

Lessons learned for remote operation on ASDEX Upgrade during the Covid-19 pandemic

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With the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic in spring 2020, experimental operations at ASDEX Upgrade came to a temporary halt, as for health reasons and due to regulations, many of the people necessary for operations and the scientific programme could not enter the institute premises, and only a very small number of people were allowed to enter the control room itself.

However, thanks to the use and optimisation of various existing and new tools, experimental operations at ASDEX Upgrade could be resumed after a short time with almost no restrictions. The programme planned for 2020, both by internal proponents and with the participation of partners from EUROfusion and other international associations, was almost fully completed. Likewise, the planning and implementation of the current 2021 campaign could continue as usual.

This contribution presents the tools provided by CODAC to enable and facilitate the smooth running of ASDEX Upgrade with a minimum number of people present on site, especially with regard to the planning, preparation and execution of the experiments as well as their evaluation and the scientific review of the results. Further possibilities for improvement are also discussed.

Several of the tools applied not only enable experiments to be conducted with remote participation, but also have the capacity to promote the efficiency of experiment operation. It is therefore likely that they will remain in use after the end of the pandemic. Furthermore, the experience gained here can contribute to the discussion of what efficient remote participation might look like in other experiments such as JT-60SA or ITER.

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