

OPTICON I3 Board Meeting 6

Meeting held at IBMC, Porto, 10-11 November 2008

Present:			
R Albrecht	ESA, ST-ECF		
J Allington-Smith	UDUR (WP3)	P Grosbøl	ESO (N3.6 FASE)
J Andersen	NOTSA	S Howard (minutes)	UCAM/ OPTICON Secretary
J Bergeron	INSU/ IAP	N Hubin	ESO (JRA1)
W Boland	NOVA (Board Chair)	G Kanbach	MPA (JRA3)
M Carvalho-Dias	EC Project Manager	E Oliva	EAS
A Chelli	Grenoble (JRA4)	J Pablo Garcia Coello	IAC (N2 ENO and N6.2 Access Office)
C Cunningham	UK ATC (JRA5)	A Quirrenbach	LSW (N5 Interferometry)
J Davies	UK ATC/ Proj. Scientist	J Seiradakis	GNCA
M Dennefeld	IAP (N6.3 Enhancement)	A Shearer	NUIG (N3.3 HTRA)
R-J Dettmar	RDS	A Sosa	IAC (N2 ENO and N6.2 Access Office)
P Feautrier	Grenoble (JRA2)		
R Garcia Lopez	RA3/ IAC	P Vettolani	INAF
G Gilmore	UCAM/ Co-ordinator	F Zerbi	INAF (JRA6)
R Gredel	MPIA		
Apologies:			
J Burgos Martin	IAC	M Kessler	ESA
S D'Odorico	ESO	R Rebolo	IAC
P Garcia	CAUP	H Spruit	MPA (JRA3)
A Gomez de Castro	Univ. Complutense de Madrid (N3.2 NUVA)	C Vincent	STFC
J-M Hameury	INSU	O von der Lüche	KIS
I Hook	Univ. of Oxford (N3.1 ELT)		

[NB: all presentations are available on the OPTICON website]

http://www.astro-opticon.org/board_mtg6_november08.html

DAY ONE – 10 November 2008

1. Welcome and Introduction

WB welcomed all participants, especially newcomers, and apologies were noted. The CAUP hosts introduced themselves and it was noted that Mario Monteiro, CAUP's Director had been unavoidably detained and would join the meeting later in the day.

1.1 Minutes/ actions of last meeting

There were no outstanding issues from the last meeting, which was the Mid-Term Review in Corfu, September 2007. All actions were related to FP7 preparation, which is now complete.

1.2 Election of new Chair

A new Chairperson will take over from W Boland at the start of the FP7 programme. Roland Gredel was nominated as the new Chair, but a formal vote would be taken on day 2, to allow any further candidates to be put forward.

2. Development of CAUP/ astronomy in Portugal

This talk was provided by Mario Monteiro on day 2 of the meeting, and delegates were invited to attend a tour of CAUP after the meeting.

3. EC FP7 Perspective

Maria Carvalho-Dias gave a presentation on the EC ambitions for the FP7 programme: a vision of ERA with global dimension, informing the Board that the FP7 roadmap will be updated in December 2008, and that the proposed planning of future calls will be finalised in March 2009. She acknowledged the excellence of the OPTICON project.

4. Strategy and FP7 overview

A presentation was provided by G Gilmore on the FP6/ FP7 status. He explained about the long administrative and legal process of finalising the contract with the EC and about the big strategic issues for FP7: building the European astronomical community (via access and network programmes), strengthening the community consistently with agreed strategic goals (E-ELT), supporting promising long-term technological developments which are potentially of very high European value (KTN planning work).

There are significantly fewer partners in FP7 compared to FP6 (25 institutes have been removed to match administrative load to available effort), which has caused considerable upset: this shows that the community considers involvement within OPTICON as highly desirable. GG asked the Board for ideas on how to involve a larger community in OPTICON, with the suggestion of Associate Partners or a 'Superboard'. It was decided that a small Working Group should be set up to develop plans ahead of the JENAM 2009 meeting in April. The group is also asked to prepare a proposal on how important issues and information will be distributed throughout the community.

5. OPTICON FP6 Status and Overview

J Davies gave a presentation on FP6 from the financial and administrative perspective.

He informed the Board that there are no major financial concerns for the FP6 final budgeting and it appears that the out-turn will be very close to the planned 19.2 million Euro budget. Plans would need to be made for the existing cash balance (approx. 786K), which is mostly earned but as yet unrefunded user fees. JD's proposal to the Board was:

- Make any urgently needed payments before end 2008 for cash flow limited contractors;
- Retain balance at UCAM until early 2009 then pay it out to smaller, and in particular FP6 only, contractors on receipt of audited form C's to close out the FP6 activity at these contractors in a timely way;
- Refund remaining partners once FP6 final report accepted and EC release retained cash.

The Board accepted this proposal. It was noted that FP6 funding cannot be spent beyond 31 December 2008, except for audit fees and management costs associated with the preparation of the final annual report.

6. Activities

Presentations were provided by the PIs on the achievements of FP6 and plans for FP7.

6.1	Adaptive Optics	N Hubin
6.2	Fast CCDs for AO	P Feautrier
6.3	Astrophotronics	J Allington-Smith
6.4	High-Time Resolution Astronomy	A Shearer
6.5	Interferometry in Europe – JRA work	A Chelli
6.6	Interferometry in Europe – EII and plans	A Chelli (on behalf of P Garcia)

End of Day One

DAY TWO – 11 November 2008

6.7	Smart Focal Planes	C Cunningham
6.8	Fast pn detectors for Astrophysics	G Kanbach
6.9	Smart Materials	F Zerbi
6.10	Key Technology Network	C Cunningham

New Chair of the Board

R Gredel was elected as the new Chairperson for FP7.

7. Community Networking

7.1	ELT Science Case	G Gilmore (on behalf of I Hook)
7.2	Ultra Violet Astronomy	M Dennefeld (on behalf of A I Gomez de Castro)

M Dennefeld asked the Board to reconsider the concept of NUVA in the future FP7 extension, to support community efforts to take a minority role in the next large UV mission in collaboration with NASA.

7.3	Software Futures	P Grosbøl
7.4	Solar Astronomy in EAST	G Gilmore (on behalf of O von der Lüche)

8. Telescope Access and Development

8.1	OPTICON Access Programme in FP6 and NA2 activities	A Sosa
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JD noted that although the setting up of the Access office had been done as a matter of urgency during the final phase of the FP6 proposal writing, the outcome had been very positive and an excellent working relationship had developed between the participants.

8.2	Developing the Community	M Dennefeld
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8.3	OPTICON Access Programme in FP7	J Davies
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JD began by making a final remark about the FP6 access, which has come out with a final spend of 99.89% of the plan and, due to rebalancing between 4m and 2m telescopes has delivered more observing units than specified in the contract

Turning to FP7 JD noted that the telescope directors forum had agreed to a split of night and day access programmes. The solar programme will be delegated to the new EAST network which will run a solar TAC and pay solar travel grants. The split had been set at 14%-86% by JKD as a starting point for discussion. MD noted that this was based on the ratio in the FP6 programme. JD remarked he felt this ratio was a strategic issue and invited the board to comment. After a brief discussion the board did not see any case for changing the ratio of the access budget devoted to the solar programme.

9. Implementing the AstroNet Strategy

G Gilmore gave a brief presentation on the AstroNet strategy and the Medium Telescopes Review (ETSRC).

10. A.O.B.

This was the last FP6 Board meeting. CAUP was thanked for organising this meeting. W Boland closed the meeting by thanking G Gilmore, J Davies and S Howard for their hard work running the management office throughout FP6. The next meeting will be a 'kick-off' FP7 meeting to coincide with the JENAM 2009 to be held at the University of Hertfordshire, Hatfield, UK, April 20-23 2009. S Howard will keep the Board members informed.

End of Day Two