Severe defects delay the opening of the SOLEIL beamlines to users
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Because of severe defects in the water cooling network supplying the beamlines, SOLEIL will be unable to open its experimental stations to external users as planned in September.

The synchrotron radiation beam induces a large thermal load on beamline components, which, if not evacuated, can lead to serious damage of beamline equipment. The pressurised cooled water network is the means by which this thermal load is evacuated.

From the very first pressure test, severe leaks were noticed in this cooling network, making it unusable. Consequently**,** SOLEIL could not formally accept delivery of the circuit. While waiting for the repair of the network, which is essential for the correct operation of beamlines, SOLEIL set up temporary palliative solutions. These are sufficient only to permit the commissioning of the first beamlines without being able to guarantee their full functionality. SOLEIL was then able to begin beamline commissioning but had to postpone the start of full beamline operation until this summer (in order to allow time for the repair of the cooling network).
It has now become obvious that the company in charge of this work will not be able to repair the cooling network before September, the date already anticipated for the opening of beamlines to external Users.

Consequently the SOLEIL Council decided, in its meeting of June 28th, to postpone the opening of the beamlines to external Users until the cooling network is fully operational. Until then access to the beamlines will be restricted to “expert scientific groups”. These are groups willing to come and collaborate with the SOLEIL beamline teams in experiments designed to test specific aspects of beamline performance, whilst accepting a degraded operational mode (the full design objectives of the beamlines cannot be achieved prior to the installation of the coolant network).

The situation which led to this (necessary) decision is very harmful to the scientific project at SOLEIL. It is all the more frustrating for SOLEIL and the scientific community, as the first tests clearly demonstrate the exceptional quality of the source and of the scientific equipment. SOLEIL and its staff will do all their very best to speed up the complete repair of this cooling network, which should take a couple of months.

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