

Report on the CTAC-meeting October 29 2019 in Amsterdam

Summary

The 2020A common call for OPTICON TNA opened in early August 2019 and closed at 23:59 on August 25. The call was published here:

<http://www.astro-opticon.org/h2020/tna/call/call-2020a.html>.

43 proposals were submitted. One proposal requested an instrument configuration which was not offered and another one asked for a too dense monitoring for the telescope requested. Both proposals were rejected before the meeting. Thus, 41 proposals were evaluated and ranked.

In spite of the much lower number of proposals submitted compared to the previous semester (43 proposals vs. 75 proposals), the oversubscription was a factor of 3.5 for the typical 250kEuro per semester budget. This confirms the trend of asking for more time on average per proposal. As this call was the last one for a full semester within the H2020 program the budget was increased to about 330k Euro. As usually, the NOT, TNG and AAT telescopes were overbooked by a factor of 2.8 or larger, the LCO offering 150 hours interestingly by a factor of 2.5.

In the end time could be allocated for 18/43 proposals initially submitted. One proposal had to be cut down because of the non-availability of nights at the CFHT, another one above the cut-off with a far from being good RA-coverage was not approved as well.

As in the previous round, the CTAC made sure that the ratio of the approved and non-approved proposals for CEE and non-CEE countries was comparable without compromising the quality of the accepted proposals.

Details

The CTAC-meeting to discuss the proposals for the semester 2020A was held at the Mercure hotel Amsterdam on October 29 2019. As the new 7th member will start her work in 2020B, the CTAC consisted again of 6 people, namely Roi Alonso (IAC, La Laguna), Renata Minkeviciute (Vilnius), Annelies Mortier (Cambridge), Laura Af-fer (Palermo), Helene Roussel (Paris) and Jochen Heidt (Heidelberg, Chair). OPTICON Project Scientist John Davies (UKATC, Edinburgh) was in attendance to advise on technical issues and record the meeting outcomes but did not participate in the scientific discussions.

Given the modest amount of applications, the evaluation of the proposals was smooth. Table 1 illustrates the demand for each of the telescopes.

As in previous calls, the distribution of the proposals between the astrophysical topics was heavily skewed and this is also somewhat reflected in the demand per telescope (AAT, NOT and TNG being the highest as they offer instruments suitable for exoplanet and stellar research and/or are suitable for TDA). The high demand at the LCO is rather due to a larger demand per proposal than by an increasing number of proposals requesting time. Table 2 shows the distribution the proposals among categories and among the telescopes offered.

The number of approved proposals ($18/43 = 42\%$) roughly reflects the oversubscription for the increased 330k budget. It is good to see that the time domain proposals (which is one of the hot topics in the H2020 programme) continue to be very successful. On

Telescope	Num _{prop}	Night _{requested}	Night _{offered}	Oversub
CAHA35	3	6	5	1.2
CAHA22	2	4.5	7	
Rem	5	124h	500h	
AAT	8	20.1	5	4.0
OHP19	2	6	10	
OHP12			10	
TNG	11	27.8	10	2.8
ESO22	1	3	10	
LCO	6	367h	150h	2.5
NOT	5	14	10	1.4 (4.0)
LT	4	30.5	50h	
INT	1	6	10	
Arist	1	6	20	
CFHT	5	6.1	4	1.5
TCS	2	1.5	14	

Table 1: Statistics on the number of proposals and nights/hours requested versus offered per telescope. Due to the carry-over of some programs from the previous semester, only 3.5 nights at the NOT were available for 2020A proposals rising the oversubscription to a factor of 4.0.

the contrary, the low number of successful proposals in the stars and stellar population category is somewhat worrisome. While we concluded that the CTAC was not biased with respect to the proposals from this category last semester, it is not clear why so many proposals were tied down this time as the CTAC was unchanged. This will be monitored into the next semester, when the CTAC will be complete with 7 members having another stellar expert in its panel.

Proposals were submitted with PIs from 15 different countries, of these proposals from 8/15 countries were approved. As usual, the UK was most active (and successful with 8/18 proposals been awarded time). Remarkably, proposals from the UK contributed to 50% of the request from non-CEE countries and 42% overall. The CTAC continued to specifically motivate astronomers from CEE countries to apply, but with 7/43 (16%) proposals their low interest was somewhat frustrating.

With a ratio of 2/7 (29%) for approved/rejected proposals from CEE (Poland and Czech republic) and 16/36 (40%) for approved/rejected proposals from non-CEE countries their share was not too different. In the end, 8/18 (40%) of the approved proposals were from the UK.

What to expect for 2020B

- No major changes are foreseen for the 2020B call which may just be for a few months. Although it was spelled out in the feedback last time and although it was mentioned on the call for proposals for 2020A, still a noticeable fraction of applicants refused to use the revised Northstar template for their submission. A warning will be mailed to the applicants again but the CTAC will not be polite in the future. Proposals submitted using the old template *will* be rejected by the CTAC.

Topic	N_{prop}	Telescope	N_{prop}
Exoplanet	6/13	AAT	8
Stars+stell. pop	2/13	CFHT	5
Circumst. med	2/3	NOT	5
Time domain	7/9	TNG	12
Low-z Universe	1/2	rest	1-5
High-z Universe	-/3		

Table 2: Distribution of applications among categories (left) and telescopes (right). For the applications we show the number of approved vs submitted applications. Exoplanet, stars + stellar population and TDA proposals dominate. Telescope requests are dominated by the demand for high-resolution spectrographs for exoplanet, wide-field capability for stellar research and flexibility for time domain astronomy. The remaining telescopes offered in the call were requested in 1-4 proposals on average. Many proposals request time at more than one telescope, each one of which is included in the statistics.

- The CTAC will be back with 7 members for the next meeting. Despina Hatzidimitriou from Athens will join the team. Unfortunately, Laura Affer from Palermo has to leave. We are actively looking for a substitute at present.

- The CTAC will face significant changes in case of a 2021A call. The upcoming 2020B CTAC meeting will be the last one for Helene Roussel (Paris), Roi Alonso (IAC) and Jochen Heidt (Heidelberg). Thus three new members will be required and a new chair will need to be selected.

Feedback to all proposers has now been prepared and will be distributed in the next days. The next call will open by early February 2020 and the next CTAC meeting will be held most likely in Vilnius by the end of April 2020.

Jochen Heidt

Heidelberg, November 20, 2019