

# ESO Users Committee

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## Draft minutes ESO Council meeting, Garching 5+6 December 2006

- Spain and Czech Republic: accession near
- Austria: accession supported (later: failed)
- Russia: accession politically difficult
- Poland and Ireland: interested in accession

- VST: National Institute of Italy has taken over management
- VISTA: expected hand-over in Q3 of 2007
- ALMA: power has to be electricity no gas, agreements are clarified and consolidated
- ELT: Phase B (57.2 M€) for 42m design
- VLT: formal lifetime ends in 2025

## 1<sup>st</sup> generation VLT(I) instruments

- AMBER,  $\Omega$ Cam (2.2m?), CRIRES, HAWK-I

## 2<sup>nd</sup> generation VLT(I) instruments

- X-shooter, KMOS, MUSE (optical IFU)
- VSI (J-M), MATISSE (L-Q), GRAVITY (K)
- SPHERE

- 
- AO: MAD, LGS, deformable secondary
  - VLTI: AT4 operating, PRIMA
  - UK Visiting: DAZLE, LuckyCam, Ultracam, ...

ESO User Portal tools to be released  
between December 2006 and April 2007

## ESO Users Committee meeting, Garching 16+17 April 2007

- (new) chair: Walter Jaffe
- (next) vice-chair: Jacco van Loon
- should UC include a non-ESO member?
- recommendation: UC substitute members

## “communication”

- recommendation: “UC minutes should be approved by e-mail and the whole process should be finished within 3 months - desirably before the next Council meeting”
- UC can distribute meeting factsheets
- presentations will be made available to UC

- manuals are now in hyperlink PDF:  
improved access, searchable, cross-linked
- manuals available per ESO period
- instrument/ data cookbooks on to-do list
- action item to keep the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation instrument webpages up-to-date
- instrument webpages feedback facility  
(e.g., to report an error in the manual)
- messenger as dynamical PDF and on ADS
- data reduction workshops?



- electronic newsletter has been launched (this is NOT another “ESO Messenger”) about 800-900 subscribers
- to get feedback on specific issues, contact [usd\\_help@eso.org](mailto:usd_help@eso.org)
- ESO to more aggressively advertise both UC to advertise both within constituencies

ESO User Portal to be released  
by the end of 2007

## “application process”

- OPC procedures are published on the web since Friday 13 April 2007
- nominating committee: 2 ESO, 3 community
- nationality not formally considered (balance)
- non-ESO member referees are considered
- serving times: OPC 2 years, panels 1 year
- panels meet for 2.5 days (was 2)

- P80: 2A, 2B, 4C & 4D panels; 72 referees (P77: 48 referees for 4x2 panels)
- increase in proposals, long-term trend: increase mainly in panels C+D (galactic), panels A+B (extra-galactic) stable 7 years (more balanced in terms of requested time) Paranal up, La Silla down
- < half of invited referees accept to serve (worst for panel C)
- action item: UC to ask constituency to oblige

- UC & OPC chairs + Gautier Mathys to discuss
- merging panel results: used to be rank v. rank now re-normalised (mean &  $\sigma$ , for grades < 3) rank is decisive if grades are identical
- panel chairs and co-chairs iterate feedback
- > P78: scheduling comments in Webletters
- oversubscription factors to be transmitted
- recommendation: “If no obvious weaknesses were identified then feedback should include the stock phrase ‘This proposal was not allocated time on the basis of relative ranking’.”

- class A service programmes will be eligible for carryover into two subsequent periods (not guaranteed)
- technical problems in visitor mode: payback? (note: ToO interrupt pays back minus 1 hour)
- G. Mathys to publish scheduling procedures in ESO Messenger

- is a 1-hr OB limit really necessary?
- allow OBs to include more than 1 target (e.g., PSF standard + science target)
- action item: ESO to implement a formal way to allow specification of generic target lists (complicate scheduling, but possible)
  
- there are fewer flights to Chile, making it more difficult to find seats
- outside ESO? Travel funding case-by-case

## “operation”

- comparing Gemini S, Las Campanas, ESO...  
chilean community ranks ESO the highest
- improved training programme for fellows  
with certificates
- downtime (weather/technical) decreasing  
nearly 3/4 programmes 75% completed  
decreasing amount of commissioning time  
20-30% visitor mode, 70% service mode



- 3.6m dome out of shape: strain on wheels  
normal operation since 26 March 2007
- 2 months on 2.2m available until 2009  
already committed to large programmes
- WiFi in control room, data can be  
automatically pushed onto laptop
- Linux computer in Santiago guesthouse?

- data release: 3 weeks upon termination
- rapid service mode data access requires ESO User Portal (1 October 2007?)
- consequences include: unvalidated data service programmes changed on-the-fly
- action item: ESO to come up with a quick-release policy of service mode data (action item on ESO User Portal still open)

- La Silla future discussions at STC & Council
- closure not on the table, but new argument  
“If possible at Paranal, then why La Silla?”
- recommendation: “We ask ESO to notice concern within the user community about the future rôle of and facilities at La Silla Observatory, and to commit themselves to reporting back to the user community as soon as possible the decisions on the future of La Silla Observatory and the grounds for these decisions.”

UC to raise awareness within constituencies  
that if La Silla proposals keep declining this  
jeopardises the future of La Silla

## “telescope/instrument status”

- HARPS iodine cell broke, caused damage  
no iodine cell offered (UVES has iodine cell)
- FORS1 has gained U sensitivity of 1.33 mag  
but fringes at  $> 650\text{nm}$ : use FORS2 for red
- VIMOS flexure improved by a factor 2
- ISAAC ultrafast readout: 10ms @ 3.2ms DIT  
UVES ultrafast readout: 10s (bin 1x1)
- VISIR spectro-photometry at  $R=10$

- CONICA: 10/11 mag contrast at 0.5"/1"  
SDI: simultaneous imaging in/out methane
- LGS commissioning UT4: strehl up to 20%  
(23% for natural guide star)  
natural tip-tilt star down to V=17.5 mag  
some scheduling/execution constraints
- VLTI uses 10% of UT time  
FINITO fringe-tracking, ATs (UTs end 2007)  
sensitivity FINITO+ATs = UTs without FINITO  
accurate expectations in Call for Proposals  
ESO affirms there is no shift away from VLTI

- VST review March 2007:  
telescope structure on its way to Paranal  
M1 & M2 problematic
- ALMA full operations by 2012  
USA: 25x12m antennae 2007-2011  
ESO: 25x12m antennae 2008-2011  
Japan: 4x12m antennae 2007-2008  
Japan: 12x7m antennae 2009-2010  
early science (16 antennae): CfP 2010
- APEX wobbler commissioning April 2007  
LABOCA array commissioning May 2007  
Heterodyne commissioning later in 2007

## “pipelines”

- service mode questionnaire on the web  
50% answered  
75%: quick-look products useful/complete  
but 60-65% did not use them for science
- most Paranal instruments have a pipeline  
but not all, some steps missing/imperfect  
4-6 months verification before release  
designed for quality control, not for science  
installation manual / cookbook on to-do list



- action item on ESO to solve the problem of a lack of scientific data reduction tools
- recommendation that ESO open a blog with respect to data reduction issues
- action item on ESO to produce concise cookbooks for data reduction

- Gasgano: GUI for organisation/visualization (EsoRex is a command-line version of it) calls pipeline recipes
- Common Pipeline Library (replaced Eclipse) has no plotting/display functionalities  
[www.eso.org/cpl](http://www.eso.org/cpl) and [www.eso.org/pipelines](http://www.eso.org/pipelines)  
CPL UVES pipeline solves problems with optimal extraction of high S:N data

- ESO-Reflex: VIPGI-like approach allowing to use one's own scripts (Python, IDL, ...)  
(VIPGI is specific for VIRMOS, Java-based)  
writes and uses standardised products e  
requires modular approach to recipes and  
requires visualization/interaction tools  
early development for FORS and AMBER  
2007 is the decisive year
- recommendation: ESO to release  $\beta$ -version of ESO-Reflex to wider community

## “publication statistics”

- there is now an ESO web interface for linking observing campaigns to publications  
[www.eso.org/libraries/telbib.html](http://www.eso.org/libraries/telbib.html)  
(ESO Messenger #119)
- La Silla publications < 20% decline (10 yrs)  
La Silla cited equally to rest of the world  
VLT publications are cited more frequently  
2 refereed papers/day based on ESO data  
service/visitor modes equally productive

- h-index: rank papers according to citations  
h-index is where number of citations  $<$  rank
- VLT  $>$  Gemini or Subaru, but  $<$  Keck
- $m = h /$  number of years in operation  
( $m < 1$  is not so good;  $m > 2$  is exceptional)
- VLT  $>$  Gemini or Subaru, similar to Keck
- $m$  biased against papers with long impact  
(e.g., published 20 years ago and still cited)
- VLT papers: 1000 in A&A, 500 in ApJ
- A&A impact behind ApJ but gap is closing

## Summary of decisions ESO Council meeting, Barcelona 5+6 June 2007

- upcoming change of ESO Director General  
Tim de Zeeuw, for Catherine Cesarsky
- upcoming change of UK representative  
Pat Roche, for Gerry Gilmore

## Resolution adopted by consensus:

- The proposed LS 2000+ scenario contains the elements to allow ESO to maintain the availability of the La Silla site for the ESO community. The minimum cost to ESO is estimated at 1.4 M€ per year.
- The transition costs from La Silla today's full operation model to the LS 2000+ scenario are fully covered by the budget line still available until 2010 if the minimal operation starts in early 2010 (i.e., the savings of the year 2010 pay for the transition costs).

(continued:)

- The effective savings of a maximum of 3 M€ per year (w.r.t. the costs in 2007) from La Silla minimal operations and support would become effective in the year 2011.
- The details on the instruments made available and the level and costs of additional services to be provided remain a matter for future discussion. This should include consideration of the scientific needs of the whole ESO community in the short and medium term.



## Scientific Strategy Working Group to consider:

- Large Solar Telescope
- SKA
- telescope in Antarctica
- large computing facilities for Astrophysics and Cosmology