

Notes from the Astronet Board 20 December 2021

zoom

1. Welcome and approval of Agenda – Chair

The Chair welcomed all attendees to the meeting, followed by a *tour de table*. A particular welcome was extended to the new observers from Ireland, Portugal and Denmark and Professor Haungs for APPEC. Amelie Saintonge and Anja Andersen attended for the Science Vision editorial team.

2. Notes from last meeting (12 October 2021) – Chair

The notes from the last meeting were approved,

3. New members – Chair

The Astronet Chair had proactively canvassed membership, initially approaching the members of ESO not currently in Astronet. Ireland, Denmark and Portugal have all joined as Observers, following Board approval and Austria is in advanced negotiations to join. Others have shown interest but are yet to state their intentions. The Konkoly Institute for Hungary is also re-considering whether to affiliate. The Board noted that the requirement to pay even the very modest fee to join Astronet as a full member was an issue in many communities, where high level approval to pay and identifying the appropriate individuals to sign could take considerable time and effort. However, there was no proposal to change the current arrangements. The Board noted that Associate status was applied to APPEC and to the EAS – these were open-ended arrangements with no formal obligations. Observer status was approved by the Board, for a fixed period, subject to review, and with the hope that it would transition to full membership.

4. Renewal of Astronet MoU – Chair

The Chair reminded the Board that the original MoU was for five years (from signing in 2016) with the option to extend for a further five years by unanimous approval of the Astronet members. Approval to extend to December 2026 was sought. On a vote, all members approved the extension, with INAF and the Swedish Research Council opting to vote *ad ref*, subject to confirmation, in writing, after the meeting. On this basis the Board was able to agree to extend the Astronet MoU until 20 December 2026.

The Board noted that the work plan and some other aspects of the original vision for Astronet required review and agreed to consider this in the coming months. An agenda item in this meeting would start the process for the Work Plan.

Following approval of these notes, and confirmation of the *ad ref* votes the Chair would circulate a statement of the outcome to all members Action: Chair

5. Admin and Web updates – Saskia (NWO), Martin (CNRS)

Saskia reported that all invoices for 2021 had been sent out. There had been little financial commitment in 2021 due to the on-going pandemic restrictions on travel/meetings and that the bulk of the funds were set aside against costs associated with delivering the Science Vision and Roadmap (publication and launch events) – these commitments were now expected in 2022. Martin reported that number of updates had been made to the web pages via CNRS and any further corrections or changes should be forwarded to him or via Malcolm. The Board noted that the purpose, format and content of the web pages would need to be addressed in the new period of the MoU. The importance of the web pages was highlighted as the ‘shop window’ for Astronet.

6. Science Vision & Roadmap update – Colin

The Board was informed that all drafts were now received and posted on Astronet web pages (including two cross-cutting sections – Computing and Societal aspects (skills, sustainability, environment etc.), as well as a chapter on Extreme Astrophysics. An update has been given to the APPEC GA. However, communities had yet to be contacted to alert them to the new

drafts and the request for comments. Members were encouraged to initiate this via their national mailing lists or other means

It was confirmed that the target audience for the Report is the Astronet members as links into their national funding and strategic bodies / Governments and the European Union.

6.1 Outline plan from Editorial team – Amelie Saintonge

An update was provided on behalf of the Science Vision and Roadmap editorial team.

The editors have looked at the submitted draft chapters and highlighted the following strengths and issues:

Strengths:

- Broad range of science topics and adjacent issues to draw a complete picture of European Astronomy
- All science chapters give a good overview of the science background and key open questions

Issues:

- All but two of the chapters still in draft form
- Heterogeneity in scope / level of details
- Very few make recommendations, rank of priorities, no careful assessment of facilities, etc.
- Focus tends to be on short term and on secured facilities (e.g. JWST, EUCLID), little long-term vision provided

Drawing from the science chapters, the editors are creating an overview table of relevant astronomical facilities based on the following criteria:

- New facilities, upgrades (to facilities or instruments), facilities under construction, or existing facilities in need of significant and sustained investment to continue operations;

- Medium to large scale investment required (>€10M) over a period of ~10 yrs;
- Significant / decisive European participation / contribution.

It is hoped that the data collection for the Facilities Table would take place this month, for iteration with the Panels and their chairs and as a basis for clarifying priorities.

The revised schedule foresaw an advanced draft of the full report (to include introduction and conclusions) by mid-spring, with a version available for the Board and then the community after that and final publication in the summer.

The Board endorsed the plans proposed by the editorial team and fed back some comments to them via Amelie and Anja and thanked them again for their support and efforts.

It was suggested that a session could be obtained at the European Astronomical meeting in June to facilitate community buy in to the Roadmap. The Board noted the difficulties in reaching the entire European astronomical community but agreed that all efforts must be made to try to ensure that the Report had both support and relevance. It accepted that this may well lead to a further delay in completion, but the alternative was not ideal.

The Chair would liaise with the editorial team to agree next actions and contact the EAS, via Sara, to establish whether a plenary and / or lunchtime session on Astronet could be included in the EWASS agenda. Action: Chair

Salvatore Sciortino stated that he would like to recommend an additional person, connected to INAF, to help the editorial board.

7. Future Work Plan – Chair / All

The Chair stated that it was not intended to discuss the revised work plan at this meeting but to agree a process by which it could be generated. The Board emphasised that completing the Science Vision along with a plan to implement its recommendations would

continue to be the highest priority. Members commented on the need to address cross-cutting issues such as responses to changes in EU opportunities, to consider the on-going need to ensure good coordination between ground and space and the need to address the future computing/data centre requirement of large infrastructures. The Chair reminded the Board that any new workpackages would require commitment by members, in terms of effort and management. The Board agreed that further consideration of the work plan for Astronet should be included in its next meeting and the Chair agreed to provide an early draft paper to stimulate discussion. Action: Chair

8. AOB – Chair

The need to consider the future format and direction of the web pages was highlighted by Jesus (see the previous item in these notes).

9. Date of next meeting – Chair

A doodle poll will be sent for a meeting in February/March 2022.
Action: Malcolm