

OPTICON I3 Board Meeting 1

Meeting held at 'het Pand', University of Ghent, Ghent, Belgium

April 1+2, 2004

Day One – April 1 2004

Present:			
R Albrecht	ESA, ST-ECF	A Jorrissen	Belgium
J Andersen	NOTSA	P Kern	Grenoble
E J Bakker	Leiden	J Kuypers	Belgium
P Benvenuti	INAF	S Lilly	SANW
J Bergeron	IAP	O van der Luhe	KIS
W Boland	NOVA	G Monnet	ESO
D Bomans	RDS	F Moreno-Insertis	RA3
S Brierley (minutes)	UK ATC	P Moschopoulos	EC
J Burgos	IAC	B Nordstrom	EAS
A Chelli	Grenoble	A Omont (Chair)	IAP
C Cunningham	UKATC	A Quirrenbach	Leiden
J Davies	UKATC	J Seiradakis	GNCA
H Dejonghe	Belgium	R Sirey	PPARC
M Dennefeld	IAP	C Sterken	Belgium
M Desmeth	Belgium	J Strasser	ESO
P Dierickx	ESO	J Surdej	Univ of Liege
P Feautrier	Grenoble	G Vettolani	INAF
G Gilmore	UCAM	C Waelkens	Belgium
A Gomez de Castro	Madrid	S Wagner	LSW
N Hubin	ESO	F Zerbi	Brera
Absent:			
H-W Rix	MPIA		

April 1:

1. Welcome

A Omont welcomed the attendees to the first official meeting that marked the beginning of the FP6 contract. He stated that this was an important opportunity for the European Community.

A Omont also welcomed and thanked the hosts, the Belgian representative Herwig Dejonghe and Monnik Desmeth for their hospitality.

On behalf of the Board, he thanked the EC for their support and the large amount of work done by the proposal and contract writing teams.

He added it was important to set the location and the time of the next Board meeting by the end of this meeting. Invitations exist from France (2004) Italy (2005) and UK (2006).

Action 1 All - Set time and location for next Board meeting by 2 April 2004(Done later)

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from the following:

H Pervo (EC), A Gimenez, represented by R Albrecht (ESA, ST-ECF), S White (MPA), represented by S Wagner, R-J Dettmar, represented by D Bomans (RDS), T de Zeeuw (UL), represented by A Quirrenbach; R Rebolo, (IAC), represented by J Burgos.

All attendees introduced themselves to the Board.

3. Approval of Agenda

The Agenda was approved with the addition of the presentation by P Moschopoulous.

4. Approval of minutes of Meeting Zero

P Benvenuti wished it to be known that, contrary to the minutes of meeting zero, at the time of the meeting he had already moved to INAF.

Action 2 J Davies: Correct minutes of Meeting Zero for P Benvenuti's new affiliation

The minutes of meeting zero were otherwise approved.

5. OPTICON Contract update (cf [<tbc>](http://www.astro-opticon.org))

P Moschopoulous presented an OPTICON Contract update. He stated he would talk about where OPTICON stands in term of the contract and that finally he would say a few words about the future.

He commented he was confident the OPTICON contract would be signed around Easter-time.

P Moschopoulous stated the Contract start date is as of January 1st 2004. This means that costs and user fees for telescope time can be charged to the project from that date. The Contract duration is 60 months.

Form A for each of the Participants is required to be sent to the EC by the Coordinator, G Gilmore, as soon as possible.

P Moschopoulous pointed out that any new Participant added to the Contract must be funded out of the existing €9.2m and the addition of a new member requires a unanimous vote by the other contractors.

5.1 Reporting

In terms of financial reporting, he pointed out that all eligible costs and receipts of the project should be declared, in keeping with the EC rules.

Progress reports are to be submitted 45 days after the end of each reporting period. Subsequent to their approval, the EC will issue future payment after a further 45 days.

He pointed out that this is different from the FP5 Contract. Unless everything is complete, the 45 days do not start to be counted, so it is essential that reporting is done in a timely manner.

5.2 Costs

In terms of eligible costs, P Moschopoulous stated that amounts can be shifted between activities (as long as they comply with Annex 1). Costs must be 'actual, economic and necessary'. The costs incurred must follow the legal entities' requirements for their staff.

5.3 FP7

P Moschopoulous commented that outline plans for FP7 are nearing completion. Wide consultation is being done by the EC. Research Ministers and the European Parliament will make the decision.

In conclusion, P Moschopoulous addressed the Board wishing the OPTICON FP6 programme success. The presentation will be made available to the attendees.

5.4 Discussion

A Omont thanked P Moschopoulous for his presentation. A Omont stated that FP7 was the crucial point to discuss in the coming year as the proposals under discussion now were very important for European Astronomy. He also stated that it would be necessary to convince the politicians that the amount of support would need to be increased and they looked to Mr. Moschopoulous for his support.

S Lilly stated that although Switzerland is part of FP6, he understands that there is confusion over funding arrangements and he wished the Board to be aware of that. P Moschopoulous stated that the EC position is very clear and he was unable to see a way that the budget could be increased with any additional funding coming to OPTICON from the EC. He pointed out that funding could be switched between participants or an agreement reached with the Swiss Government on how the Swiss partners would be funded.

In response to a further query regarding subcontracting costs, P Moschopoulous stated that small changes to sub-contracts do not require prior approval from the EC. Shifting amounts is flexible but the amounts must correspond to the eligible costs rules (see above).

6. Agree the Rules of Procedure

R Sirey pointed out that, regarding this Agenda item, it was customary to agree the Rules of Procedure although they could be changed if required.

S Lilly suggested that, with regard to section 9 in the Rules of Procedure, 'Conflicts of Interest', if conflict of interest is declared regarding an item then the Board Member should not be able to vote on that item. In addition, he commented that a 'conflict of interest' can be personal as well as institutional so this should be clarified.

It was agreed that section 9 in the Rules of Procedure regarding Conflicts of Interest would be clarified.

Action 3 R Sirey Clarify Conflicts of Interest in the Rules of Procedure

The Rules of Procedure, as detailed in the OPTICON Consortium Agreement, were otherwise agreed by the Board Members.

7. Coordinator's Report on I3 Project Status

G Gilmore presented his Coordinator's Report.

He pointed out the improvement in the FP6 contract over the FP5 contract as it gives the participants more flexibility. He thanked P Moschopoulous for all his hard work in realising the FP6 contract.

The 'Form A' Accession to Contract forms have been signed by UCAM and will be sent out to the participants together with a copy of the contract, to be individually signed and returned.

He also gave thanks to R Sirey, J Andersen and W Boland for putting the Consortium Agreement together.

G Gilmore had attended the RadioNet FP6 Board Meeting in March in La Laguna. He suggested that OPTICON should invite a RadioNet representative to subsequent OPTICON Board Meetings.

Action 4 G Gilmore: Invite RadioNet representative to next OPTICON Board Meeting

G Gilmore commented on other I3 initiatives, specifically ILIAS, an I3 Access programme which is now exclusively concerned with particle physics. All cosmic ray and high-energy astrophysics research was rejected by the EC from the ILIAS proposal, as it had been from OPTICON. His other activities on behalf of OPTICON included membership of a taskforce related to astronomy at Dome-C.

Regarding the FP5 contract, he hopes to receive all the outstanding reports shortly.

He stated that it was necessary to have a Board Meeting at least once a year and agreed that it should be decided later on in this meeting when the next would be held (*See Action 1*).

G Gilmore emphasised the overall goal of the OPTICON FP6 programme – to strengthen the European Astronomical community and develop an ELT. He stated that OPTICON provides a way of talking to the EC and thinking towards FP7. This process is already underway, and should become a focus of Board effort over the next 2 years.

Regarding the role of the OPTICON Board, he stated that a key question is whether OPTICON is complete or should consider the future inclusion of new members, for example from the high energy or astroparticle communities.

He stated the purpose of the Board was to set strategic goals and the Executive Committee is where operational issues would be decided.

7.2 Discussion

There was debate amongst Board members regarding the relationship between the Board and the Committee. It was pointed out the OPTICON Consortium Agreement delineated the responsibilities of both the OPTICON Board and the Executive Committee and the latter implemented the strategic decisions of the Board.

It was generally agreed that it was difficult to start a Board meeting cold. Regarding preparation for a Board meeting, it was stated it would be useful to have an outline strategy document in preparation for the next Board meeting regarding the role of OPTICON in FP7. W Boland commented that there was a lack of detailed knowledge of the networks, and their plans. Written reports as well as presentations might also be useful for subsequent Board meetings.

A Omont commented that these were good suggestions and he thought a strategy document should be put together over the next 6 months, in preparation for the next Board meeting, to include some thinking about what European Astronomy needs.

R Sirey suggested that a full position statement on what each of the agencies wanted to get out of OPTICON could be put to the Coordinator who would use this as a seed to start the overall strategy discussion.

M Denefeld commented that a useful starting point document is on the EAS website. [www2.iap.fr/eas/priorities.html]

Action 5 G Gilmore: Prepare a discussion paper on the role of OPTICON in FP7, based on input from Board members, and considering the EAS document

G Gilmore stated that this paper would be submitted for consideration by the Board.

Action 6 All: To send a list of issues for discussion document to G Gilmore by July 1 2004

There was further discussion amongst Board members regarding the integration of new members. G Gilmore posed the question that it might be worth setting up a meeting in central Europe to find out what people want for FP7. The Board agreed this would be useful.

Action 7 G Gilmore: Arrange a future workshop associated with a Board meeting in Central Europe, to discuss ambitions and requirements for FP7

J Andersen pointed out that it was required to convince the EC that Europe needs to be in a more competitive position with the US and that this should be attempted for FP7.

The Board discussed the integration of new members to the FP6 programme. J Davies asked the Board to consider the potential added value of the new members who may, in addition, bring extra funds to the programme.

There was some discussion on other techniques and initiatives and what should be done. O von der Luhe stated he would like to give a presentation on Solar Physics at one of the next Board meetings.

Action 9 O von der Luhe: Prepare a discussion document, and lead a discussion on the possible relationship between OPTICON and the Solar Physics community, for a future Board meeting.

S Wagner pointed out that there was general uneasiness amongst astrophysicists that they were not getting as much support as they should be getting resources provided for particle astrophysics research. He believes that astrophysicists are not sufficiently represented. As such, he proposes that there be stronger links between OPTICON and ApPEC.

A Omont concluded from this discussion that OPTICON should establish strong links with all the other initiatives, particularly with regard to FP7. G Gilmore agreed that a meeting should be arranged.

Action 10 G Gilmore: Arrange meeting with, among others, representatives of ApPEC and ILIAS and other high-energy/cosmic ray astronomical initiatives, to consider the best representation of this community in FP7.

A Omont commented he would like someone to comment more on the relationship of OPTICON to the European Science Foundation and the European Research Council. G Gilmore stated that the proposal was partially developed for a sort of super-OPTICON but these efforts had been abandoned. He agreed that at some point the Board should decide if it is something to consider for the future.

The discussion was subsequently closed.

8. Project Scientist's Report + FP5 final report status

J Davies outlined his aims in the presentation were to report briefly on FP5 and then move on to FP6.

The FP5 contract was completed at the end of February 2004. He stated that more than half of the financial reports requested from the participants are still to arrive and urged them to send them as soon as possible. FP5 deliverables were described in Chania and that information will not be repeated here.

Regarding the FP6 programme, all 6 JRAs have met and some of the Networks have met or set up twikis to start this process. [<http://twiki.org/>]

The first N1 FP6 deliverable has been produced – this is the OPTICON website (www.astro-opticon.org).

J Davies commented that the OPTICON Project Office was, in reality, a 'distributed network' of people in Edinburgh, Cambridge and La Laguna and that those resources were quite limited.

Regarding the organisation of the Network activities, he clarified that he had no intention of micromanaging networks but has some oversight over them.

8.1 Financial Issues

J Davies pointed out that the EU money will initially come to Cambridge and then be distributed to individual contractors who then will distribute it in turn.

Regarding the contractors in the Access programme, however, the travel grants for users will be delegated entirely to IAC access office managed by J Burgos. The user fees for the telescopes will however go direct to the telescope operators from UCAM, not through the Access office.

8.2 Travel to Board and Executive meetings

There is no budget specified in the contract for travel to board meetings. A proposal was made for the majority of agencies to use money from their overhead, with special arrangements being made for some contractors with small or zero budgets.

8.3 Approval of JRA and Network leaders

J Davies stated that the consortium agreement requires that the Board approves the network and JRA leaders since the presentations from these individuals had not yet been made he proposed that the existing leaders be approved today, with the option to re-visit this issue in the future.

Action 11 All: Board to approve JRA and Network leaders. (1 April 2004: this is now complete, see 8.4 below).

8.4 Discussion

A Omont thanked J Davies for his presentation.

A Omont asked the Board if anyone had any objections to the list of JRA and Network leaders which currently reflects the activities in the contract.

The current list was approved by the Board.

N Hubin agreed that it should be discussed how the finer financial details, for example the audits and timesheets are going to be managed. G Gilmore stated that it is a potentially complex issue, as the budget is built up on a work package basis, but the finances are distributed and reported on a national boundary basis: This makes it less easy to manage.

There was considerable discussion on the issue of managing networking funds via either 'national banks' or directly by the institution of the network chairs.

F Moreno-Insertis stated that he was not clear which national agencies were going to pay for which sub-activity e.g. web pages. He asked whether there could be clearer guidelines. There are few specific staff costs outlined in the contract. The main budget is for travel costs.

S Wagner commented that, for example, Ireland does not have a national agency in which case, who will approve and pay for their travel? J Davies stated that the Network chair will have to find the best way of doing this or, alternatively, talking to the Project Office. It will be the same for a number of countries, e.g. Belgium. M Desmeth said that it was the responsibility of the inviting coordinator which J Davies agreed with, adding that he could not see it any other way. J Davies further added there was a limited amount of money but there was plenty of flexibility. The person who holds the meeting should have a clear idea of the budget. J Davies stated that in FP5 the arrangement was consistent and ran quite well. From a PPARC perspective there is a guideline budget per network and he will not approve travel to

meetings which does not comply with the budget. Providing all agencies adhere to some sort of control like this it should turn out alright. J Davies added that for the Networks alone, the budget can be managed by him if people wish to do it this way.

J Seiradakis commented that NOA will receive user fees directly and that they may get matching funds if they can be allocated a local national budget.

A Omont commented that, from the discussion, it was clear that myriad cases have to be dealt with and this will make it difficult to manage. As a Board perspective, it has to be made obvious that there is a clear responsibility for the leaders to provide a clear view of how the money is spent and there will have to be some kind of approval, formal or otherwise, on spending this money which is clearly a matter for the Executive Committee.

Regarding the financial issues, A Omont and G Monnet stated that the way in which the money would be distributed and sent would be discussed at the Executive committee meeting. J Davies stated that regarding the Executive Committee meeting, anyone who wants to give input should do so during the meeting.

AFTERNOON

JRA Projects' Status

**(ALL PRESENTATIONS WILL BE AVAILABLE ON THE WWW: cf
www.astro-opticon.org/<tbc>)**

9. JRA1: Adaptive Optics

N Hubin presented the Joint Research Activity on Adaptive Optics

One of the conclusions reached in the presentation is that the management and monitoring/reporting tools have already been defined. N Hubin has provided DOC and XLS templates for partner institutes to complete, including also a web page with password. These XLS templates include hardware and effort broken down by each work package and indicate if the effort is charged to the EC or is matching funds.

A potentially important issue is that the EC budget is now restricted to exactly 50:50 matched funding. Previously, larger funds were guaranteed by national partners. With this new contract structure, will those additional resources, which are essential to deliver the agreed program, still be assured?

9.1 Discussion

A Omont thanked the JRA chair for his presentation.

C Cunningham suggested people use the same forms as supplied by N Hubin for the monitoring of JRA1.

P Moschopoulous clarified that the EC funds 50% of the JRA costs and therefore the audit certificates should only reflect that part of the total project cost such that the EC's 50% contribution is at the budgeted level. He did not address the issue of the imposed change in national guarantees.

J Burgos wished to point out that IAC should not be confused with Grantecan.

P Kern asked about ESO's relationship with AURA:

There is an ESO-AURA MOU on coordination of some mutually-beneficial ELT technical developments, some parts of which are actually funded by OPTICON. G Monnet clarified the agreement with AURA as being a grass-roots collaboration. G Gilmore commented that he hoped OPTICON would support this agreement. A Omont also said OPTICON should try to endorse this collaboration, as G Gilmore had suggested. P Benvenuti requested that the full details of the agreement be made available. G Monnet stated he would send the details of the ESO agreement with AURA to the OPTICON Board for their review. G Monnet requested that at the next Board meeting, if possible, he would like to receive the Board's approval of this collaboration.

Action 12 G Monnet: Provide the Board with details of ESO's agreement with AURA

Note: this action was discharged later in the meeting.

A Omont stated that on the basis of the information on the relationship between ESO-AURA being provided, the Board was in agreement.

10. JRA2: Fast Optical detectors for AO

P Feautrier presented the JRA2 on Fast Optical Detectors for AO.
No specific issues were raised

A Omont thanked the JRA chair for his presentation.

11. JRA3: Fast Detectors for Astronomy

S Wagner presented the JRA3 on Fast Detectors for Astronomy
No specific issues were raised

A Omont thanked the JRA chair for his presentation.

12. JRA4: Interferometry

A Chelli presented the JRA4 on Interferometry.

12.1 Discussion

A Omont thanked the JRA chair for his presentation.

P Moschopoulos asked whether the software, developed under work package 2, will be open-source. O von der Luhe asked whether users be allowed to plug in their own software.

A Chelli clarified that many of the decisions had not yet been made but things will become clearer in the coming months.

13. JRA5: Smart Focal Planes

C Cunningham presented the JRA5 on Smart Focal Planes.
An issue arose regarding the definition of 'scientific developments' as related to techniques developed during this JRA.

13.1 Discussion

A Omont thanked the JRA chair for his presentation.

G Monnet commented that if someone has contributed to the intellectual development of an instrument, by virtue of an early involvement at the basic technology stage, then it must be recognised. C Cunningham recognised that this is an issue.

C Cunningham commented that tracking staff costs is going to be the same across the JRAs and they need to make sure that they all use the same tools. He emphasised that technology roadmaps must feed back into the Key Technology working groups and he has got some idea of how this is going to feed back into the JRAs.

G Gilmore stated that the phrase “scientific development” is not formally defined in the contract in relation to the Intellectual Property Rights, but arises in the Consortium Agreement. C Cunningham stated that our own individual rules are set out in the Consortium Agreement regarding the IPRs and that as long as it is documented, it should be fine.

P Moschopoulous stated that it was still possible at this stage to add an amendment to the Consortium Agreement and this was the time to do it.

Action 13 G Gilmore: Clarify the term ‘scientific developments’ in 12.8.1.b of the Consortium Agreement with the UCAM lawyers.

OUTCOME: The intention of this term is to enable further scientific advances and internal research. As soon as this might lead to commercial work, such as a bid to construct a scientific facility, the licencing arrangements of section 12.3 apply.

14. JRA6: VPH Gratings

F Zerbi presented the JRA6 on Volume Phase Holographic Gratings.

He stated that the ultimate goal of this activity is to have a science grade VPHG.

His plan is to report on the activity and results every 3 months, not more than that. He will accept the decision of the Board regarding reports.

Over an 18 month period they will hold two reviews: one in the middle and one at the end i.e. every 9 months.

14.1 Discussion

A Omont thanked the JRA6 chair for his presentation

G Gilmore gave some information regarding spectrographs being designed around VPH Gratings; the AAO have built one completely around VPHG.

A Omont stated to the Board that before the meeting is closed, G Gilmore would read modifications to the Rules of Procedure addendum regarding ‘Conflicts of Interest’. G Gilmore asked whether S Lilly was happy with the modification. He stated that he was. The revised addendum was agreed by the Board and is attached to the minutes.

A Omont thanked everyone involved in the meeting, and this concluded Day One of the OPTICON Board Meeting.

End of Day One

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Day Two – April 2 2004

Present:			
R Albrecht	ESA, ST-ECF	A Jorrissen	Belgium
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C Cunningham	UKATC	A Quirrenbach	Leiden
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G Gilmore	IoA	C Waelkens	Belgium
A Gomez de Castro	Madrid	S Wagner	LSW
N Hubin	ESO	F Zerbi	Brera
I Hook	Oxford		
Absent:			
H-W Rix	MPIA		

(ALL PRESENTATIONS WILL BE AVAILABLE ON THE WWW: cf www.astro-opticon.org/<tbc>)

1. European Large Telescope Design Study

P Dierickx presented his status report on the ELT Design Study.

1.1 Discussion

A Omont thanked the Project Manager P Dierickx for his presentation.

A Omont emphasised that it was difficult to have a complete discussion today. The OPTICON involvement will depend on the success of the proposal but it is clear that it is a major goal for European astronomy. A Omont commented that P Dierickx should ensure there is overlap with the Key Technologies working group.

C Cunningham asked whether there was a fallback position if the proposal does not succeed. P Dierickx stated there were resources available at ESO so that, if the proposal is not approved, some effort planned for Phase A will be shifted to Phase B. It would still be a major drawback.

G Monnet commented that, from ESO's point of view, they do not want this activity to be lost. If the Design Study is only funded partially, they will work on a smaller scale to retain leadership in ELT (and not explicitly OWL) technologies. Of course, it would be on a reduced scale and the level would have to be discussed by the ESO Council.

O von der Luhe asked whether industrial sub-contracts figure in the proposal. P Dierickx commented they were below 10% of the total but the large industrial partners put up 50% matching funds as part of their contribution to the activity.

2. Network and Access Activities

2.1 N2: ENO

J Burgos presented the NA2 activity.

2.1.1 Discussion

A Omont commented that this was the only area where OPTICON had an outreach programme. Outreach activities are included within OPTICON and should be a major area in promoting European Astronomy.

G Gilmore stated that J Sieradakis had brought this up at a previous meeting. It has not been acted on yet but G Gilmore will bring up this issue of public outreach as a complementary programme.

Action 14 G Gilmore: Prepare the topic of Public Outreach as an agenda item for discussion at future Board meeting

2.2 N3: Structuring activities

2.2.1 WP3.1 ELT

I Hook presented the 3.1 ELT workpackage.

A Omont thanked the leader of the workpackage for her presentation. During the discussion, S Lilly commented that in the science case there are things that are evolutionary from what is being done today and some are revolutionary. He asked whether the science requirements would diverge in their technical implications, or will they be able to cope with such a broad spectrum. I Hook stated this is not known at the moment.

2.2.2 WP3.2 NUVA

A Castro de Gomez presented the 3.2 NUVA workpackage.

An issue was possible support for a Madrid-based www manager.

A Omont thanked the leader of the workpackage for her presentation. During the discussion, C Cunningham commented that, with regard to web based tools, he thinks twikis are very useful and very easy to set up.

A Omont stated that regarding OPTICON use of web tools, there should be some coordination on that. G Gilmore commented that web sites can prove to be very expensive to set up and maintain. Many people are using twikis. (cf twiki.org)

There will be a template download placed on the OPTICON website so member sites can be made as similar to the main OPTICON one as possible.

Action 15 J Davies/Project Office: To provide OPTICON template for web sites

J Bergeron asked what the strategy of this WP was since it would be hard to have any impact on ESA, for example. How did they propose to proceed to the next step? A Castro de Gomez stated that they had been working on this initiative alone, so it was important for them to be involved in OPTICON and that defining a plan was indeed an urgent issue for them.

2.2.3 WP3.3 HTRA

A Omont thanked S Wagner for the presentation. M Dennefeld asked why there was a separate network here and not within other JRAs. S Wagner stated that it was reaching out to much larger group of people. The JRA is supposed to be working on specific technological developments. The network had wider goals. A Quirrenbach commented it was the same for his activity; the wider activities cannot be done within the JRA. C Cunningham commented that for JRA5 the science case was part of the science case within the ELT Design Study; there was not a case for separate network.

2.2.4 WP3.4 AVO

J Davies was authorised to represent P Quinn for this workpackage presentation. The design study for the AVO is being prepared and couple of meetings planned in the next year. There is integration with other VO initiatives. The AVO team expressed their thanks for OPTICON's support.

A Omont commented that for future Board meetings, a progress report from each activity would have to be circulated, not just a presentation.

Action 16 All JRA and Network PIs: To provide progress reports to the Project Office, for circulation to the Board 30 days prior to Board meetings

2.2.4 WP3.5 Key Technologies

C Cunningham presented the workpackage.

During the presentation he asked for the Board's advice in recruiting people to the core working group panel. He would welcome opinions from partners. He stressed he only wants people who are prepared to be very active in the network so real progress can be made.

C Cunningham stated he would also like to get ideas on whether the JRA chairs themselves will form the working group

A Omont thanked the leader of the workpackage for his presentation.

P Dierickx commented that the workpackage should exercise caution in their links with industry as industrial partners could see such meetings as a place to learn from their competitors or even hint at 'red herrings' to mislead them. C Cunningham agreed.

P Kern stated that the contribution of different countries within FP5 would be missed within this work. C Cunningham agreed, stating it was important to generate a spread of technical expertise and country affiliation.

C Cunningham stated his aims to use a core group and use an interactive website – twiki – in the same way the software community use Astrogrid.

C Cunningham commented that if the JRA chairs formed the working group they would submit brief, perhaps quarterly, reports to the twiki. N Hubin commented that it was important not to multiply the number of reports that everyone has to produce. C Cunningham agreed.

A Omont stated that there were two actions as a result of this presentation. The Board should give their view on how best to appoint core and specialist panel members and secondly, on who would form the core working group which was a bit more difficult.

A Omont stated that this would be finalised in the Executive Committee meeting this afternoon. C Cunningham would receive suggestions from the Board; the Executive Committee would give their recommendations and C Cunningham will make the final decisions. C Cunningham thought it would be possible to start with a small group.

Action 17: All: *Nominate suitable candidates from national communities.*

M Dennefeld commented that there was certainly a need to identify hot topics in technologies that could be developed, which C Cunningham concurred with.

2.2.5 WP3.6 Future Software Environments

J Davies reported that P Grosbol was on holiday. His activity had already started via electronic interactions using a twiki.

2.3 N4: Synergy

P Benvenuti gave a short presentation for this network and A Omont showed some graphs on behalf of J-L Puget, the chair of the activity.

P Benvenuti reminded the Board of what he said in Chania. A study has been completed which was well-received by the EC. There was no time to include the scheme in FP6 so people will work to include it in FP7. This network must identify a leader with passion and determination but P Benvenuti himself does not have the time due to his other commitments.

G Gilmore commented Simon White thought this activity, the continuation of P Benvenuti's work, to be the single most important thing OPTICON could contribute to the European Community FP7 program.

P Benvenuti stressed that if it is to be continued, someone must be identified to carry it out.

A Omont stated that he would inform J-L Puget that people will send recommendations. A Omont also asked P Benvenuti to send his main contacts to J-L Puget however P Benvenuti stated they were already in the study.

Action 18: All/A Omont: Inform J-L Puget people will send their recommendations for network leader

G Gilmore informed the Board that the study document is available on the OPTICON web page: <http://www.astro-opticon.org/fp5/fellowships.html>. It will shortly be relinked from the new FP6 pages as the site is further developed.

2.4 N5: Interferometry

A Quirrenbach presented the Interferometry network activity.

A Omont thanked him for his presentation. A Quirrenbach explained how the network would manage its funds itself and he hoped there were no objections. S Wagner supported his view. A Omont commented that the best management scheme was not necessarily the same for all cases.

2.5 N6: Telescope Directors Network

J Davies presented the N6 activity. He gave a brief overview of the outcome of the Directors' Forum. He commented that the FP5 Medium telescope working group, which will evolve into the Telescope Directors Forum, had met in January in La Laguna. The representative of the Forum to the Board was proposed to be J Davies as he is not the director of any telescope.

They decided during the course of the meeting how the Access Office was going to operate, that it would be reviewed in 18 months and that new telescopes would not be invited to join the existing framework.

J Davies commented that extra access programme guidelines were written so that people who already have access to a telescope could not apply to the access programme to, in effect, do what they were already doing.

The Directors' Forum also decided to implement a programme of distributing spare/old equipment to other telescopes if required, but these pieces of equipment were not to be supported in any way by the donating telescope.

A Omont thanked J Davies for his presentation. During the discussion, A Quirrenbach asked whether the application forms were provided by all the telescopes in English? J Davies stated that J Burgos may know this as he has gathered a sample.

M Dennefeld stated that this had been raised as an action item. He knew that this problem had existed in France, but has been resolved in the meantime.

A Omont stated a report from the network should be available prior to the next Board Meeting.

--Access Programme and Office: status and plans

J Burgos presented the Access Programme and Office. He concluded by noting some very positive feedback from a Greek user, who in addition to a letter of thanks had send a CD of Greek music by way of a thank-you.

A Omont thanked J Burgos for his presentation. J Andersen stated that he believed the Access programme was at the moral core of the programme and he was very impressed it was up and running already.

M Dennefeld commented that the telescope directors were to provide information on the number eligible proposals they had received, in order to be able to evaluate the pressure factor requested by Brussels): the Access Office, knowing only the accepted programs, could not provide these numbers. He added that, as a result of limited funds available, only about ~10% of telescope time could be paid through the Access Program, while in principle up to 20% could be offered. The French have agreed to offer in addition to the ~10%, as an exceptional measure to encourage new, external users, up to 20% of their 2m telescopes during the first periods of the program, under the same conditions as those applied to French users.

J Davies commented that the number of telescope nights provided was cut by a factor of 2 over those offered as there was not enough money to fund further nights. But if the telescopes want to provide more nights, these can be allocated but there is no guarantee of funding them.

--Enhancement activities

M Dennefeld presented his activity on 'Enhancing the efficiency of research'.

A separate Marie Curie application for summer schools at telescopes had not been funded in the first round, despite an excellent rating. In order to have the program nevertheless continue, a NEON Archive Observing School was planned for 14-24 July in Garching, thanks to the support of ESO and ST/ECF. Should the situation still be difficult in the future, the group was planning to apply for telescope time through the Access Program, under the standard rules. G Gilmore stated that he saw nothing against this strategy.

A Omont gave thanks to all the Board members.

Date and Place of next Board meeting:

Grenoble, France: October 11+12 2004