



ESO Call for Proposals – P96

Proposal Deadline: 26 March 2015, 12:00 noon CET

Call for Proposals

ESO Period 96

**Proposal Deadline: 26 March 2015,
12:00 noon Central European Time**

Issued 26 February 2015

Preparation of the *ESO Call for Proposals* is the responsibility of the ESO Observing Programmes Office (OPO). For questions regarding preparation and submission of proposals to ESO telescopes, please contact the ESO Observing Programmes Office, opo@eso.org.

The ESO Call for Proposals document is a fully linked pdf file with bookmarks that can be viewed with [Adobe Acrobat Reader](#) 4.0 or higher. Internal document links appear in red and external links appear in blue. Links are clickable and will navigate the reader through the document (internal links) or will open a web browser (external links).

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Contents

I	Phase 1 Instructions	1
1	ESO Proposals Invited	1
1.1	Important recent changes (since Periods 94 and 95)	2
1.2	Important reminders	7
1.3	Foreseen changes in the upcoming periods	11
2	Getting Started	12
2.1	Exposure Time Calculators	12
2.2	The ESOFORM Proposal package	13
2.2.1	ESOFORM: Important notes	13
2.3	Proposal Submission	14
3	Visitor Instruments	14
II	Proposal Types, Policies, and Procedures	16
4	Proposal Types	16
4.1	Normal Programmes	17
4.2	Monitoring Programmes	17
4.3	Large Programmes	18
4.4	Target of Opportunity	19
4.4.1	Rapid Response Mode (RRM)	20
4.5	Guaranteed Time Observations	21
4.6	Proposals for Calibration Programmes	22
4.7	Director's Discretionary Time	22
4.8	Host State Proposals	23
4.9	Non-Member State Proposals	23
5	Observing Modes	23
5.1	Visitor Mode	23
5.1.1	ToO programme execution during VM observations	24
5.1.2	Designated Visitor Mode	24
5.2	Service Mode	24
5.2.1	Service Mode policies	25
6	Policy Summary	26
6.1	Who may submit, time allocation policies	26
6.2	Requesting use of non-standard observing configurations	27
6.3	Policy regarding offered/available observing configurations	27
6.4	Observing programme execution	27
6.4.1	Service Mode run execution	28
6.5	Phase 2 Service Mode policy: constraints and targets are binding	28
6.6	Pre-imaging runs	29
6.7	Data rights, archiving, data distribution	29
6.8	Publication of ESO telescope results	29
6.9	Press Releases	29
III	Appendix	30
A	Acronyms	30

Part I

Phase 1 Instructions

1 ESO Proposals Invited

The **European Southern Observatory (ESO)** invites proposals for observations at ESO telescopes during Period 96 (**1 October 2015 – 31 March 2016**). The following instruments are offered in this period:

La Silla

[EFOSC2](#) (ESO Faint Object Spectrograph 2)
[HARPS](#) (High Accuracy Radial velocity Planetary Searcher)
[Sofi](#) (Son of ISAAC)

Paranal

[AMBER](#) (Near-infrared interferometric instrument)
[FLAMES](#) (Fibre Large Array Multi Element Spectrograph)
[FORS2](#) (FOcal Reducer/low dispersion Spectrograph 2)
[HAWK-I](#) (High Acuity Wide field K-band Imager)
[KMOS](#) (K-band Multi-Object Spectrograph)
[MUSE](#) (Multi Unit Spectroscopic Explorer)
[NACO](#) (NAOS-CONICA: High Resolution NIR Camera and Spectrograph)
[OMEGACAM](#) (Wide Field Imager for the VST at Paranal)
[PIONIER](#) (Precision Integrated-Optics Near-infrared Imaging Experiment)
[SINFONI](#) (Spectrograph for INtegral Field Obs. in the NIR)
[SPHERE](#) (Spectro-Polarimetric High-contrast Exoplanet REsearch)
[UVES](#) (UV-Visual Échelle Spectrograph)
[VIMOS](#) (Visual Multi-Object Spectrograph)
[VIRCAM](#) (VISTA InfraRed CAMera)
[VISIR](#) (VLT Imager and Spectrometer for mid Infra Red)
[XSHOOTER](#) (UV-Visual-NIR medium resolution échelle spectrograph)

Chajnantor

[LABOCA](#) (Large Apex Bolometer CAMera)
[SHFI](#) (Swedish Heterodyne Facility Instrument)
[ARTEMIS](#) (Architectures de bolomètres pour des Télescopes à grand champ de vue dans le domaine sub-Millimétrique au Sol)
[FLASH](#) (First Light APEX Submillimeter Heterodyne receiver)
[SEPIA](#) (Swedish ESO PI receiver for APEX)

Further information can be found via the [Phase 1 webpage](#). Details on the instruments and ESO facilities offered in Period 96 can be found on the La Silla Paranal Observatory [Call for Proposals](#) webpage. The main characteristics of all Period 96 instruments offered at La Silla, Paranal and Chajnantor are described in the [Instrument summary](#) table. Further useful information can be accessed from the Phase 1 [Important Links](#) webpage (e.g., telescope pressure and definitions of observing constraints).

Any updates after the release of this Call will be listed on the [Late Breaking News](#) webpage.

The ESO proposal submission deadline is:

<p>26 March 2015, 12:00 noon Central European Time.</p>
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Please note that it is the PI's responsibility to resolve any verification or upload problems related to the instrument configuration, LaTeX file or associated figures well before the deadline. ESO cannot provide support beyond 11:00 CET on the day of the deadline. The online receiver will switch off at 12:00 CET. No submissions or amendments to submitted proposals can be accepted after this time.

In each submitted proposal, one single person, the Principal Investigator (PI), must be identified as being principally responsible for that proposal. By submitting a proposal the PI agrees that he/she and his/her collaborators will act according to ESO's policies and regulations (including the conditions specified in the present Call for Proposals) if observing time is granted.

Any questions about policies or the practical aspects of proposal preparation should be addressed to the ESO Observing Programmes Office, opo@eso.org. Enquiries related to the technical requirements of the planned observations should be sent to the User Support Department (usd-help@eso.org) for Paranal and Chajnantor and to lasilla@eso.org for La Silla. Enquiries can also be made through the [Ask for help](#) link in the User Portal, which is listed under "Other Services".

This document outlines the main news concerning the call, provides guidelines on how to prepare an ESO observing proposal, and outlines the policies related to ESO programmes. All the technical details related to the available facilities, telescopes and instruments are available through the ESO webpages. Part I of this Call for Proposals provides information on how to complete and submit a Phase 1 proposal to ESO and Part II describes the policies and procedures regarding proposing for, carrying out, and publishing ESO observations.

ALMA proposals are handled through a separate channel. The call for Cycle 3 ALMA proposals will be released on 24 March 2015. Further details will be made available through the [ALMA Science Portal at ESO](#).

1.1 Important recent changes (since Periods 94 and 95)

This section describes important changes which took place during Periods 94 and 95, as well as changes expected to take place during Period 96.

- **General changes**

- **Recent Changes:** News items related to the technical capabilities of the ESO instruments have been moved to the [Recent Changes in Instrumentation](#) link.
- **Any weather proposals:** ESO strongly encourages programmes that effectively exploit the worst observing conditions on the VLT. More specifically, we solicit proposals that request $> 1.2''$ seeing in the V band, thin-thick clouds and have no moon constraints on the four UTs. These proposals will be evaluated by the OPC but do not have to achieve the top grades to be considered for scheduling. However, when preparing these proposals PIs should be aware that only a fraction of their programme may be completed over the course of the semester. This is because these programmes will only be executed when the service mode queue is depleted of all higher-ranked runs.
- **Seeing and Image Quality:** Starting from Period 96, the seeing information to provide in Box 3 of the proposal form is the seeing in the V band at zenith. This change now ensures that the scheduling tool uniformly takes the seeing into account. Service mode users for approved programmes will enter the Image Quality for the airmass and wavelength of interest required for their observations as constraint during Phase 2. The article by Martinez et al. entitled "On the Difference between Seeing and Image Quality" in [Volume 141](#) of the ESO Messenger describes the meaning of these two quantities and further information can be found on the [Observing Conditions](#) webpage.
The **Exposure Time Calculators** have been modified accordingly and clearly distinguish between the two quantities, using a slightly modified version of the formula given in the above article.
- **Exposure Time Calculators:** in addition to the change mentioned in the previous point, a number of ETCs are now using a new sky model developed as part of the

Austrian in-kind contribution (see Noll et al. 2012, [A&A 543, 92](#), Jones et al. 2013, [A&A 560, 91](#) and [The Cerro Paranal Advanced Sky Model](#)).

- **Public Spectroscopic Surveys with VIMOS:** Two VIMOS Public Spectroscopic Surveys were approved for execution and the first observations started in Period 94. Further details can be found through the [Public Survey](#) webpages.

- **Monitoring Programmes:** Monitoring programme proposals enable users to request a limited amount of time to monitor targets over more than one period. Proposers should use the normal proposal template with the appropriate macro in order to apply for a Monitoring Programme. See Section 4.2 for the detailed definition of a Monitoring Programme and the instruments offered for this programme type.

No Monitoring Programmes will be allowed on La Silla telescopes, VISTA or VST. On the APEX and Paranal telescopes, Monitoring Programmes are subject to the same instrument restrictions as Large Programmes (see below).

- **Large Programmes:** See Section 4.3 for the detailed definition of a Large Programme and the instruments offered for this programme type.

As of Period 95 proposers should pay particular attention to changes in Sections 6 and 7 of the ESIFORM template for Large Programmes. In particular Large Programme teams are requested to provide a detailed delivery plan for data products and their strategy to ensure data quality (Sect. 4.3).

NTT instruments, SOFI and EFOSC2, are not available for Large Programmes due to ongoing Large Programme commitments. On the APEX telescope, Large Programmes will not be accepted for the PI instruments ARTEMIS, FLASH, and SEPIA. As in previous periods, Large Programmes will not be accepted for either VIRCAM or OMEGACAM. The following VLT instruments are also unavailable for Large Programmes: FLAMES, NACO, XSHOOTER. VIMOS is offered for Large Programmes in Period 96 subject to some Right Ascension (RA) restrictions (see below). The reasons for the restrictions on these VLT instruments are listed below. Note that these restrictions also apply to Monitoring Programmes for the same reasons.

- * FLAMES will likely be decommissioned in 2017 to provide space for CRIRES following its upgrade;
- * NACO: the availability of several modes cannot be guaranteed in the coming periods;
- * VIMOS: Large Programmes and Monitoring Programmes cannot request seeing better than 1.0'' in dark or grey time for targets in the RA range, 00-05:30h, and/or seeing better than 1.3'' in dark time in the RA range, 08-12h, as these are committed to the VIMOS Public Spectroscopic Surveys (see the [Public Survey](#) webpages). Furthermore, any Large or Monitoring Programmes in Visitor Mode should be willing to execute observations for the VIMOS Public Spectroscopic surveys;
- * XSHOOTER will likely be taken out of operations for several months to install re-designed ADC systems in the near future.

- **Guaranteed Time Observations (GTO)** will be carried out in Period 96 with **AMBER, ARTEMIS, HARPS, KMOS, MUSE, OMEGACAM, SINFONI and SPHERE**. For details about the planned observations, please see <http://www.eso.org/sci/observing/teles-alloc/gto/96.html>.

• La Silla

- Additional information regarding changes affecting La Silla instruments and facilities can be found at the [La Silla Paranal Observatory CFP webpage](#).

- **3.6-m:** A large fraction (35%) of the available science time is committed to ongoing Large Programmes in Period 96 (see the [Telescope Pressure](#) webpage). Large Programmes on the 3.6-m telescope can request time up to Period 99.

Proposers are encouraged to submit high quality Normal Programmes on the 3.6-m telescope. The success rates of Normal Programmes suggest that these programmes can be very competitive despite the substantial ongoing Large Programme commitment. Please see the article by Aerts, Hussain & Patat in [Volume 153](#) of The ESO Messenger for more information and a comparison of the success rates of 3.6-m Large Programmes and Normal Programmes between Periods 82-92.

- [HARPS](#):
 - * The commissioning of the Laser Frequency Comb will take place during April 2015. Pending the commissioning results, it could be used for operations during Period 96. Interested users are invited to consult the [HARPS News page](#) before the start of their run.
 - * The upgrade of the optical fibers will take place in May and early June 2015.
- **NTT**: A large fraction (60%) of the available science time on the NTT telescope is committed to ongoing programmes (see the [Telescope Pressure](#) webpage), with a significant number of dark and grey nights already committed. Bright time programmes are particularly solicited for the NTT. Large Programmes are not offered on the NTT in this period.

- **Paranal**

- Information regarding changes affecting Paranal instruments and facilities can be found at the [La Silla Paranal Observatory CFP webpage](#).
- **VLT-XMM proposals**: It will not be possible to apply for VLT-XMM time in Period 96; proposals under this scheme will be invited again in Period 97.
- **Distribution of VLT instruments**: Note that in Period 96 the distribution of offered instruments on the UTs is expected to be: UT1 (FORIS + KMOS + NACO), UT2 (FLAMES + UVES + XSHOOTER), UT3 (SPHERE + VIMOS + VISIR), UT4 (HAWK-I + MUSE + SINFONI).
- [CRIRES](#) was taken out of operations in July 2014 to undergo a major upgrade that will transform it into a cross-dispersed echelle spectrograph. It is therefore not offered in Period 96. It is expected to be back in operations in 2017.
- Since Period 94, [NACO](#) has been offered on the UT1 Nasmyth A focus, with a reduced list of modes. For details, see the [recent changes](#) webpage or the [NACO User Manual](#).
- [SPHERE](#) (Spectro-Polarimetric High-contrast Exoplanet REsearch) is an extreme adaptive optics system and coronagraphic facility. The primary science goal of this second generation VLT instrument is imaging, low-resolution spectroscopic, and polarimetric characterization of extra-solar planetary systems. The instrument design is optimized to provide the highest image quality and contrast performance in a narrow field of view around bright targets in the visible or near infrared bands.

SPHERE is installed at the Nasmyth focus of UT3 and includes:

- * the Common Path and Infrastructure (CPI), which receives direct light from the telescope, and provides highly stabilized, AO-corrected, and coronagraphic beams to the three science instruments;
- * the Infra-Red Dual-Band Imager and Spectrograph (IRDIS), which provides Classical Imaging (CI), Dual-Band Imaging (DBI), Dual-Polarization Imaging (DPI), and Long Slit Spectroscopy (LSS) in low resolution covering the range 0.95 to 2.32 μm , with resolving power of $R \sim 50$ (LRS) or medium resolution from 0.95 to 1.65 μm with $R \sim 400$ (MRS);
- * the Integral Field Spectrograph (IFS), which provides a data cube of 38 monochromatic images either covering the range 0.95 to 1.35 μm (Y-J) at spectral resolution of $R \sim 50$ or 0.95 to 1.65 μm (Y-H) at $R \sim 30$, and
- * the Zurich IMaging POLarimeter (ZIMPOL), which provides diffraction limited classical imaging and differential polarimetric imaging (DPI) at 15 mas resolution in the visible.

SPHERE is offered in a selected list of modes. The IRDIS-DPI mode is now offered in Period 96 in Visitor Mode only.

- [VIMOS](#) Public Spectroscopic Surveys started in Period 94. Proposals for programmes on VIMOS cannot request dark or grey time in good conditions (PHO/CLR, seeing $<1.0''$), for targets in the following RA ranges, 00-05:30h, and/or dark time at PHO/CLR conditions and seeing better than 1.3'' between RA ranges of 08-12h as these are substantially

committed to the VIMOS Public Spectroscopic Surveys (see the [Public Survey](#) web-pages). Furthermore, any Large Programmes awarded time in Visitor Mode should be willing to execute observations for the VIMOS Public Spectroscopic surveys. Please note that even though the best observing conditions in the RA ranges above are substantially committed to the two new Public Spectroscopic Surveys, some time may still be available to the most scientifically compelling Normal and DDT programmes. Furthermore, Service Mode programmes with looser constraints at these RA ranges are actively encouraged.

- [VISIR](#) has been offered again since Period 95. The offered modes in Period 96 are imaging, low-resolution spectroscopy, long slit and cross-dispersed high-resolution spectroscopy, in both service and visitor modes. The coronagraph Annular Groove Phase Mask (AGPM) mode is offered pending successful commissioning in early March 2015; interested users are invited to consult the [VISIR news](#) page mid-March 2015.

Users must specify PWV as an observing constraint during their Phase 1 and Phase 2 preparation. Examples are shown in the ESOFORM package template files. Also see Section 2.2.

- [HAWK-I](#) is offered again on the Nasmyth A focus of UT4 since Period 95. Please also note the restrictions on HAWK-I in Period 96 due to AOF-related activities.
- [SINFONI](#): An upgrade of the SPIFFI optics is foreseen to take place during Period 96. Its scope and schedule are being finalized as this call is released. Improvements may include replacing J and K filters by new ones with higher transmission, replacement of the pre-optics by one with better transmission in the J band, and replacement of mirrors by ones with better surface quality to improve the line spread functions. The instrument will therefore not be available for approximately 1 month likely to start in January 2016.

- [MUSE](#) (Multi Unit Spectroscopic Explorer) is a second-generation VLT instrument located on the Nasmyth platform B of UT4. It is a large-format integral-field spectrograph based on image-slicing technology, and has a modular structure composed of 24 identical Integral Field Unit modules that together sample a contiguous $(1')^2$ field of view in Wide Field Mode (WFM) at $(0.2'')^2/\text{spaxel}$. MUSE will initially be used in seeing-limited WFM only. Please also note the restrictions on MUSE in Period 96 due to AOF-related activities.

MUSE will later exploit the VLT Adaptive Optics Facility in combination with the GALACSI AO module. When offered, it will provide Ground Layer AO correction for the WFM. In the future, a Narrow Field Mode (NFM) will also be made available, and will cover a $\approx (7.5'')^2$ field of view sampled at $(0.025'')^2/\text{spaxel}$ with Laser Tomography AO correction.

MUSE is available for observations in Rapid Response Mode.

- **Activities related to the installation of the Adaptive Optics Facility on UT4 – Yepun**

During Periods 95 and 96 the following activities affect operations on UT4. Although the dates provided are the best estimates at the time of writing, they may shift significantly:

- * installation of the first Laser Guide Star Unit (LGSU) will take place in Period 94 (March 2015) and will be commissioned during Period 95;
- * installation and commissioning of GRAAL on the telescope will take place in August 2015, during which HAWK-I is not available for approximately one month;
- * a 10-night run for the commissioning of GRAAL with the first LGSU will take place early in Period 96 during which UT4 will not be available for operation with any instrument;
- * the installation of the 3 other LGSUs and commissioning of GRAAL with all LGSUs will likely take place during the second half of Period 96, during which the telescope will not be available for operation with any instrument during approximately 3 weeks spread over 3 months.

- No focus is available for a **Visitor Instrument** on the VLT in Period 96.
- [OMEGACAM](#): Normal programme proposals are accepted on the VST in Period 96. However, in order to ensure the timely progress of the ongoing Public Surveys these are restricted to filler programmes that request poor weather conditions (i.e., either no

moon constraints, seeing $> 1.4''$ or thin/thick clouds). Target of Opportunity proposals requesting a short amount of time will also be considered.

– **VLTI:**

- * ESO aims to increase the fraction of service mode for VLTI observations. PIs requesting visitor mode for VLTI should carefully justify the need for visitor mode.
- * Proposers should be aware that there is a **minimum time limit of 1n** per baseline configuration for Visitor Mode runs requiring VLTI-AT observations. Proposers requiring shorter runs per baseline configuration should specify Service Mode observations. These restrictions do not apply to the VLTI-UT baselines.
- * The VLTI laboratory undergoes major modifications during Period 95. The VLTI is foreseen to reopen for science operations in Period 96. As of mid-October 2015, the available instruments will be [AMBER](#) (with or without FINITO) as well as [PIONIER](#).
- * MIDI will be decommissioned by March 2015 and is therefore not offered any more.
- * PIONIER stands for Precision Integrated-Optics Near-infrared Imaging Experiment. It is a 4-telescope visitor instrument for the VLTI that combines four ATs or four UTs using an integrated optics combiner. It provides low spectral resolution in H band. PIONIER is designed for imaging with a specific emphasis on fast fringes recording to allow precision closure-phases and visibilities to be measured. Starting with Period 96, PIONIER, is offered as a facility instrument in both service and visitor modes. Therefore, contrary to previous periods, it is no longer mandatory to contact the instrument team and to add them to the proposal list of co-investigators.
- * **VLTI-ATs:** The AT configurations will change slightly in Period 96, but the overall characteristics will remain. Three different quadruplets are offered: small (baselines from 10 to 40m), medium (baselines from 40 to 100m) and large (baselines from 60 to 140m). Specifically, the small configuration is covered by the configuration A0-B2-C1-D0 instead of A1-B2-C1-D0; the medium configuration is covered by K0-D0-G2-J3 instead of H0-D0-G1-I1; the large configuration is covered by A0-J2-G1-J3 instead of A1-K0-G1-J3. See the list of all offered baselines at the [VLTI Configurations Overview Page](#).
- * The installation of **GRAVITY**, the second generation VLTI instrument for precision narrow-angle astrometry and interferometric imaging, is expected to start in 2015 during the VLTI laboratory refurbishment. Commissioning of the instrument is expected to start during the first half of Period 96 during this time the VLTI will not be available for regular operations for approximately 2 weeks every 2 months. The number of baseline configurations for the ATs may also be restricted during the second half of the period due to these commissioning activities.
In addition to the instrument itself, the first of the 4 units of the GRAVITY Coudé Infrared Adaptive Optics (CIAO) system for the VLT Interferometer is expected to be installed on UT1 during the first half of Period 96. During this period, UT1 will not be available for VLTI operation. The commissioning of this unit is expected to take place during the second half of Period 96 and require approximately 10 half-nights.
- * **VLTI Visitor Instrument:** No VLTI Visitor focus is available in Period 96.

• **Chajnantor**

- **Observing with APEX:** Information on the available APEX instruments and capabilities can be found on the [Observing with APEX](#) page. Additional information regarding changes affecting APEX instruments and facilities can be found at the [La Silla Paranal Observatory CFP webpage](#).
- **APEX:** For a detailed description of the APEX instrument capabilities and links to observing time calculators see the [APEX instrumentation page](#). During Period 96, the ESO time slots are expected to be scheduled in September and October-November. The exact distribution of the observing time between the APEX partners can be found on the [APEX webpages](#). Time-critical observations should only be requested during the ESO runs.

- **Large Programmes with APEX using poor PWV conditions:** In order to make the best use of the time where the PWV is high ($PWV > 2$ mm) ESO invites Large Programmes for those conditions. Poor PWV large programmes must be clearly identified as such in Boxes 5 and 8 of the Large Programme proposal form. Ideally a “Poor PWV LP Programme” therefore consists of a large sample of targets covering a wide RA range. The proposal must demonstrate that the scientific goals can be reached with only a significant subset of the observations completed. Poor PWV-LPs may cover up to 4 consecutive semesters.
- **SABOCA** is not offered in Period 96 as the same capabilities are offered by ARTEMIS.
- **ARTEMIS:** This new 350 μm camera is offered conditional to its successful commissioning in June 2015. ARTEMIS will cover a field of view of $4' \times 2'$ at 350 μm . Parallel observations at 450 μm may be available, but cannot be guaranteed. Sensitivity estimations for 450 μm will not be available before the deadline, and the science case should not depend on this band. If the commissioning is delayed, ESO may execute ARTEMIS programmes with SABOCA instead. A new observing time calculator is available at <http://www.apex-telescope.org/bolometer/artemis/obscalc/>.
- **SHFI:**
 - * **APEX-1:** Large proposals for $PWV > 2\text{mm}$ conditions are encouraged.
 - * **APEX-T2:** the 1.3 THz receiver has been de-commissioned.
- **FLASH:** This PI instrument is offered to the ESO community on a collaborative basis with MPIfR. Large programmes or time critical observations will not be accepted on this PI instrument. Users who would like to use FLASH must contact the instrument PI, Dr. Rolf Guesten (rguesten[AT]mpifr-bonn.mpg.de), at least two weeks prior to submitting their proposal. Members of the PI team should be included as CoIs on the proposal. The operation of this PI instrument requires the presence of the instrument team so all ESO FLASH observations will be scheduled on fixed dates; the exact dates have not been determined yet. FLASH observations will be done by the PI team over a maximum of 3 days. Preference will be given to proposals using the dual-beam, wide-bandwidth capabilities of FLASH due to limited ESO observing time.
- **CHAMP+:** this MPIfR PI instrument is not offered in P96 because of a planned technical intervention. It may be offered again in P97.
- **SUPERCAM:** This PI instrument is no longer offered. There are currently no plans to offer it again.
- **SEPIA:** this new instrument is offered conditional to a successful commissioning in March and May 2015. It can house up to 3 ALMA-type receiver cartridges. In P96, only the band 5 receiver is offered, covering 159 to 211 GHz with dual polarization, sideband-separating mixers. The XFFTS backends will cover the full 4 GHz IF bandwidth simultaneously in both sidebands and in both polarizations. An observing time calculator will be made available on <http://www.apex-telescope.org/heterodyne/calculator/>. The [Late Breaking News page](#) should be checked for updates on the commissioning which was still ongoing at the time of the release of this document.

1.2 Important reminders

- **General information**

- **ESO User Portal:** Proposals are submitted via a web upload procedure using the online tool, Web Application for Submitting Proposals (WASP). This requires users to first log in to the ESO User Portal at: <http://www.eso.org/UserPortal> (see Section 2.2).
- **Duration of one night:** Proposers are reminded that one night in Visitor Mode is defined to be 8 hours in even periods and 10 hours in odd periods on all ESO telescopes.

- **The information provided in the proposal is binding:** All observing runs must be executed as described in the proposal. Deviations from the proposal (either by observing different targets or by using different instrument modes or different constraints) may be allowed only under exceptional circumstances and after approval by ESO (see Section 6.5).
- **OPC evaluation of proposals:** Proposers should keep in mind the need for each OPC panel to cover a broad range of scientific areas, hence proposals may not fall within the main area of specialisation of any of the panel members. Proposers should make sure that the context of their project and its relevance for general astrophysics, as well as the recent related results, are emphasised in a way that can be understood by their peers regardless of their expertise.
- **Precipitable Water Vapour (PWV):** Users of VISIR and the APEX instruments in service mode must specify PWV as an observing constraint during their Phase 1 and Phase 2 preparation. Examples are shown in the ESOFORM package template files. Also see Section 2.2.
- **Observing conditions:** The definitions of the observing conditions for Phase 1 and Phase 2 can be found on the [Observing Conditions](#) webpage. Please note that the seeing is now defined as the seeing in the V band at zenith (see Section 1.1).
- **PI access to raw and reduced data via <http://archive.eso.org>:**
The ESO Science Archive Facility (see link above) is the sole access point to data obtained with ESO telescopes. Principal Investigators of Service and Visitor Mode programmes and their data delegates have access to their proprietary raw data as soon as the data have been ingested in the ESO Archive, which typically happens a few hours after the observation. This is also when the proprietary period start. Access to the data is provided through the ESO User Portal credentials. The CalSelector (link to <http://www.eso.org/sci/archive/calselectorInfo.html>) archive service for VLT instruments combines the science files with any ancillary files that are needed to process the data, (e.g. acquisition images, calibrations, etc.).
In addition to raw data, science grade data products are available on a monthly basis for the following instrument modes: UVES echelle, UVES slicer, X-Shooter echelle, HARPS and FLAMES-GIRAFFE in MEDUSA mode. They are generated at ESO by running the corresponding data reduction pipelines in automatic mode and are subject to the same proprietary restrictions as the corresponding raw data they originate from, i.e. for the duration of the proprietary period access is restricted to PIs and their data delegates. More information on the science data products and links to the query forms for the data access and download can be found here http://www.eso.org/sci/observing/phase3/data_releases.html.
- **Duplications:** Proposers are strongly advised to use the [Science Archive Facility](#) to check if observations equivalent to the proposed ones have been performed already. Proposers must check that their planned observations are not duplicating Guaranteed Time proposals for Period 96 (see [GTO for Period 96](#)) or ongoing [Public Survey](#) observations.
- **The ESO Science Archive Facility <http://archive.eso.org>:**
This is the repository of all raw data collected at the La Silla Paranal Observatory. After the expiration of the proprietary period of typically one year, during which the data are only accessible by the respective PIs and delegates, data become generally accessible without any further restriction. In addition to raw data, the ESO Science Archive Facility provides access to a wealth of science data products, e.g. as generated by Public Survey and Large Programme Teams, as well as resulting from automatic processing at ESO of raw data with the corresponding instrument pipelines.
- **Public Surveys:** Nine public imaging surveys are being carried out on the VISTA and VST telescopes. Four public spectroscopic surveys are being carried out on the NTT (EFOSC2 & SOFI), the UT2 (FLAMES/GIRAFFE & UVES) and UT3 (VIMOS) telescopes. Further details are available on the ESO [Public Surveys Projects](#) webpage.
- **Overheads:** Proposals must include all overheads when computing the total observing time request for both Service Mode and Visitor Mode runs (see the [Overheads](#) webpage).

- **Non-standard observing configurations:** The use of non-standard instrumental modes, configurations or filters requires the prior approval by the ESO User Support Department. A detailed justification should be sent to usd-help@eso.org at least two weeks before the proposal submission deadline. If proposers wish to use non-standard filters on cryogenic instruments, further restrictions apply. See Section 6.2 for more details.
- **Backup programme:** Although Phase 1 proposals requesting Visitor Mode do not need to include backup targets and/or a backup programme, the observer should prepare one in case of unfavourable weather conditions. The original science goals must be adhered to in this backup scenario. Approval of a backup programme must be sought at least one month in advance of the observing run through the change request form as described in Section 5.1.
- **The ESO Science Data Products Forum:** This is a platform that enables users of ESO instruments to share ideas, methods, software and data to assist with the preparation of science data products from ESO telescopes. Users are encouraged to contribute on any topic related to the reduction, calibration and analysis of science data from ESO instruments.

- **Paranal**

- **Observing mode on the VLT:** Departures from the observing mode requested by the proposers may be implemented by ESO so as to achieve a balanced distribution between Service Mode and Visitor Mode.
Proposers should request Service Mode for observations that benefit from the short-term scheduling flexibility allowed by this mode. Proposers may identify runs that lend themselves for observations in either Service or Visitor Mode by specifying one of the modes using the alternative run feature in Box 3 of the ESOFORM Phase 1 proposal form. Please note that if a certain instrument mode is offered exclusively in either Service Mode or Visitor Mode then this overrides these scheduling considerations.
- **Service Mode OBs:** Service Mode Observation Blocks (OBs) including all **overheads** can last up to a maximum of 1 hour. This rule also applies to concatenated OBs in most cases. Users are encouraged to read the [Service Mode rules](#) for more details. Longer OBs have to be specifically requested and justified at Phase 2 via a waiver request, which is evaluated by the Observatory.
- **Pre-imaging for VLT instruments and modes:** A separate pre-imaging run must be specified in the proposal (to be executed in Service Mode). Failure to do so will result in the deduction of the time necessary for the pre-imaging from the allocation to the main part of the project (see Section 6.6).
- **Monitoring in Service Mode:** Monitoring a target in Service Mode in a particular period is carried out on a best effort basis only, *i.e.* a monitoring sequence in any particular period may be interrupted by long periods of unsuitable weather conditions, Visitor Mode scheduling or telescope availability. All the time needed to observe one target in one period should be included in one single run; this can be split into the single epoch observations using a time-linked series in version 3 of the [Phase 2 Preparation Tool](#) (P2PP) (see Section 5.2.1 for more information).
- **Rapid Response Mode (RRM):** FORS2, UVES, XSHOOTER, SINFONI, HAWK-I and MUSE continue to be offered in this mode in Period 96. RRM observations that correspond to events with exceptional characteristics may be activated during either Service Mode or Visitor Mode runs, over which they have observational priority, unless the Service or Visitor mode runs involve strictly time-critical observations. For details on the RRM policies, see Section 4.4.1.
- **VISTA and VST:** Due to ongoing Public Surveys only a limited amount of open time is available on VISTA and VST; these observations are carried out in Service Mode only and for restricted Right Ascension ranges. Open time proposals should clearly justify the scientific goals and why they are not achievable through the scheduled public survey observations. Only those proposals that have complementary constraints and coordinate

ranges with respect to public survey observations may be scheduled, as the highest priority is given to advance public surveys on these telescopes.

As VST also has a significant GTO commitment, Normal Programme proposals on the VST are restricted to filler programmes requesting poor weather conditions (*i.e.* no moon constraints, seeing $> 1.4''$, thin/thick clouds). Target of opportunity proposals will also be considered for the VST.

- **Calibration Plans:** ESO has implemented calibration plans for all Paranal instruments. The primary purposes of these plans are to assure data quality, monitor instrument performance and calibrate science observations. Based on these plans, calibration data are obtained for certain standard instrument modes on a regular basis. Paranal calibration data are reviewed on a daily basis by Paranal Science Operations and the Garching Data Processing and Quality Control group.

A brief summary of the calibration data is available online for each instrument, for example, for FORS2: [FORS2: calibration data](#).

Please read the appropriate user manual and online documentation carefully, as not all instrument modes and/or configurations are covered to the same level of detail by the current calibration plans.

- * **Service Mode runs:** The calibrations specified in the respective Calibration Plans are obtained systematically by the Observatory and do not need to be requested by the proposers. Proposals for Service Mode runs should only request the time needed for their science observations and, if applicable, night-time calibrations (including all operational overheads) beyond those listed in the published Calibration Plans.
 - * **Visitor Mode runs:** Night-time calibrations are the responsibility of the visiting observer with the following exception: up to approximately 30 minutes per night will be used by the observatory staff to obtain standard ESO calibrations. The ESO-obtained data will be used to monitor instrument performance and to assure a baseline calibration accuracy within the ESO Science Archive Facility. ESO does not guarantee that these standard calibration data will be sufficient to calibrate the Visitor Mode science observations to the accuracy desired by the observer. Proposers should plan accordingly for Visitor Mode runs.
- **Data Reduction software:** In collaboration with the various instrument consortia, ESO has undertaken to implement data reduction pipelines for the most commonly used VLT/VLTI instrument modes. The ESO pipelines, including downloads and user manuals, can be found on the instrument pipeline page [VLT/VLTI Pipelines page](#).
 - **Quality Control and Instrument Trending:** The ESO pipelines are used to monitor the performance of the various instruments and their temporal trends. Extensive information about Paranal data handling and processing (e.g. zero points, colour terms, wavelength solutions) is maintained on the [ESO Quality Control webpages](#).

• La Silla

- **Support during observing runs and transportation schedule:** A streamlined operation is in effect in La Silla. La Silla instruments are only offered in Visitor Mode. Technical and logistical support will be delivered as usual by ESO staff, but no specific support astronomer is assigned. Please note that the transportation schedule to and from La Silla may have an impact on the arrival and departure days of the observers at the site. Please check the online instructions for [visiting astronomers](#).
- Large Programmes are not allowed on the NTT telescope. 3.6-m telescope Large Programmes can span four periods, up to Period 99.
- There is a **minimum length of 3 nights for runs** to be executed with La Silla telescopes. Proposals including La Silla runs with a duration of less than 3 nights will be rejected at submission time by the automatic proposal reception system, with three exceptions:
 1. There is no minimum duration for runs to be carried out with Visitor Instruments (see Section 3). However, in order to minimise the overheads associated with their installation and removal, such instruments are normally scheduled in blocks including

several contiguous runs; the length of these combined blocks is typically greater than 3 nights.

2. On the NTT, users can apply for combined runs using both EFOSC2 and SOFI. The total duration of each of these runs must be at least three nights. The combined runs must be requested using the instrument name “SOFOSC”. Details are also available in the ESOFORM User Manual.
3. There is no minimum duration for runs of Calibration Programmes.

Note that the minimum duration requirement for La Silla is applicable to each individual run of a proposal involving a La Silla instrument (see Section 4 for more information about the definition of “programme” and “run”). More generally, proposals for **long** runs are strongly encouraged on the La Silla telescopes. Splitting of runs in half nights (*e.g.* a 3-night run spread over 6 half nights) should be avoided as much as possible as it may be impossible to schedule.

- **Pre-imaging:** Pre-imaging frames for EFOSC2 will have to be obtained at the beginning of the spectroscopic run. The resulting lower efficiency should be taken into account in the computation of the required execution time for the run.

In some cases, pre-imaging might be carried out during technical nights by the Observatory technical staff. Please contact [to](#) check the feasibility of such observations for your program.

- **Chajnantor**

- **APEX:** This telescope is offered in Service Mode only. In exceptional cases (*e.g.* moving targets), remote observing from Bonn (in collaboration with MPIfR) can be considered. Proposals requesting time from different APEX partners are required to mention the amount of time requested from MPIfR, Sweden or Chile in Box 5. Observations will be done for up to 24 hours per day, but users should be aware that afternoon conditions are often significantly worse than night or morning. Observations using high frequency instruments (SHFI/APEX-3, ARTEMIS) should avoid the afternoon. APEX users should ensure that their proposal meets the following requirements:

- * specify if time is requested from other APEX partners in the macro, `\SpecialRemarks` (Box 5);
- * specify the requested PWV using the macro, `\Target` (Box 11), for their project to allow a better distinction between observations requesting a range of atmospheric transparencies;
- * either indicate an appropriate off-source position or request time to find such a position if they wish to observe extended line-emitting regions;
- * merge all observations for any APEX instrument into a single run (note that this also applies for the different receivers of SHFI). For Large Programmes this restriction should be understood as a single run per instrument and per period. Separate runs should be specified for observations in different periods.

1.3 Foreseen changes in the upcoming periods

- **CRIRES** is being transformed into a cross-dispersed echelle spectrograph. It is expected to be back in operations in 2017.
- **XSHOOTER** will likely be taken out of operations for several months to install re-designed ADC systems in the near future.
- **Activities related to the installation of the Adaptive Optics Facility on UT4 – Yepun**
 - GALACSI, the adaptive optics module for MUSE, is expected to be installed on Nasmyth B during Period 97.
 - The installation of the Deformable Secondary Mirror and re-commissioning of the telescope is expected to take place in October 2016; as a consequence, UT4 will not be available for approximately 2 months.

- The commissioning of the AOF and AOF-related systems is expected to require monthly slots of up to 7 days during possibly 2 years.
- The installation of **ESPRESSO**, the Echelle SPectrograph for Rocky Exoplanet and Stable Spectroscopic Observations, is expected to start in 2016.
- The installation of units 2, 3 and 4 of **CIAO** is expected to take place during Period 97, during which the corresponding UT will not be available for VLTI operation. The commissioning of each of these units is expected to require approximately 10 half-nights.
- The installation of **MATISSE**, the Multi AperTure mid-Infrared SpectroScopic Experiment, is expected to start in Period 97 and its commissioning in Period 98.
- The installation and commissioning of the New Adaptive Optics Module for Interferometry (**NAOMI**), the low order adaptive optics system for the ATs, is expected to start in 2017. The schedule currently foresees the installation of one unit every 3 months during which the corresponding AT will not be available for regular operation for approximately two weeks.
- **ZEUS-2**: Pending successful commissioning, the redshift (z) and Early Universe Spectrometer (ZEUS-2) may be offered as a PI instrument during future periods. ZEUS-2 is a broad-band spectrograph covering 7 telluric windows covering 200 to 850 μm . For details, see [Ferkinhoff et al. 2010](#).
- **ARTEMIS**: In future periods, parallel observations at 450 μm ($4' \times 2'$) may be offered.

2 Getting Started

Observing proposals must contain a scientific case, a summary of the proposed observing programme, a list of desired instrument modes and configurations, a target list, and a precise definition of required observing conditions (seeing, atmospheric transparency, lunar illumination, etc.).

In addition, a calculation of the number of hours/nights of observing time needed to accomplish the scientific goals must be carried out and summarized in the proposal. It is therefore important that proposers consult technical documentation or instrument experts regarding the instrument capabilities and sensitivities. The [overheads](#) webpage provides a summary table of all the overheads that should be accounted for. A more detailed computation can be obtained by running the [Phase 2 Preparation Tool](#) (P2PP) in tutorial mode.

The definitions of the observing conditions for Phase 1 and Phase 2 can be found on the [Observing Conditions](#) webpage.

The following sections give some additional information and references that should be useful to proposers.

2.1 Exposure Time Calculators

Exposure Time Calculators (ETCs) for ESO instruments are accessible directly on the ESO Web. For La Silla and Paranal instrumentation:

<http://www.eso.org/observing/etc>

Proposers of VLTI observations should check the feasibility of their proposed observations with the visibility calculator VisCalc, available from the ETC page. At Phase 2, users are also encouraged to select a suitable calibrator star for their planned observations using the CalVin tool, which is also available from the above link.

For APEX instrumentation please go to:

<http://www.apex-telescope.org/instruments>.

Links to useful proposal preparation software tools (*e.g.* the Object Observability Calculator, Airmass Calculator, Digitized Sky Survey) can be found at:

<http://www.eso.org/sci/observing/tools.html>.

Information on standard stars and sky characteristics, as well as additional tools, are available at

<http://www.eso.org/sci/facilities/paranal/sciops/tools.html>.

The parameters used by the ETCs are based on data collected during instrument commissioning and operations. The ETC parameters are frequently updated and changes will be reflected by the running “version number”. To help the observatory staff assess the technical feasibility of observations, proposers are requested to specify the version number of the ETC they used in the section “9. Justification of requested observing time and observing conditions” of their proposals.

Please check the ESO webpages for the ETC version to be used in Period 96. Please note that while the sky background values used in the ETCs generally reflect actual conditions on Paranal, they do not account for local effects such as the zodiacal light.

Service Mode proposers are reminded (see Section 6.5) that the requested observing conditions are binding in Phase 2. The ETC’s have been modified in Period 96 and require the seeing in the V band at zenith in order to estimate the observing time necessary to complete the programme. Proposers should ensure that the observing conditions specified in the proposal are consistent with those used in the ETC. This is also true for the requested sky transparency and lunar phase. Non-photometric sky transparency can be simulated by adding 0.1/0.2 mag to the object magnitude for CLEAR/THIN–CIRRUS conditions respectively.

2.2 The ESIFORM Proposal package

All Phase 1 proposals must be prepared using the ESIFORM Proposal Package configured for Period 96 as the package is updated every period. The ESIFORM package may be obtained by logging into the ESO User Portal following the instructions at:

<http://www.eso.org/sci/observing/phase1/esoform.html>

The “ESIFORM User Manual” in the proposal package describes in detail how to fill the L^AT_EX template, and the information required to prepare a valid proposal.

2.2.1 ESIFORM: Important notes

- **Definition of Service Mode and Visitor Mode runs:** An observing programme, as described in a single proposal, may consist of one or more runs. Multiple runs should only be requested for observations with different instruments, for different observing modes (e.g., service mode, visitor mode or pre-imaging runs). Proposers should split Visitor Mode observations at different epochs (e.g., due to different target RAs) into separate runs. Service Mode runs should not be split according to time-critical windows, or used to group targets according to their Right Ascensions.
- **Scheduling constraints** must be specified correctly as the telescope schedules are prepared using software that relies on accurate constraints (Alves 2005, [The ESO Messenger, 119, 20](#)). Observing/scheduling constraints that are not indicated or that are inaccurately specified in BOX 12 of ESIFORM are unlikely to be taken into account by the scheduler. **Retrofitting scheduling constraints after the release of the schedule is not possible.**
- **Precipitable water vapour (PWV) constraints:** PWV constraints must be specified for VISIR and all APEX instruments in the “Additional Notes” column of the Target macro. Please see the ESIFORM User Manual for more details.
- **Proposal resubmissions:** If the proposal is a re-submission of an old proposal then the **OPC comments must be addressed** in this new submission.

2.3 Proposal Submission

Proposals must be submitted in their final version by the submission deadline:

**26 March 2015,
12:00 noon Central European Time.**

This is done via a web upload procedure that can only be accessed by logging into the ESO User Portal at:

<http://www.eso.org/UserPortal>.

Please note that the ESO deadline **will be strictly enforced**: users should plan accordingly. It is the PI's responsibility to resolve any verification or upload problems related to the instrument configuration, LaTeX file or associated figures early as ESO cannot provide support for proposal submissions after 11:00 CET on the day of the deadline. Requests for submissions or amendments after the deadline will not be considered.

In order to efficiently verify and submit your proposal, please note that:

- **Postscript figures are not accepted.** The proposals are compiled using the pdfL^AT_EX package which accepts only PDF (up to version 1.4) and JPEG file formats. Please note that there is a size limit of 1MB for each figure to be uploaded.
- Always compile your proposal locally with pdfL^AT_EX. Some of the checks are made at the L^AT_EX level and checking your proposal in this way will save you time. If there are errors please read the output carefully in order to identify the problem.
- Further checks are made by the web software (“the receiver”), which uploads your proposal and checks that it complies with ESO’s requirements. The receiver allows you to verify your proposal without actually submitting it. **You should take advantage of this feature to check that your proposal is technically correct well before the Phase 1 deadline.** This can be done by verifying a “skeleton” version of the proposal early; this version should contain all the technical details but not necessarily the full scientific description. This will ease the final submission process considerably.
- Plan ahead! Over past periods, congestion of the proposal submission system has repeatedly occurred in the last few hours before the proposal deadline, leading to delays in response time that occasionally exceeded 1 hour. Try to submit proposals at least one day before the deadline and avoid last-minute stress.

At the end of the submission procedure an acknowledgment page is displayed with the Proposal ID. Please save this for your records. The PI of the proposal and the submitter will also receive a confirmation ticket via email, but **the acknowledgment page is the official receipt**. If you are not sure if your proposal has successfully entered the system, **do not** re-submit it but rather contact ESO at esoform@eso.org.

Neither proposals nor corrections to proposals that are submitted after the deadline will be considered.

3 Visitor Instruments

Visitor instruments can be mounted at the NTT, the 3.6-m and APEX telescopes in order to permit innovative observations by teams with their stand-alone instruments or to test new instrumental concepts for the development of new facility instruments.

No focus for visitor instruments is available on the VLT in Period 96.

The requirements for visitor instruments are substantially reduced compared to the requirements for fully integrated facility instruments. A set of guidelines on how to propose a visitor instrument

and technical information is available through the links below:

Technical information on the interface to the NTT and 3.6-m telescope is at:

<http://www.eso.org/sci/facilities/lasilla/instruments/visitor/VisitorInstruments.pdf>.

For visitor instruments on APEX:

<http://www.eso.org/sci/facilities/apex/instruments/apex-visitor/index.html>.

Part II

Proposal Types, Policies, and Procedures

4 Proposal Types

For Period 96 the list of proposal types is:

- Normal Programmes
- Monitoring Programmes
- Large Programmes
- Target of Opportunity
- Guaranteed Time Observations
- Calibration Programmes
- Director’s Discretionary Time

All proposals except Director’s Discretionary Time (DDT) proposals must be submitted by the current deadline. DDT proposals may be submitted at any time.

Only the Normal and Large Programme template forms should be used for the preparation of proposals. An observing programme, as described in a single proposal, may consist of several runs, *e.g.* for observations with different instruments, or to be executed in different observing modes or at different epochs for Visitor Mode observations. Proposals for **Visitor Mode** observations (Section 5.1) must request time in nights, proposals for **Service Mode** observations (Section 5.2) must request time in hours. Note that any given proposal may request a mix of Visitor/Service Mode observations provided that they are split into separate runs. The definition of a single run differs for Service Mode and Visitor Mode observations; further guidelines are available in Section 2.2.1.

Please note: All proposers (Service and Visitor Mode) must include time for all overheads (telescope + instrument) in their proposals (see the [Overheads](#) webpage).

Table 1: Available Instruments for Normal Programmes

Telescope	Instrument keywords
UT1	FORS2, KMOS, NACO
UT2	FLAMES, UVES, XSHOOTER
UT3	SPHERE, VIMOS, VISIR
UT4	HAWK-I, MUSE, SINFONI
VLT1	AMBER, PIONIER
VISTA	VIRCAM
VST	OMEGACAM ¹
APEX	FLASH ² , ARTEMIS, LABOCA, SEPIA, SHFI, SpecialAPEX
NTT	SOFI, EFOSC2, SpecialNTT
3.6	HARPS, Special3.6

¹ OMEGACAM is only available for Normal programmes that request poor weather conditions. TOO proposals will also be considered.

² FLASH is an APEX PI instrument; in order to propose its use the instrument PI must be contacted at least two weeks prior to submitting the proposal (see Section 1.1).

4.1 Normal Programmes

Most of the observing time on ESO telescopes will be allocated to **Normal Programmes** in Period 96. Proposers must use the standard L^AT_EX template (Section 2.2). The scientific case of the programme may take up to two pages including attachments (figures or tables). The scientific description contains two sections:

- A) Scientific Rationale
- B) Immediate Objective

Attachments such as figures are optional and are restricted to the second page of the scientific description, though the respective fraction of the occupied by the scientific description and by the figures is left to the discretion of the proposer.

If the proposal contains runs requesting La Silla telescopes and instruments, the duration of each such run must be at least 3 nights, except for runs using Visitor Instruments or for combinations of contiguous EFOSC2 and SOFI runs (totalling at least 3 nights).

4.2 Monitoring Programmes

Monitoring Programmes (MPs) are only accepted on some instruments (see Table 2). Section 1.1 explains the reasons why the other instruments are not offered for Monitoring Programmes.

Table 2: Available Instruments for Monitoring Programmes

Telescope	Instrument keywords
UT1	FORS2, KMOS
UT2	UVES
UT3	SPHERE, VISIR ¹ , VIMOS ²
UT4	HAWK-I ³ , MUSE ³ , SINFONI ^{3,4} ,
VLTI	AMBER ⁵ , PIONIER ⁵
APEX ⁶	LABOCA, SHFI

¹ Monitoring Programmes for VISIR are restricted to normal imaging, low- and high-resolution spectroscopy.

² VIMOS Monitoring Programmes are subject to the restrictions outlined in Section 1.1.

³ Monitoring programmes for UT4 instruments must be compatible with constraints imposed by the UT4 activities and, to a lesser extent, CIAO installation and commissioning activities described in Section 1.3 taking into account that the schedule described is provisional.

⁴ Monitoring programmes using SINFONI must be compatible with the changes likely to take place in Period 96 as described in Section 1.3

⁵ Monitoring programmes on the VLTI must be compatible with the VLTI and (if relevant) UT4 activities described in Sections 1.1 and 1.3 taking into account that the schedule described is provisional.

⁶ APEX observations for approved MPs can only be carried out in the ESO time-slots.

An ESO Monitoring Programme is defined by the criteria listed below.

- A programme requiring less than 100 hours of ESO telescope time. For ESO telescopes, one night in Visitor Mode is defined to be 8 hours in even periods and 10 hours in odd periods.
- Both Service Mode and Visitor Mode observations are allowed.
- MP proposals must request a minimum of 2 periods and can span up to 4 periods.
- MPs will be judged in the same way as normal programmes but must be amongst the highest ranked programmes in order to be scheduled.

- For APEX instruments, observations for approved MPs can only be carried out in ESO time. Hence, targets can be monitored with a bi-monthly cadence at best.
- ToO programmes cannot be submitted as Monitoring Programmes (Section 4.4).

Monitoring programme proposals should be prepared using the appropriate macro in the L^AT_EX template for normal proposals, `template.tex`. See the ESOFORM User Manual for more details.

4.3 Large Programmes

Table 3: Available Instruments (Large Programmes)

Telescope	Instrument keywords
UT1	FORS2, KMOS
UT2	UVES
UT3	SPHERE, VISIR ¹ , VIMOS ²
UT4	HAWK-I ³ , MUSE ³ , SINFONI ^{3,4}
VLTI	AMBER ⁵ , PIONIER ⁵
3.6	HARPS, Special3.6
APEX	LABOCA, SHFI

¹ Large Programmes for VISIR are restricted to normal imaging, low- and high-resolution spectroscopy.

² Large Programmes for VIMOS are subject to the restrictions outlined in Section 1.1.

³ Large programmes for UT4 instruments must be compatible with constraints imposed by the UT4 activities and, to a lesser extent, CIAO installation and commissioning activities described in Sections 1.1 and 1.3 taking into account that the schedule described is provisional.

⁴ Large programmes using SINFONI must be compatible with the changes likely to take place in Period 96 as describes in 1.1 and Section 1.3.

⁵ Large programmes on the VLTI must be compatible with the VLTI and (if relevant) UT4 activities described in Sections 1.1 and 1.3 taking into account that the schedule described is provisional.

Large Programmes are only accepted on some instruments in Period 96 (see Table 3). See Section 1.1 for more information on the availability of instruments for Large Programmes in this Period.

Up to a maximum of 30% of the observing time distributed by the OPC on the VLT can be allocated to Large Programmes. An ESO Large Programme is defined by the criteria listed below.

- A programme requiring a minimum of 100 hours of ESO telescope time. For ESO telescopes, one night in visitor mode is defined to be 8 hours in even periods and 10 hours in odd periods.
- A programme that has the potential to lead to a major advance or breakthrough in the field of study, has a strong scientific justification, and a plan for a quick and comprehensive effort of data reduction and analysis by a dedicated team.
- Large Programmes can span from 1 to 4 periods (*i.e.* up to a maximum of two consecutive years).
- A good organisational structure of the proposing team, availability of resources and relevant expertise must be demonstrated.
- ToO programmes cannot be submitted as Large Programmes (Section 4.4).

A special L^AT_EX template must be used for Large Programmes (Section 2.2). The proposers may use a total of three pages (not including figures) for the four sections of the scientific description:

- A) Scientific Rationale
- B) Immediate Objective
- C) Telescope Justification
- D) Observing Mode Justification (Visitor or Service)

An additional 2 pages of attachments are permitted. Proposers of Large Programmes should keep in mind that **the entire OPC** (hence also non-experts in a specific field) as well as the specialised OPC panels will be evaluating their proposal, and that **they should clearly explain the relevance of the proposed programme to general astrophysics**.

If a Large Programme proposal contains runs requesting La Silla telescopes and instruments, the duration of each such run must be at least 3 nights.

Proposers should be aware that the PIs of successful proposals for Large Programmes are required to provide all data products (processed images and spectra, catalogues) to the ESO archive. Starting from Period 96, PIs of Large Programmes are asked to take particular care when completing the revised Sections 6 and 7 in the L^AT_EX template form. They must provide extended information on the data quality assessment and data reduction. They should also include the planning for publication of data products (both in terms of content and timeline), which must be finalised within two years of the completion of the data acquisition for the programme. Large Programme proposals must include a precise timeline for the publication of data products in order to comply with ESO's policies.

Guidelines for the submission of these data products, including a description of the required meta-data and formats, can be found on the Phase 3 page; proposers are invited to write an email to usd-help@eso.org for further information. The Phase 3 page can be found at: <http://www.eso.org/sci/observing/phase3.html>.

During the period of execution of a Large Programme, and upon its completion, the PI is expected to report regularly to the OPC on the programme's progress. He/she may also be asked to outline the progress and/or outcome of the programme at an ESO Large Programme workshop, similar to those of [May 19-21, 2003](#) and [October 13-15, 2008](#). Large Programme PIs for the past few years will be expected to participate in the upcoming ESO Workshop entitled "Rainbows on the Southern sky: science and legacy value of the ESO public surveys". More details will become available in the next weeks via the [ESO Workshops webpage](#).

4.4 Target of Opportunity

Normally, up to 5% of the available ESO general observing time may be used for **Target of Opportunity** (ToO) proposals. For events with exceptional characteristics ESO will also consider overriding Visitor Mode observations.

ESO recognises two categories of Targets of Opportunity:

1. **Unpredictable ToOs** are those concerning unpredictable astronomical events that require immediate observations. The occurrence of such events cannot be anticipated on a sufficient timeframe to allow them to be the subject of a proposal prepared by the regular proposal submission deadline. They **qualify for allocation of Director Discretionary Time**. Corresponding applications for observing time should be submitted as DDT proposals (Section 4.7) and not as ToO proposals.
2. **Predictable ToOs** are those concerning predictable events in a generic sense only. These are typically (but not limited to) known transient phenomena and follow-up or coordinated observations of targets of special interest. Proposals aimed at studying such events are, in the ESO proposal terminology, ToO proposals.

ToO proposals must be submitted using the Normal Programme ESOFORM template. Proposals should be for generic targets and/or times. However, if accepted by the OPC the programme will not be executed until the PI (or his/her delegate) contacts ESO to request its activation after the predicted event has occurred. The observing strategy must be the one approved by the OPC, and

the triggers may not exceed the allocated time and number of triggers granted. The observations will be conducted in Service Mode and, in exceptional cases, ongoing programmes may be interrupted. Read more on [ToO policy](#).

As ToO programmes may require a mixture of ToO runs and normal runs proposers are requested to specify the type of runs (TOO or normal) in the tenth (final) field of the `\ObservingRun` macro of the ESOFORM L^AT_EX template. A more detailed description of types of ToO runs with accompanying examples can be found in the [ESOFORM package](#) User Manual.

ToO runs are defined as runs for which the target and/or observation epoch cannot be known more than one week before the observation needs to be executed.

There are three types of ToO runs:

- Rapid Response Mode (RRM), for observations to be triggered via the automated Rapid Response Mode system;
- Hard ToO runs, observations to be triggered manually that need to be carried out within 48 hours of receipt of the trigger by the Observatory (and in most cases, as soon as possible), or that involve a strict time constraint (i.e., that must be executed during a specific night);
- Soft ToO runs, for manually triggered observations for which the Observatory can receive notification more than 48 hours before execution, and which can be scheduled for execution with a flexibility of at least ± 1 day.

Such runs will be scheduled for execution upon receipt of an activation trigger by ESO; the target (and observing time) information will be inserted by the observatory support staff into generic Observation Blocks (OBs) submitted by the PI at Phase 2. Normal (non-ToO runs) may then be used to follow up observations of a ToO target. Targets that are unknown at Phase 1 proposal submission time but can be observed more than one week after they have been identified should be observed as part of normal (non-ToO) runs.

The related OBs should be defined or updated by the PI once the target is known. The OBs should be stored in the ESO database with the complete information needed to allow them to be executed as part of the regular Service Mode queues.

Note that users submitting a ToO programme will need to indicate the number of targets per run and the requested number of triggers per target using the appropriate macros in the L^AT_EX template. A trigger is defined as the request for execution of one Observation Block with a given instrument at a given epoch. Similar observations to be executed with the same instrument at different epochs count as different triggers, as do observations with different instruments at the same epoch.

Any observing request by other groups at the time an event occurs (*e.g.* a DDT proposal), with exactly the same scientific goal and aiming at observing the same object, will be rejected by ESO. ToO runs are **not** carried over to the following periods.

ToO proposers should bear in mind that ToO proposals are ranked across OPC categories by the whole OPC (hence including non-experts in their specific field). They should therefore clearly explain the relevance of the proposed programme to general astrophysics.

4.4.1 Rapid Response Mode (RRM)

ESO continues to offer VLT Rapid Response Mode (RRM). During Period 96 the following instruments are available in RRM: FORS2 on UT1, UVES and XSHOOTER on UT2, and HAWK-I, SINFONI and MUSE on UT4.

RRM proposers should note that:

- A RRM trigger is a special ToO trigger that **can only be activated up to 4 hours after an event**. If a longer time span has passed since the event, observations should be requested through normal ToO triggers.

- As with ToO programmes, proposers will need to indicate in the L^AT_EX template the number of targets per run and the requested number of triggers per target.
- **RRM runs have to be specified as separate runs** in the ESOFORM template.

Upon receiving an encoded alert indicating the coordinates of the target and the associated Observing Block (OB) to be executed, any ongoing integration will automatically be terminated and the RRM OB will be executed. Depending on the instrument and the target position, the telescope/instrument will be at the location of the target within about 6 minutes following the arrival of the alert at Paranal. Depending on the target brightness and instrument mode target acquisition may take some more time.

RRM observations in Period 96 are subject to the following restrictions:

- The requested instrument must already be in operation. No change of instrument (and telescope focus) is accepted by the automatic RRM system.
- RRM activations will be accepted during Service Mode and Visitor Mode runs. They have overriding priority over other observations, unless the latter are strictly time-critical.

Additionally, the following instrument specific restrictions apply:

- UVES can only be used with standard wavelength settings;
- FORS2 can only be used in the broad-band imaging, long slit spectroscopic, imaging polarimetric and spectro-polarimetric modes;
- SINFONI is available in NGS and noAO mode but not in LGS mode;
- HAWK-I: all the filters can be used, but the trigger requesters must follow the users' manual indications closely as far as brightness restrictions of objects in the field are concerned.

The delivery of the encoded alerts to the Paranal Observatory is entirely the responsibility of the PI. Successful PIs will be asked to provide a set of OBs by the Phase 2 deadline, to be certified for execution as is done for other Service Mode runs. Details on the activation mechanisms and the preparation of RRM observations can be found at the Phase 2 [RRM Observation page](#).

4.5 Guaranteed Time Observations

Guaranteed Time Observations (GTO) arise from contractual obligations of ESO vis-à-vis the external consortia who build ESO instruments (see the [GTO Policy page](#)). Guaranteed Time Observers must submit proposals for their GTO time using the Normal Programme templates, and by the standard proposal deadline. All GTO proposals will be evaluated and ranked together with Normal Programme proposals to provide feedback to the GTO teams on the scientific standing of their GTO programmes. In exceptional cases, badly ranked GTO proposals may not be scheduled. The policies describing the obligations of Guaranteed Time Observers are defined in Appendix 2 of the [ESO Council document ESO/Cou-996](#).

GTO runs must be conducted in Visitor Mode (Section 5.1). The only exceptions are those explicitly stated in the contractual agreement between ESO and the corresponding external consortium. However ESO may exceptionally transfer some GTO runs from Visitor Mode to Service Mode for operational reasons (such as the availability of certain VLTI baselines or instruments).

Some GTO programmes require ToO runs¹ (see Section 4.4). If this is the case then this should be specified in the ESOFORM package using the `\ObservingRun` macro of the L^AT_EX template.

¹The possibility for GTO teams to request ToO observations as part of their guaranteed time is restricted to those cases in which this option is explicitly mentioned in the GTO contract.

4.6 Proposals for Calibration Programmes

ESO operates a large number of complex instruments with many possible configurations and observing modes. Although the Observatory executes a rigorous calibration plan for each instrument, ESO does not have the resources to fully calibrate all potential capabilities of all instruments. On the other hand, the astronomical community has expressed interest to perform calibrations for certain uncalibrated or poorly calibrated modes, or to develop specialized software for certain calibration and data reduction tasks. **Calibration Programmes** allow users to complement the existing calibration of ESO instruments and to fill gaps in the calibration coverage that might exist.

Up to 3% of all the available observing time may be made available for calibration proposals. Calibration Programmes will be evaluated by the OPC with a view to balancing the added calibration value for future science with the more immediate return of the regular science proposals of the current period. Calibration Programmes are reviewed by ESO with regards to their technical and operational feasibility.

Successful proposers will be required to deliver documentation, data products and software to ESO to support future observing programmes. The procedure to be followed is described at <http://www.eso.org/sci/observing/phase3.html>. The raw calibration data, as well as the advanced calibration products that are obtained as part of Calibration Programmes are non-proprietary and made available to the entire community through the ESO archive, and the respective instrument Web pages. Scientific publications that make use of the data or results of Calibration Programmes will have to reference the corresponding proposals.

Calibration Programme proposals must be submitted using the ESOFORM template for Normal Programmes. In Box 7A (entitled “Scientific rationale”) the proposers should clearly state the limits of the existing calibration plan and the expected improvement that can result from the proposed observations. Moreover the proposal should emphasise the relevance and the overall scientific gain of the calibration techniques and products resulting from these observations. Calibration Programmes do not pertain to any of the standard OPC categories (A, B, C or D), since in general they are not directly related to a unique scientific area: the special subcategory code L0 should be used to distinguish them. The PIs of Calibration Programmes are required to deliver to ESO the resulting Advanced Data Products within one year of the completion of the corresponding observations.

4.7 Director’s Discretionary Time

Up to 5% of the general available observing time may be used for **Director’s Discretionary Time** (DDT) proposals in the current period. These programmes are generally of short duration (< 5 hours), though a longer time request may be granted if justified by a strong science case. Only DDT proposals belonging to one of the following categories will be considered;

- proposals of ToO nature requiring the immediate observation of a sudden and *unexpected* astronomical event,
- proposals requesting observations on a highly competitive scientific topic,
- proposals asking for follow-up observations of a programme recently conducted from ground-based and/or space facilities, where a quick implementation should provide break-through results,
- proposals of a somewhat risky nature requesting a small amount of observing time to test the feasibility of a programme.

DDT programmes that have target of opportunity runs should mark their corresponding Run Types as “TOO” in the `\ObservingRun` macro. See the ESOFORM User Manual for more details. DDT programmes involving TOO runs should also fill in the `\TOORun` macros in the ESOFORM proposal template as instructed.

Approved DDT proposals are carried out in Service Mode on Paranal and Chajnantor, or in Visitor Mode override on La Silla. Very few non-time-critical DDT proposals are foreseen to be approved

so proposers should provide a clear justification (in Box 8b of the application form) why the programme should be considered for DDT allocation and why it was not submitted through the regular OPC channel. In the absence of such a justification, the proposal will not be considered for DDT allocation, and the proposers will be encouraged to resubmit their proposals for the next appropriate OPC submission deadline. *As a general rule, proposals originally submitted to the OPC that were not allocated time must not be submitted as DDT proposals.*

DDT proposals may be submitted at any time. They must be prepared using the special ESOFORM DDT template. Proposers must upload the DDT ESOFORM template and submit their DDT proposals by registering and logging into the ESO User Portal. You can find more details at:

<http://www.eso.org/sci/observing/phase1/esoform.html>

DDT proposals are reviewed and approved by the Director General. Urgent requests must be clearly identified in Box 5 (Special Remarks) of the application form.

4.8 Host State Proposals

Qualifying proposals whose PI is affiliated with an institute of the Host State (Chile) are counted as *Host State Proposals*. The designation as *Host State Proposal* is independent of the fraction of non-member state. Chile's participation is regulated by the "Interpretative, Supplementary and Amending Agreement" to the 1963 Convention (Sect. 6.1).

4.9 Non-Member State Proposals

A **Non-Member State Proposal** is a proposal where 2/3 or more of the proposers are not affiliated to ESO member state institutes, independently of the nationality of the proposers and of the affiliation of the PI. Non-member state proposals are submitted in the usual way, but a separate set of criteria are used for the review of such proposals (Section 6.1).

5 Observing Modes

In Period 96, most VLT and VLTI instruments will be offered in two modes: *Visitor Mode* (VM) and *Service Mode* (SM). These modes have been extensively described in the Data Flow Operations section of the [December 1997](#) and [June 1998](#) issues of The ESO Messenger (see also an article on Service Mode scheduling in the [September 2001](#) issue). As part of the Phase 1 proposal, investigators are requested to specify which mode they desire. While every effort will be made to follow the proposed observing mode, ESO does reserve the right to allocate time in a mode that is different from the one requested. Note especially the restrictions of available modes detailed in Sects. 5.1 and 5.2 (including designated Visitor Mode), as well as the policy in Section 6.3.

The telescope, as well as the instruments, will be operated by observatory staff only. The astronomer interfaces with the telescope/instruments via Observation Blocks (OBs), produced using the Phase 2 Proposal Preparation (P2PP) tool. Observers use [P2PP 2.13.1](#) for La Silla observations and [P2PP v3](#) for Paranal observations.

5.1 Visitor Mode

In **Visitor Mode** (VM) the astronomer is physically present at the observatory during the observations. Each approved VM run will be allocated specific calendar nights. One of the programme investigators will travel to the Observatory and execute the observations. Visitor Mode is not offered on VST, VISTA or APEX.

For all ESO instruments data acquisition will be done by executing Observation Blocks (OBs), *i.e.* observing sequences specified by the astronomer that are based on templates provided by ESO. VM investigators will be encouraged to construct their OBs before arriving on the site using P2PP.

At the telescope OBs can be created or further modified in real-time (with the exception of VIMOS MOS and FORS2 MXU mode). VM investigators will be required to arrive on Paranal before the start of their observing run as follows: 24 hours for UVES, and 48 hours for all other instruments. On La Silla, Visiting Astronomers shall arrive 1 to 2 days before the start of the observations, and may leave the site up to 1 to 2 days after the end of their observing run according to the transportation schedule (see the [La Silla Science Operations page](#)). Observers should note that twilight during visitor mode runs is used by the observatory to acquire calibrations and will be given to observers on a best-effort basis.

Note that programmes must be executed as specified and approved at Phase 1. The proposer should prepare a backup/alternative programme to be executed in place of the primary programme if the observing conditions are not ideal. The original science case and goals should be followed. Such backup programmes must be approved by ESO prior to the observing run. The corresponding requests must be submitted via the web-based form available at the Target/Instrument Setup [Change Request](#) webpage. If the conditions prevent the Visiting Astronomer's primary programme to be executed the telescope will be used for the execution of Service Mode observations; assuming no backup programme is in place and that Service Mode observations are allowed on that telescope. Raw data are available for download shortly after acquisition.

Please note that **VM proposers must include overheads** for all science exposures. Guidelines are provided in the [Overheads page](#).

Though it is very rare, the Observatory may interrupt Visitor Mode observation to allow Service Mode observations. In general, the observatory does not compensate for weather or technical losses of observing time. However, the Director of the Observatory may decide to compensate losses of observing time under exceptional circumstances.

5.1.1 ToO programme execution during VM observations

VM observations may be interrupted by time-critical DDT or ToO programmes. As far as possible, the execution of observations for such programmes will be confined to scheduled Service Mode periods. Under exceptional circumstances, the Director of the Observatory may decide to interrupt VM runs to allow ToO observations. ToO runs in the Rapid Response Mode (RRM) may also interrupt VM observations (see Section 4.4.1).

5.1.2 Designated Visitor Mode

ESO reserves the right to allocate telescope time in Designated Visitor Mode (DVM) instead of regular Visitor Mode (VM) for any runs with a justified need for VM observations and whose duration is smaller than one night. The final decision will be based on the technical feasibility reports and the Principal Investigators will be informed of their DVM time allocation via the web letters.

Designated VM observations are scheduled on specific dates/slots as if they were regular Visitor Mode runs, but they are executed by an ESO staff member, in close contact (e.g. via phone, Skype or video link) with the Principal Investigator, or someone the PI designates to serve as the liaison with the Observatory. More details, including all requirements concerning the preparation of DVM runs are provided on the [Paranal Sciences Operations webpage](#). Please note that target change requests are not allowed for runs carried out in Designated Visitor Mode.

5.2 Service Mode

Over half of the total time available for observations on Paranal will be carried out in Service Mode (SM). SM is also the only mode supported for APEX, VST and VISTA. It is not offered on any La Silla telescope.

Investigators with runs allocated in SM time will be required to specify their programme by submitting a Phase 2 package in advance to ESO. This package consists of OBs, finding charts, a Readme form and, if applicable, ephemerides. Observers intending to submit proposals to be executed in

SM may find it useful to familiarize themselves with the Phase 2 Service Mode [guidelines](#). Once the OBs are completed, they will be submitted to ESO for verification and acceptance.

Accepted OBs will be executed by ESO staff based on their OPC recommended priority and a proper match between the requested and the actual observing conditions. An article about SM scheduling appeared in [The ESO Messenger \(2001, v. 105, p. 18\)](#). The article helps proposers understand how they may optimize their use of this observing mode, and it should be considered compulsory reading for SM proposers. SM PIs and their data delegates have direct access (via their personal ESO User Portal account) to their own raw proprietary data as soon as the data is ingested in the ESO Archive. Note that in Service Mode the proprietary period for a given science file starts as soon as the data are made electronically available to PIs or to those to whom they have delegated their data access rights.

Please note that **SM proposers must include overheads** for all science exposures. Guidelines are provided in the [Overheads page](#).

ESO will absorb all the time required to complete the calibration sequences to the level of accuracy foreseen in the calibration plan as well as overheads associated with such calibrations. More information on the Paranal Calibration plans can be found from the VLT/VLTI [Instrument Pipelines](#) webpage and the respective instrument User Manual. If those calibrations are not adequate, the SM proposer must include time for any additional calibrations including overheads.

Proposers are especially encouraged to request Service Mode (on Paranal) if their programme involves Target of Opportunity events or synoptic observing, or if they require the best observing conditions (which occur at unpredictable intervals). Further information on SM observing may be found in the [Service Mode Guidelines](#).

5.2.1 Service Mode policies

To ensure the efficiency of Service Mode (SM) observing, ESO has implemented a number of rules for, procedures and limitations on SM runs. They need to be carefully considered at the time of preparing an application for SM observations and are summarized here. Please note that these items have important consequences on the way that execution overheads must be taken into account. Please consult the Phase 2 webpages for the latest information on [SM policies](#) and [SM OB rules](#). Proposers should note that Phase 1 constraints are [binding](#) (see Section 6.5).

- **Some observing strategies cannot be supported in Service Mode;** in particular, real-time decisions about complex OB sequencing, or decisions based on the outcome of previously executed OBs (like adjustment of integration times or execution of some OBs instead of others).
- **Observation Blocks (OBs) execution.** OBs are executed non-contiguously (with the exception of OBs within the concatenation scheduling containers; see the [Programmes with linked time requirements](#) item below). Since efficient SM operations require continuous flexibility to best match the OB constraints with actual observing conditions, OBs for a given run are normally scheduled non-contiguously. It is thus not possible to reduce acquisition overheads by requiring the sequential execution of OBs with the same target field.
- **Multi-mode, multi-configuration OBs are normally not permitted in SM.** Although multiple configurations within one OB may sometimes reduce overheads, scheduling and calibrating such OBs is extremely inefficient and can increase the calibration load to an unsustainable level. Examples of such multi-configuration OBs are those combining imaging and spectroscopy in a single OB, spectroscopy with multiple grisms or central wavelength settings, or imaging with a large number of filters (although most imagers allow multiple broadband filters in one OB). Multi-configuration OBs are accepted only if duly justified and authorized by means of a [Phase 2 Waiver Request](#).
- **OB Total Execution Time.** Proposers should make sure that all overheads, including telescope presetting and acquisition [overheads](#) have been properly included.
- **OB execution times must be below 1 hour.** This rule also applies to concatenated OBs in most cases. Long OBs and concatenated OBs are more difficult to schedule and execute within

the specified constraints because of the unpredictable evolution of the observing conditions. OBs taking more than one hour to execute are not normally accepted. Proposers are especially encouraged to plan for OBs substantially shorter than one hour if the execution conditions are particularly demanding, as the fulfillment of all the constraints during the entire execution time becomes more unlikely as the OB becomes longer. Please see the “[Service Mode OBs](#)” item in Section 1.2 for more information.

- **Fulfillment of Phase 2 constraints:** ESO will consider an OB as successfully executed if all the conditions in the constraint set are fulfilled. OBs executed under conditions marginally outside constraints by no more than 10% of the specified value will not be scheduled for re-execution. Please note that OBs executed marginally outside specified LST constraints by no more than 20 minutes will not be scheduled for re-execution. Adaptive Optics-assisted observations with NACO or SINFONI within 50% of the requested Strehl ratio will not be repeated (assuming that other constraints are suitably met). Adaptive Optics-assisted observations with SPHERE within 80% of the requested Strehl ratio will not be repeated (assuming that other constraints are suitably met).
- **Programmes with linked time requirements:** SM is also intended to support programmes with special timing requirements. However, proposers planning such programmes should keep in mind that at most 60% of both bright and dark time is allocated to SM (on Paranal), and that observing conditions cannot be predicted when a time-series is started. This means that timing sequences that are extremely long and/or complex, timing links that are very restrictive, and time-series for observations requiring excellent observing conditions, are unlikely to be successfully completed. Therefore, all such proposals are reviewed for technical feasibility and may be rejected if judged to be too complex. Proposers for programmes requiring timing links are strongly encouraged to consider how they may simplify their timing sequences as much as possible, as this will minimize the risk that the observations are deemed unfeasible. They should also read the [Time critical OB execution policy page](#).

If a given OB cannot be executed within its intended observability window, it will be removed from the observing queue and will not be attempted again. If it was part of a time-linked series, then the time-series observation will continue with the next OB if appropriate. ESO will not restart a sequence of linked observations if the pre-specified timing constraints cannot be fulfilled. More details on how version 3 of the Phase 2 Proposal Preparation (P2PP) tool can be used to time-link, group or concatenate various OBs, are described in <http://www.eso.org/sci/observing/phase2/P2PP3.html>.

- **ToO programme execution** Successful proposers of ToO runs will have to prepare OBs for their observations well ahead of the beginning of an observing period (see Section 5.2). Mostly ToO OBs will have to be “dummy” OBs with default values for target coordinates, integration times etc. At the time of occurrence of the predicted event, the PI of the programme (or one of his/her delegates) must activate it and at the same time provide the missing information for completion of the OBs. The service observer will update and execute the specified OBs. Further details are available on the Phase 2 [ToO Procedures page](#).

6 Policy Summary

Several policies regarding all aspects of the use of ESO telescopes have been refined over the years by the ESO Observing Programmes Committee (OPC), and by the Science and Technology Committee (STC). Here we summarize those policies relevant for ESO proposers for Period 96. For details on individual policies we refer to the [VLT/VLTI Science Operations Policy](#) document.

6.1 Who may submit, time allocation policies

ESO proposals may be submitted by any group or individual. One single person, the **Principal Investigator** or PI, must be assigned to be responsible for the programme. The PI will also act as the official contact between ESO and the proposers for all later correspondence (Phase 2 information, data distribution, etc.). By submitting a proposal, the PI takes full responsibility for its contents,

in particular with regard to the names of CoIs and the agreement to follow the ESO policies and regulations, including the conditions specified in the present Call for Proposals. Following the introduction of the ESO User Portal, PIs identify themselves uniquely in Phase 1 proposals by their User Portal username. Note that each individual is allowed to have only one account in the User Portal database; multiple accounts must not be created. Failure to comply with this restriction may lead to the rejection by ESO of the corresponding proposals.

All valid proposals received by ESO prior to the submission deadline will be reviewed by the OPC, who will rank them according to the scientific merit and the importance of its contribution to the advancement of scientific knowledge. Furthermore, proposals should provide evidence that the proposing individual or team have the expertise and sufficient resources to carry out the analysis.

Proposals should be self-contained. The evaluation will be based solely on their contents.

For non-member state proposals (Section 4.9) the following additional criteria will be taken into account:

- The required telescope/instrumentation is not available at any other observatory accessible to the applicants.
- If an ESO member state proposal and a non-member state proposal are rated equally, preference will be given to the ESO member state proposal.

The following policy, extracted from the agreement between ESO and its host state Chile, governs the allocation of time to **Host State Proposals** (Section 4.8): “Chilean scientists who present meritorious projects shall have the right to obtain up to 10% of the observing time of ESO telescopes”. For VLT projects at least one half of this 10% shall be dedicated to projects of Chilean astronomers in cooperation with astronomers of ESO member countries.

Following the recommendations of the OPC and a technical feasibility check, the ESO Director General grants observing time based on the OPC ranking and the availability of telescope time.

6.2 Requesting use of non-standard observing configurations

Proposers should pay particular attention to the fact that, as indicated in the instrument manuals, use of certain non-standard instrumental modes or configurations requires prior approval by ESO. This approval must be obtained before submitting the Phase 1 proposal. Corresponding requests, including a brief justification, must be submitted by email to usd-help@eso.org at least two weeks before the proposal submission deadline. Failure to follow this rule may lead to the rejection of the proposal by ESO for technical reasons.

Users who wish to request a new (own) filter to be installed, particularly in the cryogenic instruments (e.g., HAWK-I, VIRCAM, VISIR) must approach ESO via usd-help@eso.org at least 3 months before submitting a proposal requesting that filter. Failure to follow these guidelines may lead to the rejection of the proposal by ESO for technical reasons.

6.3 Policy regarding offered/available observing configurations

Users will be promptly informed if it becomes impossible to support some currently offered instrument mode, and may be asked to switch from Service Mode to Visitor Mode or vice versa. In general, runs requiring non-standard configurations will only be accepted in Visitor Mode.

6.4 Observing programme execution

Observations in both Visitor and Service Mode must be executed as described in the Phase 1 proposal, including the instrument modes and specified targets. Departures from Phase 1 specifications and targets will not generally be allowed, unless a sound scientific justification exists, and provided that the change does not involve a significant increase in the pressure factor on oversubscribed regions of the sky. The request for changes of targets and instrument set-up(s), along with

the corresponding scientific justification, must be submitted via the web-based form available at <http://www.eso.org/sci/observing/phase2/ProgChange/>. Please note that target change requests are not allowed for runs carried out in Designated Visitor Mode.

For any other departure from Phase 1 specifications a justification must be provided in writing to paranal@eso.org at least one month before the beginning of the observations for runs scheduled in Visitor Mode. For Service Mode runs, these requests and associated justifications must be submitted to usd-help@eso.org or to p2pp-waiver@eso.org (clear instructions are available at <http://www.eso.org/sci/observing/phase2/SMGuidelines/WaiverChanges.html>) at least one week before the Phase 2 deadline (also see Section 6.5).

ESO reserves the right to reject the changes if they are insufficiently justified, conflicting with any other approved programmes, or imply significant changes in the overall distribution of scheduled targets in the sky. Observations of targets for which no authorization has been obtained are not allowed at the telescope.

6.4.1 Service Mode run execution

The runs to be conducted in Service Mode will be subdivided into the following classes for operational reasons:

- **Class A:** All possible efforts will be made to execute all OBs corresponding to the runs in the requested observing period. Approximately the first half (according to the OPC ranking) of the total amount of Service Mode time scheduled on each telescope falls in this class.
- **Class B:** These runs will be executed in the requested observing period on a best-effort basis. Approximately the second half (according to the OPC ranking) of the total amount of Service Mode time scheduled on each telescope falls in this class.
- **Class C:** Filler runs. OBs will only be executed if the observing conditions do not permit observations for runs within classes A and B. The “any weather” proposals mentioned in Section 1.1 would fall under this category.

For Class A runs that are not completed by the end of Period 96, ESO will decide whether they can be declared “substantially complete”, or have to be carried over to the next period provided that this is technically feasible. In general, a class A run will not be carried over for more than one additional natural visibility period. Class B and C runs will not be carried over. Monitoring programme and ToO runs are by definition Class A regarding priority in execution but they will not be carried over to the following periods regardless of their completion status. As Monitoring Programmes span multiple periods for the purposes of monitoring individual targets/fields this removes the necessity for the creation of carryover runs.

Proposers are particularly encouraged to consider their observing strategy and how they can simplify any time constraints are much as possible to increase chances of being scheduled. Guidelines on the handling of time-critical OBs are available at the [Time critical OB execution policy page](#).

6.5 Phase 2 Service Mode policy: constraints and targets are binding

To optimize the use of ESO telescopes in Service Mode a proper mix of runs requiring various observing conditions, and with targets spread over the entire range of RAs for a given period, is necessary. For this reason proposers are requested in their Phase 1 proposal to specify not only the targets with accurate coordinates, but also the needed observing conditions (lunar phase, seeing, sky transparency). **Due to their essential role in determining the long-term scheduling of Service Mode time, the constraints specified at Phase 1 are binding.** Successful proposers will not be allowed to change the instrument set-ups, target lists and/or times per target that were requested at Phase 1 in their Phase 2 submissions, unless explicitly authorized by ESO (see Section 6.4). The relaxation of observing constraints is allowed at Phase 2 only. See Section 6.4 for more details on how to request waivers for Service Mode runs.

6.6 Pre-imaging runs

A separate run must be specified for a VLT programme requiring pre-imaging. If this is not specified in the proposal, the time needed for the execution of the pre-imaging will be deducted from the total allocation of the project. Pre-imaging runs are always scheduled in priority class A, but must be specified as pre-imaging runs as this will not occur automatically. Please be sure to indicate the pre-imaging character of the run by using the corresponding `\INSconfig` macro in the L^AT_EX ESOFORM template. Note that pre-imaging OBs are not allowed to be in concatenation containers. The execution time for the pre-imaging run has to be calculated for single OBs.

6.7 Data rights, archiving, data distribution

All data obtained with ESO facilities are ESO property. ESO grants a 12-month proprietary period for science and acquisition data to the PI of the programme as part of which these data were obtained. This period applies to each data file individually. The proprietary period starts as soon as the data is made available to the PI or respective delegates via the [ESO Science Archive Facility](#), *i.e.*, as soon as the data are ingested. Should you wish to specify a shorter period than the nominal 12 months in Period 96, please do so using the `\ProprietaryTime` macro in the L^AT_EX ESOFORM template. Raw data of Public Surveys, calibration and technical data are not subject to a proprietary period and become publicly available as soon as they are ingested in the ESO Archive.

For both Visitor Mode and Service Mode observations, the ESO Science Archive Facility (<http://archive.eso.org>) is the sole access point to data obtained with ESO telescopes. PIs of Service and Visitor Mode programmes and their data delegates have access to their proprietary raw data as soon as the data have been ingested in the ESO Archive, which typically happens a few hours after the observation. Access to the data is provided through the ESO User Portal credentials. The [CalSelector](#) archive service for VLT instruments combines the science files with any ancillary files that are needed to process the data, (e.g. acquisition images, calibrations, etc.).

6.8 Publication of ESO telescope results

Publications based on observations collected at ESO telescopes should state this in a footnote to the article's title. The corresponding observing proposal should be clearly identified by its ESO reference number as shown in the following example: *“Based on observations collected at the European Southern Observatory, Chile (ESO Programme 096.C-1234)”*.

6.9 Press Releases

Should you consider that your results are worthy of a press release to the general public, please contact the ESO Outreach Department (information@eso.org) as soon as possible, preferably no later than when the paper is submitted for publication. ESO reserves the right to use any data obtained with ESO telescopes as part of programmes allocated ESO time for press releases.

Part III

Appendix

A Acronyms

AMBER	Astronomical Multi-BEam combineR
APEX	Atacama Pathfinder EXperiment
ARTEMIS	Architectures de bolomètres pour des Télescopes à grand champ de vue dans le domaine sub-Millimétrique au Sol
AT	Auxiliary Telescope for the VLT Interferometer
CHAMP+	Carbon Heterodyne Array of the MPIfR
CI	Classical Imaging
CIAO	GRAVITY Coudé Infrared Adaptive Optics (CIAO) system for the VLT Interferometer
CoI	Co-Investigator
CONICA	High-Resolution Near Infrared CAmera
CPI	Common Path and Infrastructure
CRIRES	Cryogenic high-resolution IR Echelle Spectrometer
DBI	Dual-Band Imaging
DDT	Director's Discretionary Time (proposal)
DPI	Dual-Polarization Imaging, Differential Polarimetric Imaging
EFOSC2	ESO Faint Object Spectrograph and Camera 2
ESO	European Southern Observatory
ESPRESSO	Echelle SPectrograph for Rocky Exoplanet and Stable Spectroscopic Observations
ETC	Exposure Time Calculator
FLASH	First-Light Apex Sub-millimeter Heterodyne
FLAMES	Fibre Large Array Multi Element Spectrograph
FLASH	First-Light Apex Sub-millimeter Heterodyne
FORS2	Focal Reducer/low dispersion Spectrograph 2
GTO	Guaranteed Time Observations
HARPS	High Accuracy Radial velocity Planet Searcher
HAWK-I	High Acuity Wide field K-band Imager
IFS	Integral Field Spectrograph
IR	Infra-Red
IRDIS	Infra-Red Dual-Band Imager and Spectrograph
ISAAC	Infrared Spectrometer And Array Camera
KMOS	K-band Multi-Object Spectrograph
LABOCA	LARge BOlometer CAmera
LGS	Laser Guide Star
LRS	Low-Resolution Spectroscopy
LSS	Long Slit Spectroscopy
LST	Local Sidereal Time
MATISSE	Multi AperTure mid-Infrared SpectroScopic Experiment
MIDI	MID-infrared Interferometric instrument
MOS	Multi-Object Spectroscopy
MPIfR	Max Planck Institut für Radioastronomie
MRS	Medium-Resolution Spectroscopy
MUSE	Multi-Unit Spectroscopic Explorer
NACO	NAOS-CONICA
NAOMI	New Adaptive Optics Module for Interferometry
NAOS	Nasmyth Adaptive Optics System
NGS	Natural Guide Star
OB	Observation Block
OMEGACAM	Wide Field Imager for the VST at Paranal
OPC	Observing Programmes Committee
OPO	Observing Programmes Office

P2PP	Phase 2 Proposal Preparation (software tool)
PI	Principal Investigator
PIONIER	Precision Integrated-Optics Near-infrared Imaging ExpeRiment
PWV	Precipitable Water Vapour
RA	Right Ascension
RRM	Rapid Response Mode
SABOCA	Submillimetre APEX BOlometer CAmera
SEPIA	Swedish-ESO PI receiver for APEX
SHFI	Swedish Heterodyne Facility Instrument
SINFONI	Spectrograph for INtegral Field Observations in the Near Infrared
SM	Service Mode (programme)
SPHERE	Spectro-Polarimetric High-contrast Exoplanet REsearch
SPIFFI	SPectrometer for Infrared Faint Field Imaging
ToO	Target of Opportunity
USD	User Support Department
UT1	Unit Telescope 1 (Antu)
UT2	Unit Telescope 2 (Kueyen)
UT3	Unit Telescope 3 (Melipal)
UT4	Unit Telescope 4 (Yepun)
UV	Ultra Violet
UVES	UV-Visual Echelle Spectrograph
VIMOS	VIisible MultiObject Spectrograph
VIRCAM	VISTA InfraRed CAmera
VISIR	VLT Imager and Spectrometer for mid Infra Red
VISTA	Visible and Infrared Survey Telescope for Astronomy
VLT	Very Large Telescope
VLTI	Very Large Telescope Interferometer
VM	Visitor Mode (programme)
VST	VLT Survey Telescope
XSHOOTER	UV-Visual-NIR medium resolution echelle spectrograph
ZEUS-2	Redshift (z) and Early Universe Spectrometer
ZIMPOL	Zurich IMaging POLarimeter

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