

OPTICON Executive Committee 9

Meeting held in Munich, Council Room, ESO

9 January 2008

Present:			
G Gilmore (Chair)	UCAM	S D'Odorico	ESO
J Andersen	NOTSA	E Oliva	EAS
J Bergeron	IAP	A Omont	INSU
W Boland	NOVA	R Rebolo (by video conference)	IAC
J Davies	UK ATC/ OPTICON Project Scientist	J Seiradakis	GNCA
R Gredel	MPIA	R Sirey	PPARC
J-M Hameury	INSU	G Vettolani	INAF
S Howard (minutes)	UCAM	O. von der Luehe	KIS
E Kohler	INSU		

1. Welcome

Alan Moorwood welcomed the participants.

G Gilmore ran through the agenda and explained the FP7 proposal process for electronic submission, noting that each partner must fill in a form on-line, so it is essential that Cambridge knows who is responsible in each organisation for doing that by the end of January. He also urged the need to agree partners and budgets before the end of the meeting.

2. Consortium Agreement

G Gilmore explained that the easiest thing to do is to take the current one and change partners. The EC insist that a Consortium Agreement exists for each project, but they never see it. The agreement is very important to define the legal rights and limited liability of all partners. Cambridge lawyers will update the necessary terminology to meet the FP7 technical definitions.

Action 1: GG to circulate draft Consortium Agreement once completed by Cambridge lawyers.

GG informed the Executive of the maximum allowed envelope, so we must not ask for more than that amount. Most JRAs have asked for more money than they were told to, so the Executive must make some cuts.

GG read out the goals as listed in the proposal outline:

- *to broaden the European astronomical community by including, after appropriate training, scientists from communities and countries which at present do not have access to the best modern facilities and infrastructures.* R Sirey suggested adding in a phrase to state that we will also provide support for those communities.
- *to build for the future, by proving appropriate innovative technologies, and involving the whole scientific community in planning for future facilities.* R Sirey felt that this statement should take into account the ongoing planning activities, e.g. AstroNet.

3. JRAs

JRA1 Adaptive Optics – it was agreed that this is a good and clear proposal. R Gredel confirmed that Max Planck (MPIA) in Heidelberg will continue as the main contact for all the

MPG labs. Partners listed on the proposal were accepted. No specific flaws/ imperfections in this proposal.

JRA2 Fast detectors – a revised proposal circulated mid-December 2007. Two descope options have been provided, the second one being the preferred option of the PI, which loses Cambridge and IAC as partners. R Rebolo accepts that. This descope option brings JRA2 back into its budget envelope. W Boland suggested that P Feautrier should improve the introduction to his proposal, and P Vettolani thinks that it would be possible and feasible to merge JRA1 and JRA2 under one management structure, and we should make it look as if it is new rather than an extension of FP6. This will be clarified in the introductory text. It would therefore be advisable to change the titles of the projects. There is a technical issue with the HLL lab and it was suggested that Mark Downing at ESO could possibly pick up this work under his current project. Some WP involving IoA, Lund and Padova are more networking, and can be done in the HTRA network.

Action 2 ***GG to clarify introductory text***

Action 3 ***S D’Odorico to check inside ESO to see if Mark Downing can be allocated to WP6***

JRA3 Photonics – this is completely new work, spun out of Key Technology networking; it is a broad proposal, so some re-writing is required. Proposal needs to drop the detector related work, as we need to make cuts and shouldn’t have two detector type projects. The list of partners needs to be much shorter and with more clarification, and it is felt that some of the costs for certain partners can be covered in a Network, so need not be listed in the JRA. It was agreed that GG will inform the PI of the allowed budget, to focus on WP3 and some of WP4 with a possible budget increase in the second phase (year 4), and that a serious reduction in number of partners is required. AIP Potsdam is the only new administrative partner. This re-write will be required by week ending 18 January. We need to clarify Australian partner involvement.

Action 4 ***G Gilmore to contact Jeremy Allington-Smith with the Executive’s recommendations.***

JRA4 Interferometry – the new PI is Denis Mourard. This is a good programme, but more focussed information is required, but is a plus point that extra Eastern European countries will be involved. A detailed list of partners is needed. The Executive agreed to reduce the budget slightly, and thought that some work will naturally happen in the 3-year extension, so it will be effectively 100% funded.

JRA5 Smart Focal Plane Instrumentation – a revised proposal was circulated two days prior to the meeting. The Executive felt very strongly that an explanation of what the money is for is required and that the proposal should be descoped by a factor of at least 3. It is felt by the Exec that the substance of proposal hasn’t been improved in the revised version. WP1 should be dropped as it is linked too closely to the ELT. WP3 can be done through the KTN. WP2 should be focussed on in this JRA. The Executive agreed on a set budget.

Action 5 ***G Gilmore to contact Colin Cunningham to request a more focussed proposal by week ending 20 January, or the JRA will be dropped.***

JRA6 New Materials – the requested budget was approved. If there is more money available later in the project, there is a recommendation for JRA6 to get more funding.

4. Access and related issues

GG explained that there had previously been extra Marie Curie money for the training programme, but this won't apply for FP7, so OPTICON will need to cover the extra cost.

The Access programme is critical for EC funded programmes, but our telescopes are unusual compared to others in EC programmes in the sense that our infrastructure is changing over time. It is desirable that this proposal reflects a change to show that things are improving. The Telescope Directors' Forum (TDF) is perceived to be a very good idea, so should continue. It is likely that the Access Office will move from Tenerife to La Palma. G Gilmore informed the Executive that the important decisions to make before the end of the meeting were:

- Do we continue with the same telescopes, or remove some?
- How do we divide the requests between the telescopes?
- What should go into the programme and how do we deal with its evolution?

It is a positive statement to the EC that we are oversubscribed as it shows we are in demand. J Andersen proposed that we start as we currently are and then have final proposal for 2009 and decide how to implement it in 2010.

The telescopes currently in the OPTICON access programme, which are those most likely to be removed in any future reduction of telescope numbers, are those most used by central European astronomers. Clearly, we have to (re)train the users and migrate them to more modern facilities before rationalising the infrastructures.

The Executive decided in the interim to retain the present list of telescopes, keep the current distribution in the proposal, set up a common TAC with a common application process, and transfer a substantial amount of money into a training programme in order to migrate the community into a set of modern telescopes which are evolving to become complementary.

In planning strategic change, AstroNet has authority, OPTICON the technical knowledge (TDF) and wide user connection (Access). It was agreed that a forum should be set up with AstroNet to develop a broad overview of a possible way forward for Europe, which the agencies could then use as a basis for decision making. It should also investigate finding innovative ways of rationalising and utilising lower scale facilities. All present agencies were in agreement.

Action 6 ***J Andersen and J-M Haemeury to inform AstroNet Board to discuss involvement in planning for the future of Access.***

The budget for the Access Programme is what remains after the JRAs and Networks have been allocated their budgets.

5. Networks

N1 – this is the Management Network. We have a notional budget, which also covers meeting costs, audit fees and a contingency.

Enhancement programme

This the training programme led by Michel Dennefeld. An advantage of doing this as a network is that we can pay the teachers, so more offers of help may be forthcoming.

Interferometry network

Fizeau costs have been included twice (here and in Enhancement), so this error will need to be amended. There is concern that all expenses related to this Network are not currently being claimed in FP6. This is currently dealt with by Andreas Quirrenbach, but the

responsibility will change under FP7 to Paulo Garcia from CAUP. Andreas Quirrenbach to be contacted to find out what is going on. Paulo Garcia and Denis Mourard to be involved.

Action 7 *W Boland to contact A Quirrenbach to find out what is happening with claiming of costs*

ELT Science Case

The proposal recommends employing 1-2 extra people to work on the programme. The current co-ordinator of this project, Isobel Hook, may move out of the UK, so salary figures and length of contracts are as yet uncertain. The Executive need clarification on the proposed jobs.

NUVA Network

University of Madrid is requesting funding for hiring some project research staff to get involved in a specific proposal, as well as for the Approx. 80K is for continuation of networking. The research area cannot be funded by OPTICON, so the Executive have agreed to support the Network side.

Key Technologies Network

The actual budget request was higher than stated in proposal, as staff costs had only been calculated for one year, not four. Staff costs high because at the UKATC all personnel costs must be assigned to a particular grant/ project. It was agreed that Colin Cunningham must contact other partners, especially ESA. Given C Cunningham's workload, a Co-PI may be sensible (Frank Molster has experience here), to come up with a revised proposal no later than 18 January. W Boland stated that he would be happy to look into the possibility of dealing with this network in the Netherlands, if that proved more practical, so WB should communicate with CC on this. The Executive cut the requested budget.

Action 8 *GG to urgently contact C Cunningham to explain the situation*

HTRA

The Executive was happy with this proposal and with the budget. Note the links to network activities transferred from JRA2.

EAST

This was perceived to be a well organised proposal with a sensible budget. A budget was agreed as the initial request was judged to be too small due to misunderstanding of the budget envelope.

Site Characterisation

There was concern that no mention of meteorological work and climate change was included in this proposal, which would certainly be considered in a positive light by the EC, and received well by those external reviewers who are not so in favour of the ARENA project. There are some vital partners missing from this proposal, such as ESO. R Rebolo will contact the relevant people, and inform them that a revised proposal must be submitted no later than 18 January and that a co-PI should be included (which would be a positive statement) and that adaptive optics and atmospheric issues should be involved. The budget remained unchanged.

Action 9 *R Rebolo to contact PI to request a revised Site Characterisation proposal which is to be submitted no later than week ending 18 January.*

FASE Network

The proposal is for co-ordination costs and funding for staff effort. The Executive noted that there had been no mention of the VO, which is closely linked, so an improved and shortened proposal must be provided by week ending 18 January, involving an assistant PI from NVO. There are VO people within ESO who could be involved.

Although there appears to be 10 networks, there will in effect only be 2: "Planning the future" and "Enhancing the Communities", with sub-groups relating to one of these.

Each JRA should start their proposal with a paragraph on the state of the art outside Europe to place the request in context, and where possible title names should be changed to make the proposal look different from FP6.

Detailed financial information was agreed by the Executive.