

LSST Dark Energy Science Collaboration
Policy on External Collaborators

Contents

Policy on External Collaborators

Introduction	
Scope of Approval	
Approval Process for External Collaborators	

May 3, 2018 (v1.0)

Drafted by the DESC Publication Board: Pierre Astier, Seth Digel, David Kirkby, Adam Mantz, Phil Marshall, Hiranya Peiris, Michael Wood-Vasey.

Licensed for re-use according to Creative Commons CC0 1.0 <https://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/zero/1.0/> To help track people's improvements and best practice, please acknowledge "LSST DESC Policy on External Collaborators" when re-using this document.

DESC Policy on External Collaborators

Introduction

The DESC Publication Policy recognizes that some DESC Projects¹ and publications may benefit from the participation of contributors who are not members of DESC, and not applying to join DESC, but are willing and able to work with DESC on specific Projects, typically providing expertise, data, or simulations not available within DESC. This document specifies the circumstances and process for participation of external collaborators.

The policy and procedures described here are relevant for establishing participation of individual external collaborators (perhaps more than one) in a given DESC Project. Joint work between DESC and other collaborations is not covered here; such arrangements should be negotiated between DESC and the collaborations on a case-by-case basis, and documented via memoranda of understanding. (The expectation is that in these cases the Spokesperson would negotiate MOUs for ratification by the Collaboration Council.)

Scope of Approval

In no circumstance can an external collaborator arrangement result in LSST data access being granted to someone who would not already have data rights based on national or institutional participation in LSST. For external collaborators without LSST data rights, the DESC data products that may be shared are limited to those that are either independent of the LSST data, or that are derived from and represent LSST data *in summary form only*, i.e., data products that are intended for eventual publication by DESC. If derived from LSST data, these DESC data products must be distinct and “value added” subsets or reductions. Examples of such summary products include supernova sample coordinates to enable follow-up, statistics such as correlation function estimates, and MCMC samples in joint cosmological and nuisance parameter space.

An external collaborator is understood to participate in the work on the Project, including as appropriate analyses and drafting the associated notes and papers.

External collaborators will be granted access to all DESC resources needed for their participation in the Project. This access is understood to be for work on the specific Project only. In general the access would

¹The DESC Publication Policy contains the definition of DESC “Projects”: their features include being advertised to the collaboration as soon as they are defined. We capitalize the term to emphasize that it has this technical definition. A DESC Project is a research topic leading to one or more publication. DESC Projects are not to be confused with the LSST Construction Project (which is often referred to as “the Project” and also usually appears capitalized).

not include DESC mailing lists or Slack channels, or GitHub repositories or Confluence spaces for specific working groups, but would include Project-specific lists, channels, repositories or spaces². Access of the external collaborator to DESC resources (repositories, etc., as needed for participation in the Project) will end with the conclusion of the Project.

See the DESC Publication Policy for policy on how external collaborators are included in the author lists of DESC publications.

Approval Process for External Collaborators

1. The Project leads, together with the external collaborator they would like to nominate, prepare a proposal. Ordinarily the proposal for external collaboration should be made at the time a Project is proposed to a science working group. If the need or utility of the participation of an external collaborator is recognized only later by the leads of the Project, a proposal can be made at any time. The proposal must be written, naming the Project and concisely addressing³:
 - the proposed role of the external collaborator in the Project⁴;
 - the motivation for the proposal, e.g., unique expertise, data, or simulations provided by the external collaborator, with a clear explanation of why this work cannot be undertaken by current DESC collaborators (see below);
 - what non-public DESC data products the external collaborator will need for this work;
 - a statement that the external collaborator agrees to use these data products only for the proposed joint work with DESC, not to use other non-public DESC data products, and not to redistribute these data products outside DESC.

The proposed external collaborator must agree to abide by the DESC Policy on External Collaborators, DESC Publication Policy, and DESC Professional Conduct Policy for this work with DESC⁵.

2. The Project leads submit the proposal to the relevant Working Groups for the Project. (If a Project belongs to a Task Force that does not have a primary ‘host’ analysis, computing, or technical Working Group, then the proposal must be made to DESC Management.) The conveners of the Working Groups consider input from the Working Group members, and the merits of the specific proposal for the external collaborator arrangement. The proposal should be circulated within the Working Group, and presented at a meeting of the Working Group, as part of giving Working Group members an opportunity to comment. The best-effort time limit for this Working Group stage of the process is **two weeks**.
3. If the Working Group conveners are inclined to accept the proposal, they then circulate it to DESC membership⁶ for a **one week** comment period⁷. The primary considerations are whether the external

²If broader access to DESC mailing lists or Slack channels, and GitHub repositories or Confluence spaces is felt to be necessary for participation in the Project, then the applicant may want to consider whether an application for DESC membership would be more appropriate.

³A proposal template is available in Confluence.

⁴External collaborators can be proposed for participation in a specific Project, not a series of Projects.

⁵These policies are publicly available at <http://lsst-desc.org/Collaborators>. The proposed external collaborator must send an e-mail message to lsst-desc-ext-collab@slac.stanford.edu with a brief statement indicating agreement to abide by these policies in working with DESC.

⁶This would ordinarily be via e-mail to the lsst-desc-members@slac.stanford.edu list announcing the proposed external collaborator, the working group and the project.

⁷If one of the conveners is conflicted (e.g., a leader of the Project), they should not participate in the decision to circulate the proposal. If both are conflicted, the decision is up to the relevant coordinator for that working group (analysis, computing and simulations, or technical).

collaborator brings essential or unique expertise to the project, and/or unique data. If the expertise is not unique, i.e., if similar expertise exists within the Working Group or DESC as a whole, the conveners should establish whether the existing members would be able to lend their expertise to the project on an appropriate time scale.

4. If a **viable DESC-internal alternative is found**, with the concurrence of the Project leads, the Project leads will **withdraw the external collaborator proposal**.
5. If internal candidates have offered to fill the role, but the conveners are still inclined to approve the external collaborator proposal, they must first inform the internal candidates. These candidates will have the opportunity to appeal. Ordinarily, appeals would be made to the relevant coordinator (analysis, computing and simulations, or technical) who oversees the Working Group.

If the relevant coordinator is conflicted, e.g., a lead of the Project in question, then the appeal is considered by the Spokesperson. In either case, the decision by the coordinator or Spokesperson on whether the internal candidate has the required expertise and availability to meet the need described in the external collaborator proposal is final, and the process of appeal and decision must be complete within **one week**.

6. If at the end of the comment period (and once any appeals are exhausted), **no DESC-internal alternative for the proposed contribution is identified**, the conveners will **approve the external collaborator arrangement**.
7. The DESC membership, and the proposed external collaborator should then be informed of the decision by the Working Group conveners. After approval, the external collaborator must be registered by the Working Group leads in the entry for the Project in the Publication Management System. The approved proposal must also be uploaded into the entry for the Project.

Figure 1 is a flow-chart version of these steps.

The timeline described above should take no more than four weeks. For fairness and transparency within DESC, in all cases, the participation of the external collaborator **must be proposed, and approved, before participation of the external collaborator can begin**.

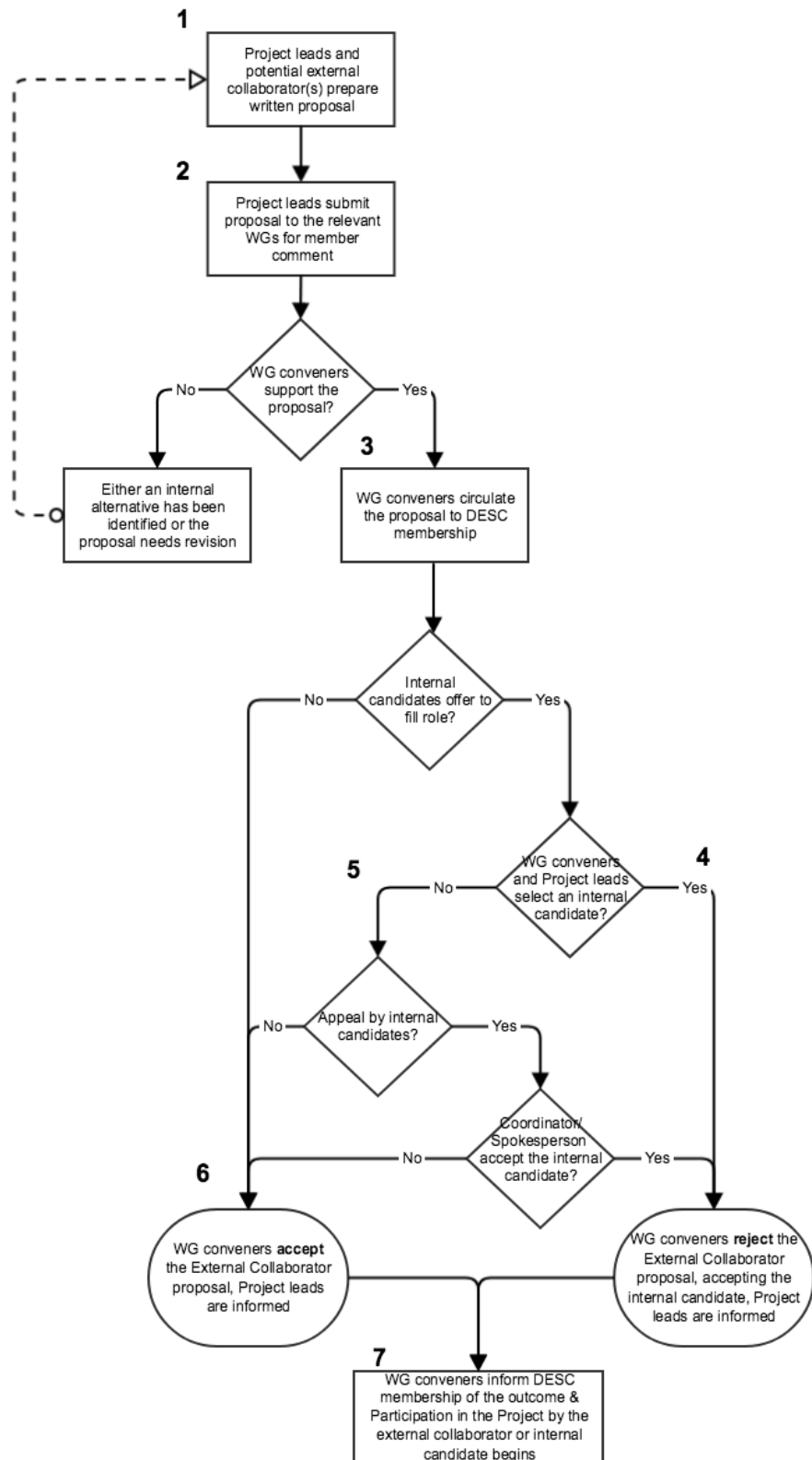


Figure 1: Schematic representation of the review and approval process for External Collaborator proposals. The numbers correspond to the steps described in the text.