Nationally Operated 2-4m Telescopes: an Obsolete Paradigm?

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Nordic Optical Telescope

The New Context:

The ASTRONET Science Vision and Infrastructure Roadmap have given us a coherent, high-level European strategic plan for:

- The development of the largest new facilities
- The scientific coordination between optical/radio/space
- The coexistence of larger and smaller facilities
- The coordination of international and national funding

What is still missing?

-The practical implementation of these lofty ideals!

The Bottom Line:

We must learn to become more effective - and cost-effective - by learning to cooperate not only through organisations like ESO and ESA.

We can do that by coordinating the planning and use of our other (='national') assets more intelligently, without being limited by historical baggage.

So the Practical Question is:

How Do We Fit In?

Current Status of 2-4m Coordination:

Effective European coordination of?

	Roles	Instrum.	radio/space	N/S	Educ
La Silla	+	+	-	-	-
LaPalma	-	(-)	-	-	-
Hawaii	?	(+)	-	(+)	-
Others	-	-	-	-	-

Decisions often based more on financial than scientific considerations (e.g., HARPS I+II on wide-field telescopes!)

Impediments to More Rational and Cost-Effective Operations:

- Conservatism and acquired turf
- Outdated organisational & financial structures :

30 years ago, 2-4m telescopes were front-line facilities and permanent vehicles of national prestige. Today, this role is occupied by the Bn€ projects, and 2-4m telescopes are finite-term investments like VLT/E-ELT instruments etc. They should not be trapped in the planning and financial environments of the mega-projects, but live a freer, more cost-effective - and unsafe? - life as European facilities.

The "EGO2" Vision:

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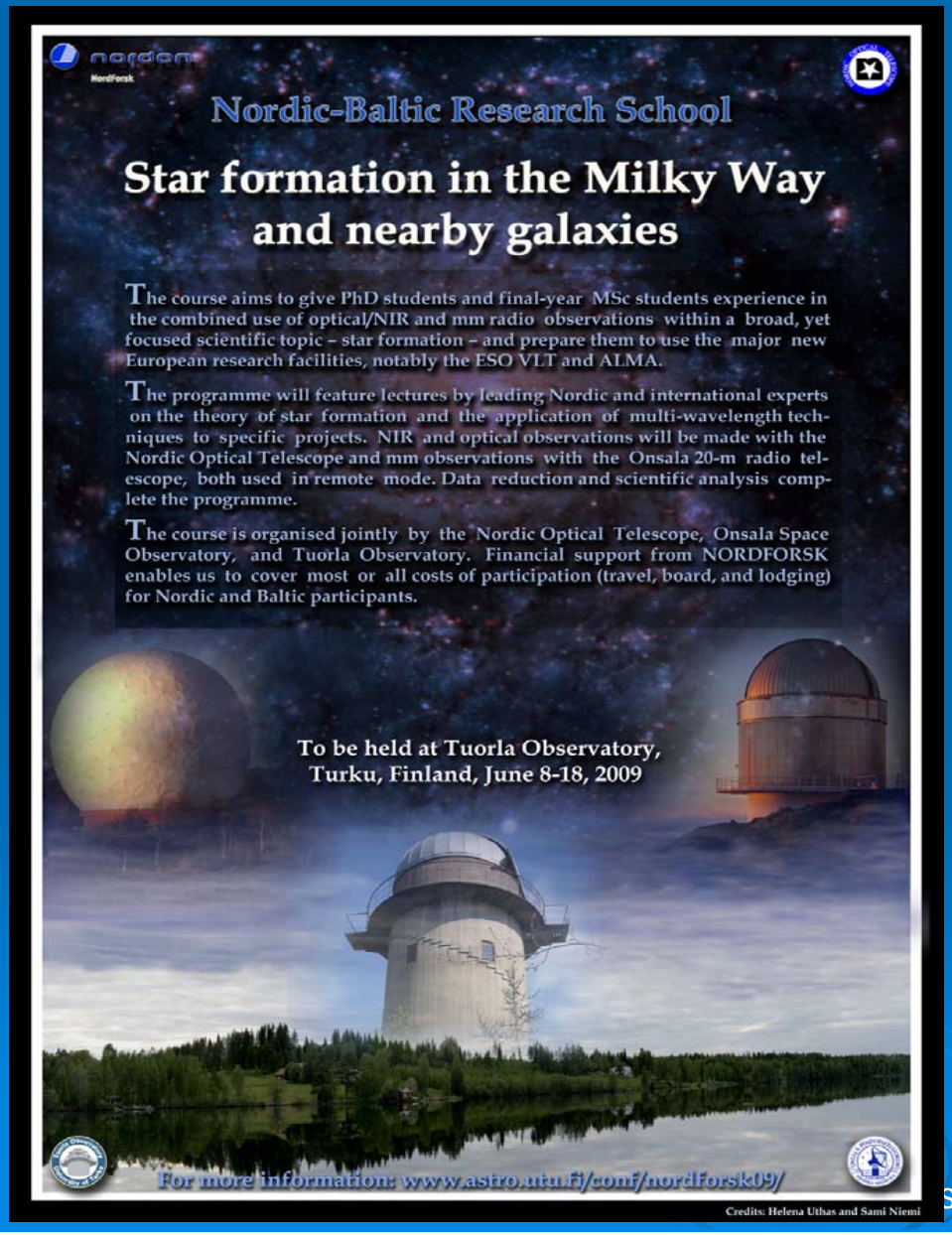
A core European 2-4m facility should be defined to:

- Allow coherent overall planning, including radio/space/ 8-m coordination and overall optimised instrumentation
- Extend such coordination to both hemispheres
- Allow efficient joint operation of co-located telescopes
- Provide an optimised blend of science and education
- Allow more flexible membership and funding schemes

Other 2-4m telescopes might be assigned special roles and obtain status as *"Regional Partner Facilities"* ?

So How Do We at NOT Try to Fit in?

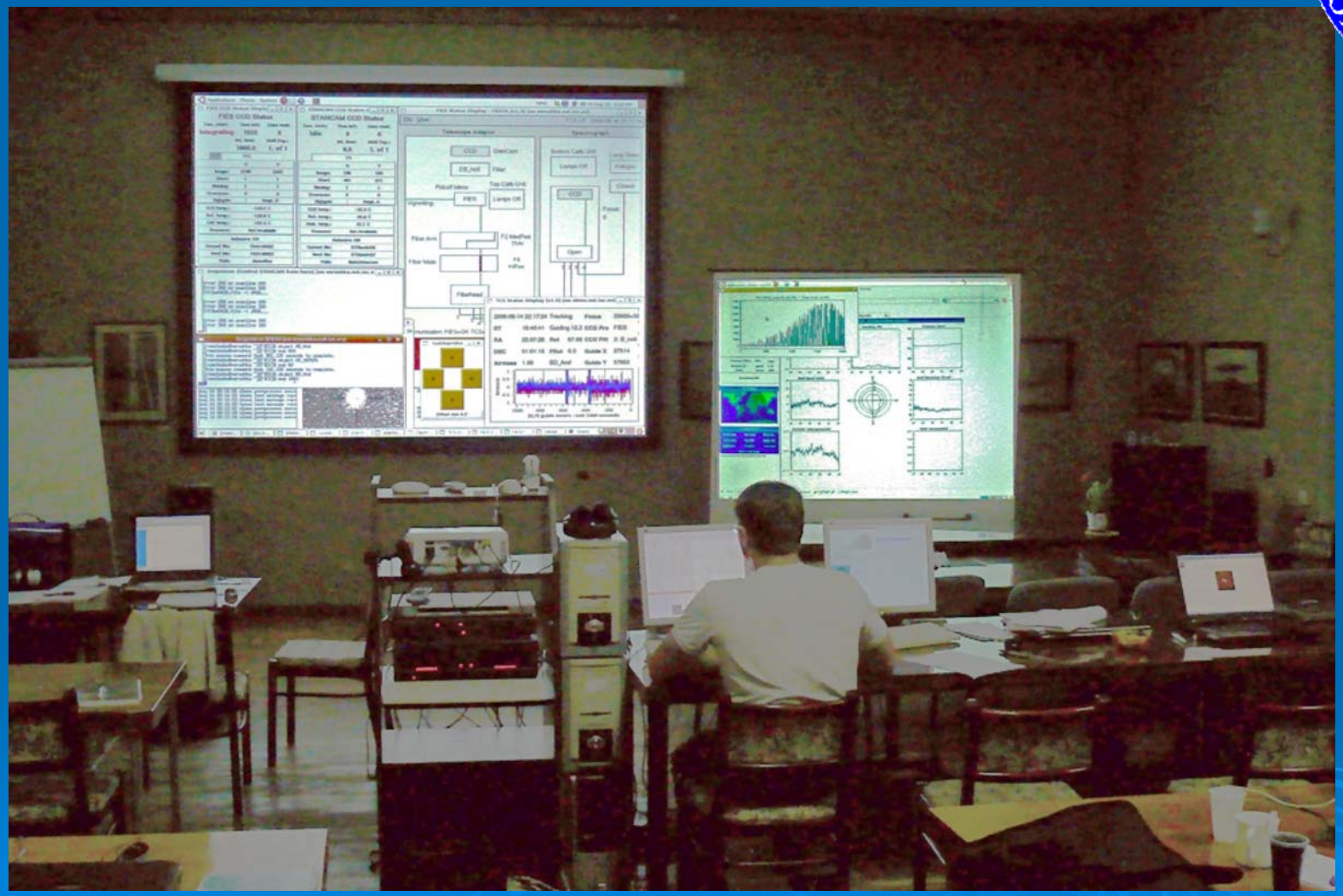


- Specialise instruments on flexible & rapid response (GRBs, SNe, Doppler imaging, exoplanets)
- Flexible scheduling, remote observing, VO compl.

- Develop coherent suite of training options
- Join forces optical+radio in education

Training at NOT: On-site…

- and off-site



This is Molètai Obs., Lithuania, but could be your undergraduate course!

1-year Research Studentships

NOT Students 2003 - 2009 – but why only Nordic?