

OPTICON I3 Board Meeting 3

Meeting held at INAF, Rome

27 & 28 October 2005

Day One – 27 October 2005

Present:			
R Albrecht	ESA, ST-ECF	R Gredel	MPIA
J Andersen (Chair)	NOTSA	I Hook	Oxford/ ELT
P Benvenuti	INAF	S Howard (minutes)	UCAM
J Bergeron	IAP	O von der Lühe	KIS
W Boland	NOVA	G Monnet	ESO
J Davies	UK ATC/ Proj. Scientist	P Moschopoulos	EC
M Dennefeld	IAP/ Access Review Chair	B Nordstrom	EAS
R-J Dettmar	RDS	A Omont	INSU
R García-López	RA3	R Rebolo	IAC
M Garrett	JIVE/ RadioNet	J Seiradakis	GNCA
G Gilmore	UCAM/ Co-ordinator	P Vettolani	INAF
Apologies:			
A-M Lagrange	INSU/ CNRS	S White	MPA
R Sirey	PPARC	T de Zeeuw	UL

[NB: all presentations are available on the OPTICON WWW site]

1. Welcome

P Benvenuti welcomed the Board and informed them of the sudden passing of Prof Marcello Rodonò.

J Andersen thanked P Benvenuti for his welcome and asked him, on behalf of the Board, to pass their condolences to Prof Rodonò's family and colleagues. The Chair also welcomed R Gredel, who now formally represents MPIA on both the Executive Committee and the Board, R García-López from RA3, representing E Battaner, I Hook for ELT Activities, M Garrett for RadioNet and P Moschopoulos from the EC.

2. Approval of and action points from minutes of Meeting Two

The minutes from the last meeting were approved.

The action points from the last meeting were discussed and the outstanding issues are as follows:

Action 2 for G Gilmore/ J Davies: to establish a working group to consider issues of overlap and common interest with RadioNet, including training issues, far-infrared and ALMA involvement, reporting and management issues, possibility of a joint astronomy policy towards FP7 and outreach.

G Gilmore informed the Board that a meeting was planned for spring 2006 to meet with astronomy networks to agree a way forward, especially with a view to FP7. This meeting is important to ensure that astronomy networks are not duplicating work and that nothing is being overlooked.

Action 10 for G Gilmore/ J Davies: to produce an overview of OPTICON.

J Davies explained that there are handouts available from the OPTICON website, but the Board felt that a properly prepared, printed overview would have more impact. G Gilmore also

referred to the interest in OPTICON from colleagues in the US, who would like a concise overview.

Action 1 *G Gilmore/ J Davies: to produce an overview of OPTICON as a handout.*

3. Co-ordinator's Report

G Gilmore presented the Co-ordinator's Report, stressing OPTICON's high profile. He informed the Board that the science aspect of the Annual Report had been accepted and that this could be found on the website; it was the financial side of the report that caused complications. In order to avoid many of these issues arising for 2005, he stated that S Howard would circulate reporting guidelines and would complete as much of the Form C as possible for each partner.

Action 2 *S Howard: to circulate guidance notes for Financial Reporting and Form C for each partner.*

He notified the Board that the money from the EC should arrive in two payments, the first mid-November and the second at the end of November; G Gilmore suggested that the entire 18-month advance be paid to partners in one lump sum, but that ESO, PPARC, INAF and INSU, as partners with the largest amounts, would be free to choose a different payment schedule.

G Gilmore stated that it was now time to consider the mid-term review, which is due early 2007; however, only vague hints on the procedure existed so far. P Moschopoulos said that the EC is putting the finishing touches on a light MTR procedure and that MTRs will be based on existing annual reports, thus reducing the effort of consortium. It was noted that CAHA has changed its status and will become a legal partner in its own right. P Moschopoulos related that the formal request for this change is yet to be received by the EC, but as the legal nature of the entity is the only thing being changed, the EC does not anticipate a problem with this.

4. Project Scientist's Report on Networks

J Davies presented this report, covering the highlights and concerns of the first 18 months.

He estimated that if current spend trends continue, the projected network underspend will be 250,000 Euros, which would roughly offset the project-wide shortfall of 273,654 Euros due to problems with Swiss money, unexpected audit costs, etc.

In general, progress is excellent and the under/ overspends are currently manageable. With the exception of N6.3, which J Davies proposes to reset to 100K, he recommended that the Board allow the networks to continue within the projections made in the report. No news had been received from N3.4 (AVO), but also there had been no request for additional funding.

5. ELT Science Case Update

This was presented by I Hook. She discussed the highlights of the ELT activities – notably the production of the 150-page full ELT Science Case a month ahead of schedule - and the plans over the next 12 months, which includes setting up contacts to look into closer collaboration with GSMT and Japan and develop a way forward for an international ELT science case. It is hoped that this can be taken forward at the IAU Symposium to be held in South Africa in November.

Further information on ELT can be found on the web:
<http://www-astro.physics.ox.ac.uk/~imh/ELT/>

6. Access Programme

This was presented by J Davies, who reported that this programme remains extremely popular and heavily subscribed. Following the resolution at the last Board meeting, a plan to bring

spending into line with the budget by the end of year 4 of the contract had been proposed by the Telescope Directors' Forum, approved by the Executive Committee, and implemented.

Efforts to promote the Access Programme in Central Europe are continuing.

6.1 Access Programme Review

The review panel was chaired by M Dennefeld. Its report to the Telescope Directors' Forum stressed the excellent work by the Access Office team to date. It was, however, suggested that there could be a reduction in staff effort after the build-up phase, so the Access Office could take on other added value tasks. This suggestion was accepted by the Telescope Directors' Forum and endorsed by the Executive Committee in Leiden on 20 September 2005.

It was noted that the Executive Committee had been very pleased with the Access Programme; it is continually reviewed to ensure cost-effective returns and it was recommended to allow the Programme to continue on its current budget. This proposal was endorsed by the Board.

The Board also agreed on the policy to give priority to new users and new countries when allocating the limited funds among otherwise eligible access programmes.

7. RadioNet Progress and Plans

This was presented by M Garrett. Further information on RadioNet can be found at their website:

<http://www.radionet-eu.org/>

M Garrett explained the general set-up of RadioNet (its partners and activities), the JRA and Networking Activity highlights. The RadioNet Board will meet in Bonn on 28 November.

A Gunn (RadioNet's Outreach Officer) circulated an e-mail proposing to jointly subscribe to the EU Politix website in order to increase awareness of Astronomy programmes within the EU, and there was some discussion about this. It was agreed that the money to subscribe to this website was not the greatest concern, but rather the amount of work that would be required. It was decided that no decision would be made until RadioNet had discussed this matter at their Board meeting next month. Also, competing services seem to exist, and P Moschopoulos had never heard of this particular one, which was a concern. J Davies was authorised to agree (or otherwise) any OPTICON involvement.

8. New Chair and Observers

J Andersen nominated W Boland as the new Chair of the Board, in preparation for the actual election of the Chair and Observers, which would take place on day two of the meeting.

9. Approval of Proposals and Budgets

- 9.1** J Andersen recommended the approval of the reorganised CAHA as a formal new partner, and this was unanimously agreed.
- 9.2** The Board approved the proposal from JRA3 that H Spruit would become the new permanent PI for JRA3.
- 9.3** The proposed distribution of payments to partners of the advances for 2005 and until mid-2006 was approved by the Board.
- 9.4** Following the in-depth review of the JRAs at the last Executive Committee meeting, the Board agreed that the JRAs should continue as now, with the exception of JRA3, for which approval is contingent on the PI submitting the documentation as requested by the Executive Committee and its subsequent approval by G Gilmore.
- 9.5** As partner 37, LSW, no longer exists, the contract would have to be amended accordingly. P Moschopoulos advised the Board that this could be amended very easily providing that there was no change in activity.
- 9.6** The scientific Annual Report 2004 was formally approved. J Andersen recommended that the Board delegate authority to the Board Chairman to formally approve the

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J Andersen welcomed everyone back and welcomed S Lilly who had just joined the meeting. He explained the change of the agenda for the benefit of S Lilly.

12. AstroNet

This was presented by J Andersen, in the absence of A-M Lagrange. The ASTRONET web address is as follows, but as yet there is no site:
<http://www.astronet-eu.org/>

J Andersen related that Europe is a leader in the field of Astronomy, but that new large infrastructures are needed to maintain this leadership; Europe-wide mechanisms for consultation and planning are required. The 4-year ERA-NET grant started on 1 September 2005, although the EC is still to sign the contract, but this is expected to take place in November.

It was made clear that AstroNet is an organising committee, but there must be involvement from Europe if this project is to succeed; new communities are currently being contacted. M Garrett voiced concern that RadioNet did not have more input in the proposal, but J Andersen explained that, legally, ERA-NET participants must be funding agencies, which the RadioNet partners are not; but also that no plan that left out radio astronomy would succeed, so the RadioNet partners should not be worried about the final outcome.

13. Perspectives of Solar Research in Europe

This was presented by O von der Lüche, who covered the position of Solar physics and Solar and Stellar seismology in Europe. There was some discussion regarding the funding status of ATST, and of the possible synergies between daytime and night-time astronomy.

14. FP7

There was further discussion regarding FP7, following P Moschopoulos' presentation on day one. A variety of possible ways forward were discussed. P Moschopoulos added that the Infrastructure roadmap prepared by ESFRI would probably be revised midway in FP7. Also, if it was still desired to include training fellowships for Astronomy under FP7, the issue should be explored with the managers of the Marie Curie programme.

G Gilmore informed the Board that there is a meeting arranged for 6-7 December in Nottingham re: infrastructures, which he cannot attend as this coincides with the ESO Council.

Action 4 *G Gilmore: to examine whether J Andersen should be invited to the meeting in Nottingham on his behalf.*

There was further discussion on OPTICON's present strengths and limitations and whether it would be advisable to split OPTICON into several I3s for FP7. G Gilmore pointed out that a decision on who does what would have to be made before May 2006 in order for proposals to be ready early in 2007.

Action 5 *G Gilmore: to circulate a summary outline of options and timescales to find out opinions from affected communities.*

It was decided that an Astronomy Workshop between all parties interested in participating in astronomy funding proposals under FP7 should be arranged for the second half of June 2006, probably in Edinburgh, as it was as yet unknown when financial decisions regarding FP7 would be finalised. In preparation for this meeting, the Key Technology Network (N3.5) would be asked to release their Key Technology Roadmap early in 2006.

Action 6 *J Davies: to contact potential participants in FP7 to arrange a suitable date for this workshop.*

Action 7 *J Davies: to contact N3.5 to request early release of the Key Technology Roadmap.*

15. New Chair and Observers

15.1 At J Andersen's nomination, the Board unanimously elected W Boland as the next Chair of the Board for 2006.

15.2 EAS, GNCA and KIS were nominated as new Observers on the Executive Committee for 2006-2007. After a vote, GNCA and KIS were appointed.

It was noted that the functions of the current Board terminates at the end of FP6.

16. Next meeting of the Board

At the invitation of R Gredel, the next meeting will be held in Heidelberg in the third week of October 2006. An exact date will be finalised shortly.

J Andersen thanked the Board members for attending, and thanked S Howard and INAF for organising the meeting.

End of Day Two

