



**British Embassy  
Paris**



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**Entente cordiale is alive and well in the world of science**

***Formal agreement paves way for new collaborations and scientific breakthroughs***

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed today by the Heads of Britain and France's next generation science facilities, the synchrotrons at Diamond Light Source and Soleil, in the presence of HM Ambassador, Sir John Holmes. The MoU will enable Diamond and Soleil to combine expertise to accomplish significant scientific goals. It formalises existing joint endeavours and paves the way for important new collaborations of significant benefit to the scientific communities in both countries.

Commenting at a special event hosted by the British Embassy to celebrate these new levels of co-operation, Sir John Holmes said; *"Promoting international science is a key element of the work of British embassies around the world. I'm delighted that the collaboration between Diamond and Soleil will lead to even greater co-operation and use of each others facilities."*

Dennis Raoux, Directeur General, Synchrotron-SOLEIL said: *"Electron beams now circulate in the SOLEIL ring at full energy, with already one third of the full current. The first users will be welcome in early 2007. We have already signed agreements with several synchrotrons, and we are very happy to sign today with Diamond. With this Memorandum, the UK and France will both have access to the best of both facilities. This agreement is all the more interesting since the scientific programmes of Diamond and SOLEIL are, to a large extent, complementary."*

Gerd Materlik, CEO of Diamond added; *"This official signing is paving the way for innovative collaborations between our two institutions way beyond what already exists; we are already exploring the infrared area with our colleagues at Soleil to identify where we could both benefit. This MoU will help us plan for a regular exchange of scientists and expertise, creating a world-class knowledge hub between the two facilities. Funding is, of course, a vital element to collaborations, and the EU already has a funding programme especially designed to facilitate trans-national access and joint research activities. This will enable us to integrate activities such as staff exchanges, conferences and workshops."*

For further information, please contact Isabelle Boscaro-Clarke, Head of Communications at Diamond Light Source on 00 44 (0)79 90 79 16 or Marie-Pauline Gacoin, Head of Communications at SOLEIL on (01) 69 35 90 15.



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**ENDS**

Note to Editors

Synchrotrons are like a series of super-microscopes which provide 'beams' of X-ray, ultra-violet, and infra-red light. Otherwise known as synchrotron light, these beams are a 100 billion times brighter than hospital X-ray machines, enabling scientists and engineers to look deep into the basic structure of matter. Researchers will be able to conduct highly advanced experiments leading to scientific breakthroughs in the fields of biotechnology, medicine environment and materials research.

In the spirit of entente cordiale, Diamond has also been setting up collaborations with other French Institutes. One of the projects is a biomedical collaboration led by Dr Thomas Sorensen. Dr Soresen comments, "*The new generation of synchrotrons will allow researchers to take on new challenges, one example being research into the function and 3-dimensional structure of membrane proteins. Membrane proteins are involved in numerous crucial cellular functions and it has been estimated that two-thirds of current drug discovery programmes are focussed on membrane proteins. However, our current knowledge about these important proteins is still limited illustrated by the fact that of the 30,000 know 3-dimensional models of proteins, fewer than 100 are membrane proteins. Progress has been slow for several reasons, but there is an exciting future in this field of research and the new generation of synchrotrons will have a major impact in this area.*"

SOLEIL's synchrotron radiation covers a very large range of wavelengths and techniques, from far infrared through ultra-violet to hard X-rays. In the field of life sciences, it allows macromolecular biocrystallography studies, but also infra-red microscopy (for early diagnosis of cancer for example), X-ray micro-imaging of cells and VUV imaging for biology and medicine. Furthermore, SOLEIL chose to be a multidisciplinary facility and will address many other fields, including materials science, nanosciences, physics and environmental studies. It also targets industry as well as social issues such as cultural and archaeological heritage. Users from fields across industry and science which require synchrotron radiation will gather at SOLEIL.