OPTICON

The Optical Infrared Co-ordination Network for Astronomy.

Overview

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OPTICON Summary by John Davies.

What is OPTICON?

In FP5 (2000-2004) OPTICON was an EU funded thematic network bringing together national funding agencies and users with common interests in optical-infrared astronomy.

PI. Gerry Gilmore, Institute of Astronomy, Cambridge

PS. John Davies, UK Astronomy Technology Centre, Royal Observatory, Edinburgh

13 Original Participants, 1MEuro over 4 years.

Funding Agencies and Users

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FP5 Objectives/Deliverables

Produce coherent, Europe-wide, proposals on projects of common interest such as :

- Very large telescopes
- Virtual Observatories
- Access to large databases
- Common data standards
- Future of 1-4m telescopes
- Co-ordinated Instrumentation developments
- Exploitation of spacecraft data

In Spring 2003 OPTICON Applied to the European Union FP6 programme for funding as an Integrated Infrastructure Initiative (I3).

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The OPTICON I3

- Networking via working groups similar to the FP5 OPTICON network.
- Transnational access to Night-time and solar telescopes (combining activities such as COMET and FP5 ENO)
- Joint Research Projects in Technology

The Result

- OPTICON I3 evaluated favourably.
- 6 JRA's approved
- 22 Telescope network approved.
- Most networking activities endorsed
- Contract for 19,200,000 Euro + substantial national matching funds

Status: June 2004

- After some consolidation 47 of the 80 original participants remain as contractors (ie signatories to the final contract with the EU)
- A consortium agreement acceptable to these 47 contractors has been negotiated within OPTICON
- The contract with the EU has been signed.
- The first tranche of money is due soon!

Management

Cambridge (Gerry Gilmore) is co-ordinator and main finance office

OPTICON Board (~20 partners +JRA Chairs and others) sets strategy and priorities at annually. Chair Alain Omont

Oversight committee (~9 agencies) make detailed decisions, especially about money, 6 monthly. Chair Gerry Gilmore.

Project Office (John Davies, UKATC) supports board, runs some networks, attends board, proposes budgets etc

Access Office (Jesus Burgos, IAC) runs telescope grants

JRA's and some networks have internal management

OPTICON Board

Cambridge, PPARC, ESA, ESO, CNRS/IaP,
CNRS/INSU, IAC, INAF, Leiden, MPiA,
MPfA, NOVA, NOTSA, GCNA,
RDS, SANW, KIS, RA3

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Executive Board

Chair . Prof Gerry Gilmore

Members: ESO,
France (INSU),
Germany (MPG/MPIA),
Italy (INAF),
Netherlands (NOVA),
UK (PPARC),
Spain (IAC),
NOTSA.

+ 2 observers (Switzerland and European Astronomy Society)

OPTICON I3 Networking

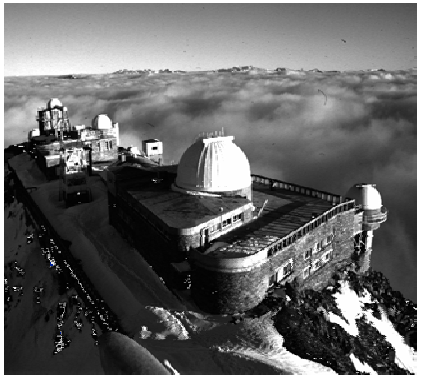
- Structuring European Astronomy (J.Davies). This includes ELT science working group (Hook), AVO/Interoperability (Quinn), HTRA (Spruit), UV-Net (Gomez de Castro) , Key Technologies (Cunningham) , Software (Grosbol)
- Interferometry working group (A. Quirrenbach, Andrzej Niedzielski, Romain Petrov, Jean Surdej)
- Fellowships and large scale projects (J-LPuget/M. Kessler)
- Telescope Directors Forum (J .Davies)
- NEON Research Experience (M. Denefeld, IAP)
- Structuring the ENO -ORM + Izana- (J Burgos et al)
- Round tables with Radionet, ALMA, NGST etc_

Access programme

- Offers 997 nights + 228 days over 5 years
- Scale factor of time offered ~2.1 (applied linearly for first 18 months)
- Contract promises minimum 10% of this access over first 18 Months
- User fees fixed for duration

The Access programme.

Anglo Australian Observatory	3.5m Telescope
Anglo Australian Observatory	Schmidt Telescope
Centro Astronomico Hispano Aleman	3.5m Telescope
Centro Astronomico Hispano Aleman	2.2m Telescope
Canada France Hawaii Telescope	3.5m Telescope
La Silla	3.6m Telescope
La Silla	3.5m Telescope
La Silla	2.2m Telescope
Isaac Newton Group	4.2m Telescope
Isaac Newton Group	2.5m Telescope
UK Infrared Telescope	3.8m Telescope
TNG	3.5m Telescope
Nordic Optical Telescope	2.5m Telescope
Aristarchos	2.5m Telescope
Observatoire Haute Provence	1.9m Telescope
Telescope Bernard Lyot	2m Telescope
Telescopio Carlos Sancez	1.52m Telescope
THEMIS	Solar Telescope
Swedish Solar Telescope	Solar Telescope
Vacuum Tower Telescope	Solar Telescope
Liverpool Telescope	2m Telescope
Dutch Open Telescope	Solar Telescope



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Joint Research Projects

- VPH Gratings – F. Zerbi
- Optical Detectors for HTRA – S.Wagner
- Fast Detectors for AO – P. Feautrier
- Smart Focal Planes – C.Cunningham
- Interferometry – A. Chelli
- Adaptive Optics. – N.Hubin

Budgets & Principles

Initial Breakdown

- Networks 3.4 MEuro
- Access 5.5 MEuro
- JRA's 10.3 MEuro

Budgets & Principles

- Unlike FP5, in FP6 there is considerable flexibility devolved to the co-ordinator.
- 5 year budgets are indicative but can be varied by OPTICON as the programme continues
- 18 month plan defined now will determine how much money is delivered in the 1st tranche
- An updated 18th month plan justifying further money will be required annually

Budgets & Principles

- The contract will be dated from 1-Jan-04 so costs after that date are allowable.
- There will be an advance of ~80% of the 1st tranche once the contract paperwork is done. (summer 04?)
- The money will go direct from Cambridge to the contractors.

Budgets & Principles

- The initial JRA, Access and Network budgets were set by the board in Chania. For JRA's 50% of eligible costs are refunded (except for AC model contractors who get 100% of additional costs)
- For networking and access 100% of costs are refunded for all cost models.
- Changes are in principle possible, but it is a zero sum game, the total OPTICON budget is fixed.

Management (again)

- The JRAs (and some networks) are largely self contained and managed internally.
- Reports will be required both for the EU to justify spending and to the OPTICON board to bid for future funds.
- The Project Office (JKD) is the conduit for this material.
- It is important to keep the project office in the loop. Good communications are essential in such a distributed activity

Outreach

- We should try and maintain a high profile and use the OPTICON ‘brand’ icw your own logo whenever possible.
- We expect to have a presence at major international meetings (eg JENAM) and in suitable newsletters.
- Websites are great, but need to be cross linked as much as possible.

Contacts

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FIN

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