Integrating and strengthening the European Research Area

ERA-NET

Coordination and Support Action

ASTRONET

Coordinating Strategic Planning for European Astronomy

Contract no 262162

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Dissemination Level

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1 Introduction

The ASTRONET Infrastructure Roadmap can be seen as a common action plan identifying opportunities for joint activities of the ASTRONET member agencies related to infrastructures/facilities, and for common actions related to science funding including joint calls. The overall objective of Work Package 5 (WP 5) is the implementation of common actions based on appropriate roadmap recommendations. To reach this objective, the goals of the work package are twofold:

a) the implementation of recommended cost-benefit optimization actions concerning existing European facilities, and

b) the implementation of common actions for the coordination of funding in Europe in areas identified in the roadmap and the implementation of further joint calls.

As for item a) the goal is to implement the actions recommended by the different panels of the coordination actions of Work Package 4 and those already recommended by ASTRONET-1 (FP6 supported action 2005 – 2010). The latter includes the European Telescope Strategy Review Committee (ETSRC) established for an assessment of a future strategy for the 2-4m class optical/IR telescopes and a similar process initiated for the European radio telescopes in 2011 with the establishment of the European Radio Telescope Review Committee (ERTRC).

The goal of item b) is the implementation of common actions and further joint calls based on the funding activities of the partner agencies. This will require identifying areas of co-operation resulting from the roadmap and providing a strong European added value.

The specific objectives of Task 5.4 as defined in the Description of Work (DoW) are common actions in the three areas Astrophysical Software Laboratory (ASL), Virtual Observatory (VO) and Laboratory Astrophysics (LA). Proposals for common actions in the three main areas (VO, ASL, LA) are expected to result from recommendations of expert panels of Work Package 4 (WP4). In addition to these primary areas further fields offering opportunities for common actions on the European level are high performance computing and grids, Gaia data analysis and processing, wide-field multiplexed spectrographs, technology research & development, exploitation of facilities, and training and mobility actions in the context of human resources. It is ex-
pected that concerning the human resources topic there will also be input from Task 5.3, which specifically addresses the roadmap “Panel E” recommendations\(^1\).

A further topic of Task 5.4 is to develop common statutes for the joint establishment and operation of future Astrophysics programmes. In the context of the task objectives “common statutes” have the overall meaning of member rights and obligations, management structures and the roles of bodies, intellectual property rights (IPR) and other internal arrangements.

The purpose of this deliverable is to report on a set of proposed common statutes aiming at different programmatic levels. In order to coordinate and harmonize common activities in the relevant fields, common statutes for three levels of stakeholders should be discussed: the funding agency level, the institutional level, and the beneficiary level:

- **Funding agency level:**
  - common statutes on the funding programme level, e.g. for joint calls;

- **Institutions level:**
  - Common statutes in the form of Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) or Letters of Intent for collaboration of institutions (research institutes, universities) in order to coordinate activities of the institutions in the relevant fields;

- **Beneficiary level:**
  - the funding agencies may enforce common statutes for the transnational collaborative projects. These could comprise rules for the collaboration addressing issues like intellectual property rights, consortium member rights and duties, settlement of disputes etc., and rules for project organization in general.

Lead by the task leader, the working group (WG) established in 2012 during a Task 5.4 workshop in Hamburg has considered possible common statutes for the joint establishment of common actions. Active members of the WG were representatives of CAS, CNRS-INSU, NWO, MINECO, and STFC plus the task leader from PT-DESY. The proposed statutes were discussed during a dedicated workshop which took place in Hamburg on 22 October 2013 (see Appendix 4.3 for the agenda). This report, Deliverable D5.6, reflects the outcome of the discussions within the WG and during the workshop.

\(^1\) Task 5.3 Implementation of roadmap recommendations on education, recruitment and training, public outreach and industrial links, Task Leader: ESO
It should be noted that this report is not meant to be a “Handbook of Project Management” as there is a plethora of such documents around in the communities, be it funding agencies, institutions or beneficiaries. Rather, the goal is to identify common structures on the various levels in existing programmes or projects, and to reach a consensus on recommendations for best practices applied for the implementation of common actions on the different levels mentioned. In this context the term “project” is aiming at research or R&D projects in a general sense and is explicitly not referring to the prioritized large infrastructure projects listed in the ASTRONET Roadmap.

As we furthermore believe that application of the principles of voluntarism and variable geometry is a major prerequisite for a lasting success of transnational cooperation, the proposed common statutes are not considered to become mandatory for the implementation of future common actions but are considered having the character of recommendations. We believe that binding requirements for internal processes and operations would be counterproductive.

2 Proposed common statutes

2.1 Common statutes for funding programmes

Statutes on this level primarily address the requirements of joint calls, i.e. a common action on the funding agencies level, with single joint evaluation of the project proposals in accordance with international peer review standards. Within the ERA-Net scheme this is meanwhile an established procedure in European research funding which has been successfully applied e.g. to the first ASTRONET Joint Call. Starting from this we generalize the ERA-Net procedures to a wider context so that they should be applicable to common funding actions independent of an ERA-Net.

2.1.1 Overall structure and procedures

In ASTRONET-1 rules for joint calls have been established. Details are described in Deliverable D17 of ASTRONET-1 “White book on the implementation of common structure and standards”. The rules were successfully applied in the first joint call of ASTRONET in 2008 and were considered during the discussion of the realization of the second call in 2010-12 (Deliverable D28 of ASTRONET-1). The proposed basic set of rules is recommended to form the com-
For the implementation of a joint call three bodies are established:

- **Joint Call Board**: it consists of representatives of the call partner agencies, supervises the call, and is the decision-making body for the joint call; its remit is to supervise the call process and to provide the national funding agencies with a jointly agreed funding recommendation.

- **Evaluation Panel**: it carries out the scientific proposal evaluation in a peer review process on the basis of Terms of Reference agreed by the call partners;

- **Joint Secretariat**: it is responsible for the implementation of the call according to the rules in the white book.

Based on the ranking list established by the Evaluation Panel, the Joint Call Board provides a funding recommendation to the national funding agencies. This recommendation is the basis for the final funding decision by the national agencies; the call partner agencies waive the need for an additional national evaluation process.

For the transnational joint funding of projects the “virtual common pot” model has proven useful. Grants are processed according to the national rules applying for the beneficiaries participating in a project.

The typical time schedule of a joint call is schematically depicted in Fig. 2 below.
Fig. 1 Administrative structure for joint calls, “FA”: Funding Agency (adopted from ASTRONET-1 Deliverable D28)

Fig. 2 Joint call time flow (adopted from ASTRONET-1 Deliverable D17)
2.1.2 Draft Implementation Agreement

It is recommended that the participating funding agencies sign an “Implementation Agreement” specifying the terms of co-operation, the accepted rules and the governance structure of the call. Due to legal requirements for several agencies the agreement should contain a disclaimer on the legal status of the agreement being legally non-binding (Article 8 below):

1. The Signatories agree on the implementation of a transnational call for proposals, hereafter referred to as the Joint Call. The theme of the Joint Call is designated [Call theme and further details to be inserted]

2. The action will normally be carried out in accordance with the provisions of document White book on the implementation of common structure and standards (ASTRONET Deliverable D17), the contents of which the Signatories are fully aware of.

Basic tools for the implementation of the call shall be in particular
   a. the installation of a supervising body, the Joint Call Board, which consists of representative of the Signatories;
   b. the installation of a Joint Secretariat for the organisation of all call-specific activities;
   c. a peer review process for the assessment of the quality of proposals;

3. The budget available for the joint call shall be organised as a virtual common pot. The final decision about the application of the national fund contributions to the virtual common pot shall remain under the responsibility of the proper national organisation according to the national regulations of the Signatories. If required, national reporting procedures apply in addition to call-specific reporting laid down in Deliverable D17.

4. The Programme Board establishes a list of proposals according to the procedures laid down in ASTRONET Deliverable D17 which are recommended for funding to the proper national organisations. The Signatories agree to decide on funding on the
basis of the recommendation by the Programme Board without further national evaluation.

5. The duration of the funding period of the Joint Call shall be \([n]\) years\(^2\).

6. The total envelopes for the entire funding period up to which national funding is possible are set as follows:

- Agency 1 \([\text{limit 1}] \) €
- Agency 2 \([\text{limit 2}] \) €
- ...
- ...

7. The Call for Proposals is jointly published by the Signatories. If required by national regulations the call is published at the same time by the respective Signatories. The application deadline shall not be earlier than \([n \text{ days}] \) after the date on which the call has been published by all Signatories. It is agreed by the Signatories that the date of publication shall not be later than \([\text{date of publication}] \).

8. At the end of the funding period an evaluation of the call is carried out, normally by the Joint Call Board.

9. This Agreement represents the intentions of the partners, made in good faith to collaborate in respect of the joint transnational call for research projects on “[call theme]”. Each partner hereto understands and agrees that nothing contained in this agreement is intended to constitute a legally binding obligation.

2.2 Common statutes relevant for collaborations on the institutional level

Medium to long-term activities in areas like the VO, the ASL, and LA not covered by international organisations like ESO and ESA require a sustainable structural basis which cannot be

\(^2\) Usually 3 years.
provided by project funding, as for example through a joint call. Rather, the basis for common action in these fields must be anchored on the institutional level by supporting research institutions and organisations, possibly supplemented by additional transnational project funding within this framework.

In transnational initiatives of research stakeholders, i.e. common actions on the institutional level, it is a task for the participating organisations to agree common rules on the basis of the national budgetary and funding frameworks. Common funding principles and the application of common statutes on a voluntary basis either have proven useful or are expected to be useful where they allow a certain degree of flexibility with regard to their interpretation and application.

It seems difficult if not impossible to propose more details to be regulated in agreements for common actions in the relevant fields without knowing the detailed boundary conditions and the requirements of the involved stakeholders, which vary from case to case. More concrete demand will emerge on the basis of the committee reports of VO, ETFLA, and ASL. Reports are in preparation and will be available for the next phase of ASTRONET. We therefore refrain from elaborating more detailed recipes at this time, but concentrate on issues of general relevance in European-wide efforts by analysing the basic implementation principles of past or existing European networks in these areas.

### 2.2.1 Examples of existing networks

In the fields of the Virtual Observatory and Laboratory Astrophysics several European networks existed or still exist (EURO-VO, cf. [http://www.euro-vo.org/](http://www.euro-vo.org/), ExoMol, LASSIE, VAMDC, cf. [http://www.labastro.eu/eu_networks.html](http://www.labastro.eu/eu_networks.html)) which are funded within the 7th Framework Programme of the EU. The organisational structures of these consortia could serve as templates for common actions statutes in the ASTRONET context as well. For the ASL there have been no comparable coordinated activities until now.

In the Laboratory Astrophysics context the global VAMDC network (“Virtual Atomic and Molecular Data Centre”) and its current successor SUP@VAMDC are of particular interest as they represent virtual infrastructures comparable to the Virtual Observatory (cf. [http://www.vamdc.eu/](http://www.vamdc.eu/)). VAMDC had 5 managing bodies: Communication and Training Committee (CTC), Executive Project Team (EPT), Strategic Advisory Board (SAB), VAMDC Executive Board (VEB) and the VAMDC Project Board (VPB). The successor SUP@VAMDC has a similar structure with a small Executive Team (ET) acting as the managing body for the daily
business replacing the CTC of its predecessor. In both networks the Project Board is the major decision-making body.

The implementation of the Virtual Observatory in Europe is coordinated on the community level by the European Virtual Observatory initiative, EURO-VO. The overall goal is the establishment of an operational VO supporting all necessary infrastructures like VO tools and services, and the technical platform.

In the framework of EURO-VO a series of activities has been funded by the EU in the 6th and 7th Framework Programme: The Coordination Action Euro-VO Data Centre Alliance (EuroVO-DCA, 2006-2008) the Integrated Infrastructure Initiative Euro-VO Astronomical Infrastructure for Data Access (EuroVO-AIDA, 2008-2010), and the Euro-VO International Cooperation Empowerment (EuroVO-ICE), which ended 2012.

Currently, the EU funds the initiative EURO-VO Collaborative and Sustainable Astronomical Data Infrastructure (EuroVO-CoSADIE) for a two-year period (2012-2014). In short, CoSADIE “is centred on the development of strategies and coordination structures, through a feasibility study for a sustainable European Virtual Observatory giving access to the open, highly diverse, highly distributed data holdings of astronomy. [...] It also aims at disseminating results among and gathering requirements from the scientific community (users) and the data providers. It will co-ordinate European technical activities, and includes the promotion and monitoring of international standards, and their adoption through the International Virtual Observatory Alliance IVOA. Co-operation and interface with the grid and cloud will also be assessed. Specific care will be taken to consolidate the high impact VObs outreach activities towards education and the general public.”

CoSADIE is working in close collaboration with ASTRONET.

With respect to common statutes the proposed governance structure of the EURO-VO consortium is lean comprising only 2 main bodies: the **Consortium Board** consisting of MoU signatories and the **Executive Board** consisting of the chairs of the boards of the functional subunits of the VO (in the case of the EURO-VO the 3 subunits are Data Centre Alliance, Facility Centre and Technology Centre). The Executive Board reports to the Consortium Board. National data centre issues are brought in through the data centre alliance board.

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For the EURO-VO FP7 funded project AIDA a consortium agreement (CA) was under consideration. The proposed governance structure comprised 4 bodies: a Board as the decision making body with representatives from the partner organisations, the Work Package Management Team (WPMT), the Science Advisory Committee (SAC), and the Internal Science Team (IST). The WPMT and IST were proposed to be appointed by the Board and to report to the Board. Scientific oversight was to be provided by the SAC. Although the AIDA consortium agreement is largely governed by rules regulating the relations of the consortium to the EU there are a couple of issues which are of more general interest here.

2.2.2 Issues of general relevance

In the following we identify issues playing a role in future common actions on the research institutions level:

List of important items which should be addressed in a MoU/Consortium Agreement for a common action:

- Governance structure
  - Board, Coordinator, Work package management, Science Advisory Committee
  - Rules for procedure of the consortium governing bodies
- Programme structure - Role and contributions of individual Partners
- Liability towards each other
  - No warranties in respect of any information or materials supplied by one project partner to another
  - Limitations of contractual liability
  - Rules for involvement of third parties (liability, damage etc.)
  - Force Majeure
- Foreground and background knowledge
  - Intellectual Property (IP) rules
  - Dissemination
  - Special conditions for International Organisations (e.g. ESO, cf. 2.3.1)
- Miscellaneous provisions
  - Mandatory statutory law
2.2.3 Example: The Virtual Observatory

A draft MoU for the VO relevant for funding agencies will be delivered by Task 4.4 in Deliverable D4.10 “Draft memorandum of understanding between funding agencies to implement the VO in a permanent way” (due Month 48 of ASTRONET-2).

CoSADIE has identified 3 areas of activity required for a sustainable VO, namely support for the astronomical community, support for data providers, and VO team support. For the VO the necessity of a long-term commitment for the operation of data centres is obvious as this is a core functionality of the distributed VO infrastructure. In the list given above the first item could be specified in more detail as follows

- Programme structure - Role and contributions of individual Partners
  - Community support
  - Operation/maintenance of data centres
  - Provision of VO tools and services

Funds necessary to maintain the structural basis have to be allocated by the participating institutes/organisations. In this framework the legal basis for co-operation of institutional/organisational partners could be an agreement in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) defining the statutes of the co-operation. Additional project funding e. g. through joint calls (following e. g. the recommendations in Sect. 2.1 and 2.3) could then provide complementary funds for transnational research projects within the VO common action framework.

2.3 Common statutes relevant for collaboration of partners on the beneficiary level

Common statutes in this context are aiming at research projects in a general sense involving research teams from several countries. Larger-scale instrumentation projects like the construction of wide-field multiplexed spectrographs or technology research & development projects are special cases for such collaborations.
2.3.1 Common statutes for collaborative projects

Transnational collaborative projects are formed by partners collaborating in the project context ("parties"). Usually these are science groups at universities and research institutions. Third parties involved by commission of a contract are not considered collaboration partner. An example is an industry contract to develop and deliver specific components for an instrument. The commissioned company is not a project partner.

There are a couple of issues that are common to many collaborative projects and which are laid down usually in a written agreement. The agreement should contain well-balanced regulations for rights and duties of the collaboration partners concerning use and exploitation of knowledge and achievements with the following principles:\(^4\):

1. Each project partner has the right of full and unrestricted use of foreground knowledge generated by that party. "Foreground" means the knowledge generated in the framework of the project's activities by the work carried out since the signature of the collaboration agreement.

2. Access to foreground and background (meaning existing knowledge) shall be granted. The parties normally grant mutually royalty-free non-exclusive access rights to background needed to use the foreground generated in the indirect action on a royalty-free basis unless otherwise agreed by all participants before their accession to the collaboration agreement.

3. Among the knowledge generated in a project, inventions should be treated separately in order to acknowledge the special achievement:

   - Parties may agree that inventions be offered to the other parties first (initial negotiating rights) and/or not to offer them third parties on terms more favourable than those it offers project partners (most-favoured-customer clause). In the case of non-exclusive licensing the project partners are free to grant third parties non-exclusive licences in the same field. An invention generated in the project belongs to the party who made it and whose employees generated the result. This party undertakes the necessary steps for patent protection.

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— In case employees of several parties are involved in an invention, these parties find a consensus on the modalities for the patent protection (determine applicant for the patent, redistribution of expenses and revenues). If the contributions of the parties are considered equal their remuneration claims are considered compensated.

— Parties not involved in an invention may purchase licenses for the use of the invention beyond the project. Participation in the project as such does not justify any claim of royalty-free use of the invention beyond the project.

— Contracts of consortia with international organisations are subject to their own IP rules (see for example the “General Conditions of ESO Contracts”\(^5\)).

4. The parties shall establish arbitration procedures for amicable settlement of disputes.

5. Acknowledge the obligation to observe higher-ranking law, in particular EU competition law.

### 2.3.2 Common statutes for project organization

Adoption of the general rules for project planning and implementation like those described in the ESA publication ECSS-M-ST-10C Rev.1 (2009)\(^6\) is strongly recommended. This comprises rules for project planning, project organization, project breakdown structures and project phasing. In short, an example of general principles in the context of this deliverable is:

- Agree on a recommendation of project breakdown structures, which constitute the common and unique reference system for the project management to:
  - identify the tasks and responsibilities of each collaboration partner;
  - facilitate the coherence between all activities of the whole project;
  - perform scheduling and costing activities.

- Agree on a common vocabulary concerning the definition of phases and formal

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milestones enabling the progress of the project to be controlled with respect to cost, schedule and technical objectives.

(Source: ECSS-M-ST-10C Rev. 1 (6 March 2009, see\(^6\)), Introduction, p. 8)

The appropriate consortium organisation is of particle importance for complex instrumentation projects. The necessary detailed project breakdown structures certainly depend strongly on individual requirements of the project and may even change during the life cycle of a project. A detailed definition is therefore not meaningful here. We refer here to recent large instrumentation projects carried out under ESO contracts like KMOS, MUSE, MATISSE, and ERIS\(^7\) and other projects like WEAVE\(^8\) which all have consortia management structure differing in details. Recommendations for typical project breakdown structures generally applicable to instrumentation projects are summarized in Appendix 4.1.

Where appropriate we propose to use a common vocabulary for the definition of project phases and project reviews representing project milestones at the end of each phase. This is certainly useful for instrumentation projects. The proposed definitions are listed in Appendix 4.2. As projects evolve through the various project phases one certainly should expect that the requirements for the project breakdown structure will have to be adapted to new needs.

### 3 Final remarks

The discussion on common rules and procedures was started in ASTRONET-1 (2005 – 2010). It resulted in a set of rules for joint calls which were successfully applied to the first ASTRONET joint call in 2008. The continuing discussion on common rules and procedures in the present phase of ASTRONET has shown that there is a general consensus on basic procedural rules on the various levels of science funding. The discussion process moderated by Work Package 5 of ASTRONET-2 has both consolidated and extended the common understanding of rules and procedures for future common actions. The ASTRONET partners were able to agree on recommendations for common statutes for future common actions on different levels, from joint calls on


the funding agencies level to common actions of institutions and transnational collaborative projects of consortia of scientists. As the recommendations presented here can be seen as a further step towards coordination of activities in the field of astronomy and astrophysics with European-wide significance and interest we are confident that this Deliverable not only can serve as a reference in future common action but also has the potential for further development in the years to come.
4 Appendix

4.1 Project breakdown structures for instrumentation projects

For instrumentation projects the following organisational components are usually established in consortia and are also recommended here:

- **Principal Investigator** (PI): the overall project responsible; for ESO instrumentation projects the single consortium contact point with ESO. This person has the ultimate responsibility for the design, procurement, test and delivery of the instrument to the observatory.

- **Project Manager** (PM): responsible for the project development and coordination, managing of the project resources and project risks. PM reports to the PI.

- **Project Scientist** (PS): responsible for developing tools needed to convert astrophysical models into parameters observable by the instrument.

- **Instrument Scientist**: leads and selects the instrumental concept choice.

- **System Engineer**: oversees system design and implementation and reports to the Project Manager.

- **Work Package / Subsystem Leaders**: have the responsibility for the development of subsystems and report to the system engineer.

In addition to these core functions there may also be need for:

- **Quality Manager**: oversees application of quality rules.

- **AIT Manager**: manages Assembly, Integration and Test.

A further option is the appointment of an **Oversight Committee** consisting of representatives of the project partner institutions to oversee the project.

4.2 Common vocabulary for phases and milestones of instrumentation projects

We propose to use a common vocabulary for the definition of project phases and reviews representing project milestones at the end of each phase referring to the terminology of ECSS-M-ST-10C Rev.1. ESO uses similar definitions in instrumentation projects (cf. e.g. E-SPE-ESO-313-0066 Issue 1). Starting from this, we propose to use a general definition for project phases and end milestones, where meaningful, as follows:
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<th>Description</th>
<th>Milestone</th>
<th>Acronym</th>
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<td>Phase A</td>
<td>Conceptual design</td>
<td>Conceptual Design Review</td>
<td>CoDR</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phase B</td>
<td>Preliminary Design</td>
<td>Preliminary Design Review</td>
<td>PDR</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phase C</td>
<td>Final Design</td>
<td>Final Design Review</td>
<td>FDR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Acceptance Review(s)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Manufacturing</td>
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<td>• Assembly, Integration and Test (AIT),</td>
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<td>• Commissioning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phase E</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phase F</td>
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Remarks:

- The definitions of Phase A, B, and C follow the ESO definitions in document E-SPE-ESO-313-0066 Issue 1 for the E-ELT programme.
- We propose the designation “Conceptual Design Review” for the Phase A end review with the acronym “CoDR” in order to avoid confusion with the designation “Critical Design Review (CDR)” which is sometimes used for the Phase C end review.
- We propose “Final Design Review (FDR)” for the Phase C end review instead of “Critical Design Review (CDR)”. An alternative designation sometimes used is “Technical Design Review (TDR)”.
- Phase D might contain further intermediate reviews like equivalents to “Preliminary Acceptance Europe (PAE)” and “Provisional Acceptance Chile (PAC)” used by ESO.
- If a contract with an observatory contains guaranteed time as payment for the delivery of the instrument, it is part of Phase E.
- In the case of instrumentation projects de-commissioning (Phase F) is normally the responsibility of the observatory owner.

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4.3 Agenda of workshop on common statutes

ASTRONET
Task 5.4 Workshop
Common statutes for future common action programmes
PT-DESY, room 504, 5th floor, Albert-Einstein-Ring 21, Hamburg
22.10.2013
AGENDA

9:30 – 9:45 Arrival and welcome

9:45 – 10:15 Introduction: Draft Deliverable D5.6 "Report on common statutes for future common action programmes" (F.-J. Zickgraf)

10:15 – 11:15 Discussion session 1: Funding Agencies level – guidelines for Joint Calls (Chair: N. Häbe)

11:15 – 11:30 Coffee break

11:30 – 13:00 Discussion session 2: Beneficiary level - guidelines for establishment of transnational research projects (Chair: J. Gallego)

13:00 – 14:00 Lunch break

14:00 – 15:30 Discussion session 3: Institutions level - guidelines for MoUs, LoIs etc. (Chair: D. Mourard)

15:30 – 16:00 Closing roundtable discussion: Finalization of Deliverable D5.6 (Chair: F.-J. Zickgraf)

16:00 End of Workshop