

## Case Study

### **Wilton Park: The Big Bang and the Interfaces of Knowledge: towards a common language?**

In June 2012 the Sir Halley Stewart Trust awarded a grant of £20,000 towards the October 2012 Wilton Park Conference in Nyon, Switzerland, in partnership with the European Organisation for Nuclear Research (CERN).



**Wilton Park**  
Harnessing the power of dialogue

Scientific and religious leaders from across the world attended the event. The objective was to give each community the opportunity to present their different understandings of the nature of the Big Bang, space, time and the formation of the Universe. What understandings might scientists and theologians share in common? How are their paradigms shaped and developed? Is it possible to develop a common framework or language?

The project culminated in wide dissemination of outcomes and gained global attention. The 2012 conference report stated that *"...Although it is possible to access a measure of common language this conference has shown that words like truth, proof and faith have divergent meanings in different disciplines. Nonetheless all participants seem to have a common passion for rationality and awe along with a sense that as a human family we need to address our common problems."*

The report concluded that: *"The interfaces of language are complex and subtle and theologians, philosophers and scientists all need to work hard to firstly understand what other disciplines are saying in their own terms"*.

This body of work led to a second conference being held in 2014 entitled ***The Big Bang and the interfaces of knowledge: towards a common understanding of the Truth?*** Its purpose was to *"widen the spectrum of scientists, theologians and philosophers involved and to deepen the dialogue towards a common understanding of truth"*.

The Trust awarded a further grant of £5,000 in June 2014 to disseminate the outcomes from this second conference, which sought to continue a dialogue between science and religion by focusing on the nature and understanding of truth – a key theme that had been identified during the first conference.



For more information on these pioneering conferences, please visit:  
[www.wiltonpark.org.uk/conference/wp1316/#conference\\_introduction](http://www.wiltonpark.org.uk/conference/wp1316/#conference_introduction)