponsored by Swiss Neutronics. It is now tradition that the prize will be formally awarded at the Annual Meeting of the Swiss Physical Society, which this year will take place at ETH Zurich from September 9-13, 2024. This provides the awardees with the opportunity to present their work to a large audience.

Now, **Dr. Boyang Zhou (PhD @ PSI & ETHZ)** receives the SNSS Young Scientist Price for his Thesis ‘**Effect of Softness and Charges on the Volume Phase Transition of Colloidal Microgels and Macrogels**’. Congratulations!

Nominations for the prize 2025 should be submitted to the Swiss Neutron Science Society (sgn@psi.ch) until March 1, 2025 (exact date may still change).

https://sgn.web.psi.ch/sgn/young_scientist_prize.html

4. Report of the Treasurer

The annual balance sheet for 2023 is presented:

Assets SNSS/SGN on 1.1.2023:

CHF 9287.18

	Revenues [CHF]	Expenses [CHF]
Membership-fees, donations (cash box)	0.00	
Membership-fees (postal check acc.)	3'180.00	
Membership over-payments (postal check acc.)	60.00	
Membership over-payments return (postal check acc.)		60.00
Donations (postal check acc.)	160.00	
Deposit (cash box)	0.00	
Expense (cash box, Braun-Shea, M.)		200.00
Expenses Postfinance account		82.00
Other Expenses		977.29
Deposit Young Scientist Prize (Swiss Neutronics)	1'000.00	
Young Scientist Prize (Schulthess, I.)		500.00
Young Scientist Prize (Nocerino, E.)		500.00
Total	4'400.00	2'319.29
Net earnings 2023:	2'080.71	
Balance sheet 2023:		
	Assets [CHF]	Liabilities [CHF]
Postfinance account	11'347.89	
Cash box	20.00	
Assets on 31.12.2023	11'367.89	

5. Report of the Auditors

Both Auditors (Dr. M. Zolliker and Dr. Daniel Mazzone, both from PSI) have examined the bookkeeping and the balance sheet for 2023. They have accepted it without objection. The participants unanimously vote for the release of the SNSS Board.

6. Budget 2025

	Receipts [CHF]	Expenditures [CHF]
Membership-fees	3'400.00	
Interests	0.00	
Young Scientist Prize (in/out)	1'000.00	1'000.00
Expenses Postfinance account		63.00
Fee ClubDesk Software for Membership Management		432.00
Fee webdomain		15.00
Fees SCNAT Membership (285*7 CHF)		1'995.00
Financing of poster awards/workshop aperos		2'000.00
Total	4'400.00	5'505.00
Net earnings 2024:	-1'105.00	
Estimated Assets on 31.12.2025	10'695.00	

The present members accept the budget proposal without objection.

7. Open seat in the SNSS Executive Board

The current board members for the period (2024-2026) are:

- Marc Janoschek (PSI + UZH, president)
- Fanni Juranyi (PSI, member and secretary)
- Florian Piegsa (Uni Bern, member)
- Romain Sibille (PSI, member)
- Markus Strobl (PSI member).

Further functions:

- Viviane Lütz Bueno (PSI, Editor Swiss Neutron News)

Our by-laws state that the executive board is made up by the president and a maximum of five further members (<https://sgn.web.psi.ch/sgn/regulations.htm>).

Andrea Carminati (ETHZ) was proposed for the open seat. He acknowledged this and accepted the nomination. Due to the short notice he could not attend the meeting in person, but prepared a slide to introduce himself. Andrea Carminati is Professor of Physics of Soils and Terrestrial Ecosystems Department of Environmental Systems Science (D-USYS) at ETHZ. His research is focused on root water uptake. He is a regular SINQ user (ICON and BOA) since 2003. 21 persons participated in the online voting, all voted with 'yes', nobody voted 'no' and there was no 'abstention' vote. Additionally, 3 persons voted with 'yes' in person. As a result, the vacant place could be filled with Andrea Carminati. Congratulations!

8. News from

a) UCN:

New degaussing sequence of 6 shields provides a significant improvement and achieves magnetic fields below 300 pT over the 1.4 m³ of the shielded volume of the N2EDM experiment.

UCN-EZE project is working on upgrading the ultra-cold neutron source insert to achieve even higher flux (it is already world-leading) and increase life-time. It is making good progress, and it is expected to be implemented until the end of 2026.

b) SINQ (report by John White standing in for Michel Kenzelmann, Head of LNS, PSI):

SINQ was running from early May 2023 to Christmas with 12 Instruments (2 at 50% and some downtime on FOCUS, TASP and Poldi due to aging). Amor entered the proposal round. HIPA operation was very successful, with again > 90% availability. Stable high number of proposals, although other facilities are back in operation. SANS-I and HRPT had the highest number of proposals. [A. Braun: “Who is using SANS-I” J. White: A broad community, SANS-LLB is in the commissioning and will release the pressure on SANS-I.] It would be desirable to increase the portion of non-PSI Swiss users and to obtain financial contribution from countries, which get significant amount of beam time, like Germany or Sweden.

Fortunately, the number of publications recovered from lower numbers in 2021 and 2022 and now corresponds again to the number of publications reported on average before the SINQ Guide upgrade. Likely the low in publications was due to the time required to restart user program after the upgrade. Highlights from the four LNS groups have been briefly shown. There are two EU Programs for user access at SINQ: REMADE (Materials development for recycling, financing also 1 PostDoc at LNS) and NEPHEWS (twinning action between new and experienced user groups). LNS is engaged in education in various ways and held 3 workshops in 2024. There are 2 tenure-track positions in the hiring phase (Spectroscopy and Soft-Matter groups, respectively) and two further ones are expected (instrument scientists at DMC and EIGER).

c) ENSA (Report by M. Janoschek):

Last meeting was in person in Garching, Germany in April 2024, where Finland became a member. ENSA reported that the NEPHEWS program (Neutrons and Photons Elevating World-Wide Science) is taking place. It is a program to pair potential users from countries that do not use neutrons with existing expert groups. 7 countries including Ukraine selected to receive support. Kickoff meeting was held in February 2024 at SOLARIS Synchrotron in Poland. Jon White remarks that NEPHEWS give support for travel. The Danish delegate to ENSA, Kim Lefmann reported good progress with the organization of the ICNS 2025, which will take place in Copenhagen and Lund. SNSS and PSI will apply to carry out ECNS 2027 in Basel.

d) ILL (Report by M. Janoschek):

ILL membership contract for 2024 is negotiated between SERI and ILL, with possible extension until 2030 or 2033 (expected shutdown of ILL). Approval of the final contract is expected soon. Decision about ILL closure is expected in 2 years. ILL Membership is very important for the CH neutron science community, especially for the time before the full start of ESS.

e) ESS (Report by M. Janoschek):

Swiss in-kind contributions progress very well. ESS’s next challenges are the circulator for the accelerator cooling and the license to start neutron production. Timeline and project progress is presented. Beam on target is expected in June 2025.

9. Update on the Swiss Neutron Science Roadmap

In 2021, SNSS published the Neutron Science Roadmap for the first time. It is a document that summarize the needs of the neutron science community to SCNAT and SERI and is thought to feed into the national roadmap 2027 for funding of national and international large-scale facilities

(https://www.sbf.admin.ch/sbfi/en/home/services/publications/data-base-publications/roadmap_research_infrastructures_2023.html). Funding is not guaranteed, but only those projects have a chance, which are in the document. Prioritization of the proposals are also based on the Roadmap. The timeline for preparation is tight due to delays in the process. Feedback and inputs from the neutron community are requested, preferably by end of June. Publication is expected at the end of 2024. Need for neutrons is still increasing, the overload is permanently above the healthy factor of 2 over the past years, the availability of other sources in Europe is limited, therefore appropriate financial support for the swiss neutron science is crucial.

10. Progress of the new Webpage and Logo

At the last GA decision was made to make new web-page. It will be soon available under a new address: <http://www.neutronscience.ch/>. Logo is designed by Neil Smith from <https://neilsmithillustration.co.uk/>. Exemplary pages were shown. M. Janoschek pointed out that the next issue of Swiss Neutron News will appear soon and thanked to Viviane Lutz-Bueno for editing it.

11. Varia

John White asked about the transition of Swiss beam time from ILL to ESS.

M. Janoschek: SERI expected ESS to start earlier and is aware of the problem caused by the ESS delay. SERI is working on extending funding for the ILL, allowing a Swiss membership at ILL until 2030 or maybe even 2033. A contract draft is available but is pending approval of the required extra funds from the Federal Council. It is also clear that 15 Instruments at ESS will not be a replacement for 45 Instruments at ILL, a fact to be pointed out in the update of the Neutron Science Roadmap. However, it seems to be more difficult to convince UK, Germany and France about the necessity of an extended run of ILL. But even if ESS turns into full operation, for sure there are major differences, e.g. particle physics is not offered. This is something to monitor.

Marc Janoschek thanks for attending and opens the Aperó.