



ASTRONET Board Meeting
September 20, 2006
Salle des séminaires, IAP, 98 bis Bd Arago, Paris 14^{ème}

Present :

ANDERSEN Johannes (NOTSA) – Chair
BARCONS Xavier (MEC)
BÖHLKE Kristina (PT-DESY/ BMBF)
CASOLI Fabienne (CNRS/INSU)
De ZEEUW Tim (NOVA)
DIAMOND Phil (JBO-University of Manchester)
FLETCHER Peter (PPARC)
GILMORE Gerry (University of Cambridge)
GIMENEZ Alvaro (ESA)
KATSANEVAS Stavros (CNRS/IN2P3)
KESSLER Martin (ESA)
KOHLER Elisabeth (CNRS)
MOLSTER Frank (NWO/NOVA)
MONNET Guy (ESO)
NORDSTRÖM Birgitta (NOTSA/University of Copenhagen)
OLIVIER Nathalie (CNRS/IN2P3)
PERNA Corrado (INAF)
ROMEO Olivier (CNRS/ INSU)
STARK Ronald (NWO)
VAN ACHTER Marc (European Commission)
VETTOLANI Paolo (INAF)
ZENSUS Anton (MPG/MPIfR Bonn)
ZICKGRAF Franz-Josef (PT-DESY/ BMBF)

Apologies:

FONTANA Adriano (INAF)
LAGRANGE Anne-Marie (CNRS/INSU)
VOGES Wolfgang (MPG)

Minutes

The Chair expressed the Board's cordial wishes for the rapid recovery of A.-M. Lagrange from her current health problems.

The Chair welcomed P. Fletcher as new permanent representative of PPARC; M. Kessler as future permanent representative of ESA; K. Böhlke as representative of the BMBF; and A. Zensus as representative of the MPG. He also welcomed the Coordinators P. Diamond (RadioNet), G. Gilmore (OPTICON), and S. Katsanevas (ASPERA), as well as Task Leader T. de Zeeuw (Science Vision).

Adoption of Agenda

The Agenda was adopted as distributed.

Minutes of the last Board Meeting

The minutes had already been approved.

Summary of decisions since the last Board

- November 2005 : signature of the Consortium agreement
- January : approval of the Management Plan and the Leaflet
- March : approval of the Plan for Disseminating Knowledge and the website
- May : approval of the Science Vision panels
- July : change of leader for WP3 : R. Davies was replaced by M. Bode
change of task leader 1.3 : R. Sirey was replaced by P. Fletcher

Overall status of ASTRONET (F. Casoli)

Anne-Marie Lagrange being absent, the Coordinator was represented by Fabienne Casoli.

The global status of ASTRONET is satisfactory despite the fact that some participants face problems due to institutional reorganisations and lack of staff. Such changes affect especially CNRS/INSU and, in a minor way, PPARC.

Presentation of EU funded projects linked to ASTRONET

- OPTICON by G. Gilmore
- RADIONET by P. Diamond
- ASPERA by S. Katsanevas

The presentations are available on the ASTRONET website. Notably, South Africa (SALT) has expressed interest in joining OPTICON.

Progress report on WPs

WP1.1 Systematic exchange of information (C. Perna; e.g ppt presentation)

Currently the report contains a description of the organization of Astronomical Research in each ASTRONET full-contractor country, with the exception of the Nordic Countries.

In August, single country reports have been distributed to each country contact point for feedback and incorporating quantitative data. On September 20 the full report has been delivered to the respective Board members for feedback. The final report should be ready for the next Executive Committee on November 21.

The idea is to highlight key points in the Report. Smaller countries would only have to give feedback and data on these key points.

After the completion of the Report, the next step will be to coordinate and make a permanent exchange of information between agencies throughout the duration of the network activities.

WP1.2 Integration of new participants (B. Nordström; e.g ppt presentation)

Many contacts have been taken. The Swedish Research Council and the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences want to join as Associates. Poland will probably be the only new contractor. Most others are interested in becoming forum members. The decisions are expected by the end of December 2006.

New documents have been provided: a Quick Guide for New Participants and a draft agreement for Associates.

The integration of third countries, like South Africa or Australia, is not appropriate in the case of ERANETs, unless there is a very high added value (M. v. Achter).

WP1.3 Links with I3, DS and astroparticle physics (P. Fletcher; e.g ppt presentation)

- Era-Net : Aspera. Invitation to open Board meetings (and ASTRONET to theirs). Contacts have been taken with the Science Vision panels, and suggestions have been made to avoid duplication in activities and for the Roadmaps. Aspera will attend the Science Vision symposium and other open events. Exchange of information via PMO will be developed.
- I3 : Opticon and RadioNet. Are invited to open Board meetings (and ASTRONET to theirs); are invited to comment on Science Vision panel coverage and to suggest names for the Roadmap panels. They will be also attending the Science Vision symposium and other open events.
- Others: Design studies and Coordination actions for specific projects and subject areas. Ensure that the different areas are covered through invitations to Science Vision symposium.

WP2.1 Census of present European astronomical forces (G. Monnet)

The major part of the census has been completed in April 2006 and is available by a link from the Astronet web site. It focuses on strategic visions and on major projects and facilities. The census will be regularly updated and the data will be checked again.

WP2.2 European Science Vision for Astronomy (T. de Zeeuw; e.g ppt presentation)

The first meeting of the Science Vision working group (SVWG) was held on March 10 in Leiden, and four supporting panels have been organized. The SVWG presents a good distribution of expertise, gender, nationalities. The next meeting will be held on October 6.

The panels' comprehensive first drafts still need harmonizing. The part on "Astronomy beyond 2025" is not done yet. The draft on "Astronomy and Society" by M. Perryman is in good progress. The draft of the Science Vision will be released by December 1st, 2006 and put on the ASTRONET website to benefit from community input. The draft will be also be presented and discussed during the Science Vision Symposium that will be held on January 23- 25, 2007. The final report is scheduled in Spring 2007.

The span covered by the Science Vision is about two decades. How long will it be valid? Should it be updated every 5-10 years?

WP3 Roadmap for the development of infrastructure for European Astronomy. (P. Fletcher; e.g ppt presentation)

Since August, Michael Bode is the new Task Leader. By November the panels will be agreed (structure, chairs, members). An assistant will be hired in December. The first panel meeting will be held in January 2007. The first draft Roadmap is planned in June 2007, the final version in June 2008. The date of the corresponding symposium is not fixed yet.

WP4 Targeted coordinated actions to strengthen Astronomy and Astrophysics (F.-J. Zickgraf; e.g ppt presentation)

A questionnaire on grant management procedures has been sent out on June, 16. The deadline for return was July 15. 10 out of 12 questionnaires have been returned. The analysis is in progress.

The end of the information collection is scheduled by the end of September and the first draft of analysis of questionnaire (D13, D14) by the end of 2006. The Associates are also required to answer the questionnaire if appropriate.

The first workshop will be held in February 2007. The invitations have been sent out on September 11, and the deadline for answer is September 25.

General discussion

The possibility to combine the ASTRONET joint call with EU funding for infrastructures under FP7 should be investigated. The ASTRONET Roadmap will also help to define the scope of the call. It is important to foster key technologies, but the intellectual property issues are very tricky.