FP7 Proposals: Comments from the Executive and the Board

General point: when proposals are received, they must be accompanied by supporting letters from their funding agencies. A plausible maximum request for all JRA projects is ~15M€.

This document accompanies the minutes from the OPTICON Board #4 on 20 October 2006, and will be circulated not only to Board members, but also to all PIs.

1. **Adaptive Optics**
   This is a top priority for astronomy and is clearly critical for Europe.
   - this proposal needs more focus and must be prioritised at a feasible funding level;
   - it must have a balance of national partners.

   It should identify what would be unique from the OPTICON contribution in FP7.

2. **Fast Detectors**
   This proposal has the same high priority as Adaptive Optics; these 2 proposals should be placed above all others. It should be co-ordinated with Adaptive Optics requirements, and take on the continuing FP6 JRA4 development contract.

3. **Interferometry**
   The budget should be significantly descoped. The proposal needs more focus, the JRA must identify an active PI and there should be a clear distinction between value added by this proposal and the approved ESO VLTI Instrument Design Studies

4. **High-Time Resolution**
   On the plus side the contract looks promising, but on the negative side, it is focusing strongly on a small science community. The general consensus was that this proposal is not viable as a separate JRA, but aspects should be integrated on a smaller scale into detector development activities.

5. **Smart Focal Planes/ Key Technologies/ Instrument Studies**
   This is a continuation of the design study for ELT and technology developments. The work is of very high importance and merits support. The general consensus was that this proposal should be more focused (it is currently too broad). A broad approach with planned future down-selects seems plausible. Any duplication with detectors should be removed, and the transfer of several activities to the proposal for ELT Design Studies should be considered.

6. **New Materials**
   This is a continuation of the current JRA6, which has done very well to-date and certainly deserves to be continued. More partners might be involved in this JRA. At a presentational level, any similarities in approach with project 5 need to be clarified.

7. **Solar Astronomy**
   The Solar Astronomy community has made a convincing case to remain within OPTICON. The proposed technical activities need to be integrated into other JRAs.

8. **Hardware Developments (FPGA)**
   This proposal was not supported as an isolated proposal – aspects can be included in the Adaptive Optics JRA.

9. **Lucky Imaging**
   This proposal was not supported, as being too close already to working science applications. It merits support at national agency or ERC level.

10. **FP7 Network Plans**
    This would be much the same as now.
    - NUVA want to become a partner,
    - HTRA should be asked to develop their proposal as only a Network not a JRA,
    - KTN should develop their proposal,
    - FASE should be converted into a Steering Committee rather than implementation, so a more realistic proposal is needed,
    - Enhancement is led by Michel Dennefeld and is considered highly valuable. This could be substantially expanded and ways need to be found to achieve this,
    - Outreach should cover all of astronomy, not just OPTICON, and should co-ordinate outreach leaders, not try to implement the activity,
    - Proposal tools – a more detailed proposal with evidence there is a real interest and need is required before this will be considered for support.
    - Synergy – a specific proposal must be developed with a dedicated PI. Without this no further action will be taken.

11. **Site Characterisation**
    This is a concept for a new Network, to allow communication across the international site characterisation community. The idea is good.

12. **Access Programme**
    There are no assumptions on the detailed implementation of the programme. OPTICON must have an Access programme and the current one is a great success. The proposal could be slightly more structured and aggressive. The Board had asked the Telescope Directors' Forum to come up with a vision.