

Report on the virtual CTAC meeting Apr 29/30 2021

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Cambridge, 21 May 2021

Summary

The 2021B common call for OPTICON TNA opened in early February 2021 and closed at 23:59 on 28 February 2021. The call was published here: <http://www.astro-opticon.org/h2020/tna/call/call-2021b.html>. Fifty-seven (57) proposals were submitted. This was higher than for the 2020 calls, but similar to the 2021A call (43, 47 and 60 for 2020A, 2020B, and 2021A respectively). Three (3) proposals were not discussed as they had used an out of date template or had significantly modified the correct one. One (1) proposal withdrew their proposal as the technical review revealed that the proposal (for CARMENES) was clashing with CARMENES GTO Science. The remaining fifty-three (53) were all evaluated, discussed, and ranked.

The oversubscription in terms of money was about a factor of 3. This pressure factor is in line with the trend seen in previous semesters. On average, a proposal requested telescope time for about 19000,- Euro, although there is large spread between different individual proposals.

The demand for telescopes was also not evenly spread, but not wildly different than previous semesters. There were no proposals for Aristarchos (again), but all other telescopes were requested. Five (5) telescopes were oversubscribed, of which the TNG, the NOT, and the AAT the strongest with a factor of 2.5, 2.1 and 2, respectively. TCS and CAHA35 were also oversubscribed with factors 1.2 and 1.1.

Time could be allocated for 17/57 proposals. Given the many highly competitive proposals this semester, the cutoff was significantly higher than it normally is. The cutoff was clear though with scores enough apart to draw the line.

The CTAC wanted to make 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. However, the very high cut-off meant, statistics were less favourable than previous semesters.

Details

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the CTAC-meeting to discuss the proposals for the semester 2021B was still held online, hosted from Edinburgh. The CTAC was complete with 7 members and consisted of Despina Hatzidimitriou (Athens), Renata Minkevičiūtė (Vilnius), Roser Pello (Marseille), Victor B́ejar (Tenerife), Kari Nilsson (Turku), Leonardo Tartaglia (Padova), and Annelies Mortier (Cambridge, Chair). Dr Tartaglia is the replacement of Dr Turatto who unexpectedly needed to leave the CTAC. 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. We took a group photo which can be seen below.

Three proposals were disqualified prior to the meeting as they had adapted the template rules. One other proposal had withdrawn. All other proposals were discussed, per topic and following the preliminary ranking within a topic. Overall, the evaluation of the proposals was smooth.

Table 1 illustrates the demand for each of the telescopes. Five telescopes were oversubscribed. However, all proposals ranked in the top third received the appropriate telescope time. Out of all requested telescopes, observation time was awarded to use TNG, NOT, LCO, AAT, and CAHA35.

As in previous calls, the distribution of the proposals between the astrophysical topics was skewed towards exoplanet, stars and stellar populations and time domain science, as seen in Table 2. This is somewhat reflected in the skewed distribution of requested telescopes as some are more suited to study these topics.

The number of approved proposals ($17/57 = 29.8\%$) roughly reflects the oversubscription in terms of the budget of 350 kEuro. No topic was significantly more successful than others, though it is noted that this is based on low-number statistics. Within the most popular topics (exoplanets, stars, time domain), success rates varied between 20% and 42%. This is no different than last time.

Proposals were submitted with PIs from 17 different countries, of which 9 countries were successful in getting time. As per usual, the UK was most active, with 13 submitted proposals, which is less than previous semesters. UK proposals had a success rate of 30.8%, perfectly in line with the general success rate. Germany was the second most active, with 12 submitted proposals. They had a success rate of 50% which stands out in terms of the

Telescope	N_{prop}	Requested time	Available time	Oversubscription
NOT	13	21.25n	10n	2.1
SALT	2	8n	50n	
TBL	1	3n	7n	
OHP	1	7n	10n	
CFHT	2	2.5n	4n	
AAT	9	31n	15n	2
TCS	2	17n	14n	1.2
TNG	14	25.25n	10n	2.5
LT	5	34h	50h	
LCO	7	333.5h	400h	
REM	2	87h	300h	
CAHA35	9	10.8n	10n	1.1
CAHA22	4	5.7n	10n	
Aristarchos	0	0n	20n	

Table 1: Statistics on the number of proposals and requested/available time per telescope. Note that some proposals asked for more than one telescope.

Topic	N_{prop}	N_{success}	Success rate
Solar System	5	2	40%
Exoplanets	16	5	31.25%
Stars and stellar population	15	3	20%
CSM and star formation	3	0	0%
Low-z Universe	2	0	0%
High-z Universe	4	2	50%
Time Domain Astronomy	12	5	41.67%

Table 2: Statistics on the number of proposals requested/offered per science topic.

general success rate.

The CTAC continued to specifically motivate astronomers from CEE countries to apply, resulting in 13 submitted proposals (23%), which is the same as in the last call, but still low overall. Proposals from CEE countries unfortunately only had a success rate of 7.7% (1/13) while the non-CEE proposal success rate was 36.4%. The CTAC is looking at ways to help adjust this.

What to expect for 2022A

The new OPTICON-Radionet Pilot contract is now in play. However, no substantial changes are expected for the upcoming semesters yet.

No members are expected to leave the CTAC.

Feedback to all proposers is being prepared and will be distributed by the end of May. The next call will open by early August 2021. The location for the next CTAC meeting (early November 2021) will be discussed in September 2021 when there is hopefully more clarity on the pandemic situation.

