Users' Committee

35th Meeting

Garching, April 14 and 15, 2011
Approved Minutes

UC
Chairperson: Prof. Werner Zeilinger Austria
Vice-chairperson: Prof. Scott Trager The Netherlands

UC members:
Dr. Stefano Benetti Italy
Dr. Gary Fuller United Kingdom
Dr. Martin Groenewegen Belgium
Dr. Frank Grundahl Denmark
Dr. Jiří Grygar Czech Republic
Dr. Seppo J. Katajainen Finland
Dr. Nanda Kumar Portugal
Prof. Thomas Preibisch Germany
Dr. Mathieu Puech France*
Dr. Nils Ryde Sweden
Dr. Hans Martin Schmid Switzerland
Dr. Lourdes Verdes-Montenegro Spain
Prof. Manuela Zoccali Chile**

*Alternate representative
**Excused

UC Observer
Dr. Marcos Diaz Brazil

Invited Speaker:
Prof. Roberto Maiolino Italy

Excused Invited Speaker:
Dr. Marcus Albrecht Germany

On behalf of ESO
Prof. Tim de Zeeuw ESO Director General
Andreas Kaufer Directorate of Operations/LPO/EASC
Michael Sterzik LPO’s Director Office
Bruno Leibundgut Directorate of Science/OPO
Christophe Dumas Paranal Science Operations Division
Fernando Comerón Data Management and Operations Division
Francesca Primas User Support Department
Martino Romaniello Data Products Department
Paola Andreani ALMA Regional Centre Department
Pascal Ballester Pipeline Systems Department
Paul Eglitis Archive Department

Excused:
T. Bierwirth Data Flow Infrastructure Department
M. Perón Software Development Division

Invited to Special Session:
Jan Brand ARC Node Manager Italy
John Conway ARC Node Manager Sweden
Carlos De Breuck APEX/ARC Department
Frederic Gueth ARC Node Manager IRAM
Palle Möller APEX/ARC Department
Tom Muxlow ARC Node Manager UK
Thomas Stanke APEX/ARC Department

Minutes taken by:
S. Chasiotis Data Management and Operations Division
1. OPENING OF THE UC MEETING

The Chair, Prof. Zeilinger (A), opens the 35th UC meeting and asks everyone for a brief introduction.

Introduction of new UC members:

- Dr. Nanda Kumar, Portugal
- Dr. Lourdes Verdes-Montenegro, Spain
- Dr. Gary Fuller, United Kingdom

Furthermore, Dr. Mathieu Puech is the alternate representative for France, replacing Dr. Vanessa Hill and Dr. Marcos Diaz is the observer, representing Brazil.

1.1. Adoption of the Agenda

As no suggestions for changes were raised the draft agenda was adopted.

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE 34th UC MEETING

As no suggestions for changes were raised the minutes of the 34th UC meeting were approved.

3. UPDATE ON ESO’S PROGRAMME

Prof. Tim de Zeeuw, Director General of ESO gives a presentation on ESO’s programme and latest developments, including the E-ELT project. This is an overview that he is sharing with all ESO committees. Due to the fact that he could not attend last year’s meeting, his last interaction with the UC dates back to two years ago. Thus it is a pleasure to meet with this Committee again, to see many new faces and he particularly welcomes Dr. Marcos Diaz, the observer from Brazil.

At the end of the presentation, Prof. Zeilinger (A, Chair) asks whether the on-going considerations to lower the costs of the telescope will be final or if they might still change at a later construction stage. Prof. de Zeeuw answers that these would be final, because it is the volume of the dome that drives most of the cost. If it is decided to make it smaller, the whole mechanical structure of the telescope would be simplified, all design schemes would be adjusted to the smaller size, thus making it difficult to reverse such a decision at a later stage. If ESO manages to have a telescope with a main mirror of a diameter of 39 meters in 10 years time, the mirror is still significantly bigger than the 8 meters currently available and definitely a fantastic machine to have. Insisting on the initially planned 42m might instead endanger the whole project.

Prof. Trager (NL) and Dr. Verdes-Montenegro (E) ask respectively whether the accession of Brazil covers the 300 million Euros necessary to complete the E-ELT project and if the E-ELT funding will affect La Silla. Prof. de Zeeuw confirms that Brazil covers these 300 million Euros and that only its accession makes the demonstrated funding scenario possible. As far as La Silla is concerned, its annual operational cost amounts to a little bit more than 1% of ESO annual income. This amount will remain the same up to 2020; therefore its discontinuation would not make any difference, as the saving would be too small to solve any E-ELT funding issue. ESO would save too little, which is not worth sacrificing the La Silla site considering the valuable scientific output it is producing.

4. REPORT FROM THE OBSERVATORIES: LA SILLA & PARANAL

Andreas Kaufer (Director of La Silla Paranal Observatory, ESO) presents an update on the La Silla Paranal Observatory (attachment 1).

At the end of the presentation, Prof. Trager (NL) asks what wavelength range the high-strehl instrument to come will cover and Kaufer (DOO, LPO) replies that the plan is to cover JHKL.
5. REPORT FROM THE OBSERVATORIES: PARANAL SCIENCE OPERATIONS

Christophe Dumas (Head of Paranal Science Operations, ESO) reports on the achievements of his department (attachment 2).

6. REPORT FROM OPERATIONS: FRONT-END

Francesca Primas (Head of User Support Department, ESO) gives an overview of last year's achievements in the front-end of data flow and operations (attachment 3).

7. REPORT FROM OPERATIONS: BACK-END

Martino Romaniello (Head of Data Products Department, ESO) gives a report on last year's achievements in the back-end of data flow and operations (attachment 4).

At the end of the presentation, Prof. Zeilinger (A, Chair) asks whether data delegation is only working for Phase 3 or if it also works for Phase 2 now. Romaniello (DPD) explains that it currently works for Phase 3 and for Archive data retrievals. It cannot work for Phase 2 yet, because this feature is embedded in the third generation P2PP, not yet deployed to the VLT (see Primas - USD).

In reply to Prof. Trager's (NL) question about the exact meaning of the term “massive” related to the use of optical data storage to serve archive requests, Romaniello (DPD) specifies that it means hundred of GBs and this is why the optical media was not discontinued yet. It is however expected that it will be able to handle most of those “massive” requests through the online transfer.

8. REPORT FROM OPERATIONS: ALMA Regional Centre

Paola Andreani (Head of the ALMA Regional Centre Department, ESO) reports on the latest ALMA operations developments (attachment 5).

9. REPORT FROM THE OBSERVING PROGRAMME OFFICE

Bruno Leibundgut (Director of Science and Acting Head of the Observing Programme Office, ESO) reports on the latest telescope statistics and activities in OPO (attachment 6).

10. REPORT ON THE UC/OPO/OPC LIAISON MEETING

Prof. Zeilinger (A, Chair) provides feedback on the OPC/UC/OPO liaison meeting.

The last meeting took place on October 15, 2010 and was attended by the OPC Chair (Prof. Ralf Bender), Head of ESO OPO (Gautier Mathys) and by himself. Three points/issues were discussed:

i) OPC feedback on proposals: Prof. Zeilinger presented the most frequent users' comments, i.e. too generic feedback and contradictory comments if the same proposal is submitted several times. Prof. Bender pointed out the OPC’s size, its variety of members, and the extreme time pressure the reviewers are exposed to, but he promised to discuss this matter within the OPC in order to improve on the feedback.

ii) The revised ESForm package: all three attendees agreed that users are generally satisfied with the new form. A few weaknesses were mentioned: inclusion of figures (PDF- or jpg-files and their degraded resolution), large target lists, LaTeX (no longer state of the art). Many users would welcome a web-based tool. Mathys reassured Prof. Zeilinger that time will be invested in order to improve the proposal submission tool, but that this task is a long-term investment. Both agreed to keep track of further developments.
iii) The search for replacement/new OPC members: according to Prof. Bender this has been a major issue for Period 88, due to the high number of members who needed to be replaced. ESO is paying special attention to this problem and the UC will also have to monitor further developments closely. As a result, the 2011 UC Users’ Poll explicitly asked the users if they were willing to serve/volunteer on the OPC and there were a number of users who replied positively.

11. GENERAL DISCUSSION

The discussion covered different topics, ranging from ALMA and APEX, to UC Users’ Poll, VLT instrumentation, ESO pipelines and data processing.

Dr. Fuller (UK) started by asking when the ALMA SV data is expected to become available and Andreani (ARC) informed the UC that the release will happen on June 1st, simultaneously to the opening of the ALMA Archive.

With the move of APEX Operations to the ALMA Regional Centre Department, Dr. Groenewegen (B) asked whether APEX-related questions should from now on be submitted to the ARC ticketing system. Andreani (ARC) explains that all APEX users should continue to contact usd-help@eso.org for all APEX-related questions, because the ALMA helpdesk is supporting only ALMA tickets.

Dr. Kumar (P) would like to understand whether some of the largest users' communities (e.g. United Kingdom and Germany) receive only very few responses to the Users' Poll but notes that, according to feedback received from ESO staff as well as from people outside ESO, many users are not even receiving these questions. Hence, he wonders whether it would be possible to distribute the poll through the ESO portal and to ask ESO to insist on feedback.

After a brief explanation on how the UC Users' Poll is organized (ESO indeed provides the UC Chair with a complete list of all PIs who have submitted at least one proposal during the last three observing periods), Prof. Zellinger (A, Chair) adds that, based on his personal experience, he has seen a constant up and down in regard to the number of replies being received. The typical response rate lies anyway between 10-20% and one can only speculate why within certain communities or at certain times responses are exceptional. Prof. Preibisch (D), however, believes that the vicinity between the UC Users' Poll and the proposal submission deadlines is not optimal and decoupling the two would result in more responses. Since it is the UC Chair who sets the deadline, Prof. Zellinger (A, Chair) admits that time pressure caused by two close deadlines could have more of a detrimental than a positive effect, a position that is shared also by Dr. Fuller (UK). Prof. Trager (NL) suggests postponing the discussion to the closed session, because there might be other factors that play a role. In his community, for instance, several users did not like the poll format and decided to respond via private emails to him. He notes that there are very nice and more sophisticated polling systems on the market that could be used instead and he wonders whether a new format could be funded as part of the UC in the future. Primas (USD) adds that her department, among others at ESO, has already looked into this matter for its own users’ feedback campaigns and has decided to go for a freeware solution.

Due to the various concerns raised by the community about the decommissioning of NACO, Prof. Trager (NL) asks what type of science is being carried out with NACO at the moment. He is concerned about the move of NACO to a VLT focus without the Laser Guide Star Facility (LGSF), which would make NACO far less interesting for the Dutch community (interested in very high contrast imaging with very high-strehl). Hopefully, the new instrument supposed to replace NACO will offer this possibility. Nevertheless, there will still be a gap of 3+ years in the thermal infrared science. Sterzik (LPO) reports that there has been quite an intensive study about NACO and its usage. About 40% of NACO current scientific demand will be offloaded to SPHERE, which is narrow-field highest strehl-ratio, a very particular application, basically companions. The other 60% is L and M band imaging (with and without LGS) and 40” high-strehl imaging. The most prominent project is however on the Galactic Centre, which does not necessarily use LGS, rather the infrared wavefront sensor (as many other programmes do). He notes that there are also a significant number of upcoming programs about disc and companion imaging for which one does not need the laser.
Prof. Trager (NL) shifts the focus to VIMOS expressing his concerns about its new pre-image-less mode. He thinks that astronomy in general has not solved yet the problem of how to do astrometry correctly in the sense of having catalogues with astrometry consistently derived for both stars and galaxies, for example. He worries that multi-slit spectroscopy without pre-imaging would be very risky. Dumas (PSO) replies that even if the currently on-going tests seem to prove that pre-imaging is not necessary, it is very likely that users will be given the option to choose pre-imaging, depending on the accuracy of their astrometry. It is however clear already now that some programs will certainly benefit from the new upgraded instrument. Primas (USD), who mentioned the new mode in her presentation, confirms that no decision has been taken yet. ESO is planning to have several tests on sky in the coming months after which a decision will be made. It is likely that the new, upgraded instrument will be offered anyway, and pre-imaging will be optional. She notes that this upgrade is a good example of how ESO took the initiative to look deeper into a major source of users' dissatisfaction to see what can be improved in VIMOS performance, how its stability can be optimised and how backlogs can be reduced. VIMOS is a complex machine. It probably had some weaknesses from the start, but it certainly has also strengths. It is in high demand, also by the public spectroscopic surveys. Since VIMOS is not at the end of its life, it is important to improve it, if possible.

Prof. Trager (NL) asks for a clarification of the pipelines development schema presented earlier, i.e. stable pipelines (that have been improved, like UVES, or are to be worked on) and pipelines that have been and are being considered for Reflex (UVES was Reflex test case). Romaniello (DPD) explains that the pipelines mentioned in his presentation are not stable but have been put on-hold, which means that they are not being worked on except in case of emergencies. Putting a pipeline on-hold however can mean two things: moving it to the end of maintenance after having been already enhanced and successfully monitored or putting it on hold in order to continue working on it as time and resources permit. Working on the pipelines listed in the data products enhancement column of his presentation always involves a REFLEX workflow. UVES became the first choice for REFLEX, as its data reduction blocks were judged to be more satisfactory and robust than other pipelines. The team consisted of people with expertise both on UVES and REFLEX. How pipelines are and will be chosen for enhancement depends on both users' feedback and feedback received by the instrument operations teams. Final decision is then taken by weighing both inputs.

With reference to the massive data downloads mentioned in Romaniello's (DPD) presentation, Dr. Kumar (P) asks if there are plans to provide pipeline-processed data as well, via the Archive. Particularly for VISTA, he thinks that massive downloads will become an issue. Romaniello (DPD) notes that reduced data is not much smaller in size than raw data and that there is already processed data served by the Archive: PI-packs, different sets of processed data coming from HARPS, UVES, FEROS, plus data which was either produced by ESO or originated outside ESO, like zCOSMOS, ESSENCE, and related data. This data will of course dramatically increase with the VISTA and VST Public Surveys, whose teams have to return their processed data to ESO so that it can be made public through the Archive. The quality of these datasets will increase as well with time as mosaics, catalogues etc. won't be possible right from the start. The first so-called Phase 3 deadline is scheduled for this month. Since the number of papers based on archival data is increasing, Dr. Kumar (P) thinks that Archive users would actually benefit from having access as well to the processed data. Romaniello (DPD) replies that even if the technical reason that impeded the implementation of this solution has now been solved, it first needs to be defined to what extent ESO can actually hand out these data and to be evaluated which data are more valuable.

Prof. Zeilinger (A, Chair) adds that he finds it straightforward to search for science data in the raw data Archive, but often experiences difficulties finding the associated calibration frames. So he wonders if it would be possible to get a data product, which is a master calibration, master bias and master flat field as looking up all individual calibration files is very cumbersome. This is indeed the plan, confirms Romaniello (DPD) and it is what we refer to as “CalSelector”, which will automatically associate raw calibrations to raw science frames. Accessing master (i.e. processed) calibrations is another issue. ESO is working on solving this matter as well, but no final time line can be provided at this moment.
12. CLOSED SESSION

13. TOUR DE TABLE – UC Feedback

Prof. Zeilinger (A, Chair) reports to have received 249 responses to the UC Users’ Poll. Users expressed to be very happy with ESO and stated that it provides a satisfactory or even excellent service. The areas that have been criticalised include preparation and submission of proposals and Exposure Time Calculators. Users found the LaTeX proposals form too complicated and reported differing verification errors between private computers and the ESO interface at time of submission. Users would also like to have the possibility to include in the ETCs their own data, to have all spectra templates available (especially for stellar sources) and the complete wavelength coverage for X-SHOOTER.

OPC feedback was in general rated very positively. The majority of the users expressed to be happy with the feedback received, with only a couple of them dissatisfied (too general, too weak, too brief or even not reflecting the scientific background and the main aims of their proposal). Only 17 (out of 259) proposals had a conflict with GTO programs, and 9 of them were amended and re-submitted (for a different instrument and/or a different target list).

In regard to Visitor Mode observations, users are generally quite satisfied although they feel that the support provided on La Silla is too limited, especially for first time users. Service Mode observations run quite smoothly. No major items were mentioned apart from P2PP, which requires a specific Java version that is not the one installed by default.

Concerning data reduction, 40% of the respondents use ESO pipelines, 30% use different software packages, and the remaining 30% use their own routines, with a 55%/45% split between Linux and Mac platforms. Responses were overall positive (especially for UVES and FLAMES pipelines), with some criticism to X-SHOOTER data reduction and the FORS long-slit mode for sky subtraction.

Besides, there are no recipes for the reduction of tilted slits.

Both Linux and Mac operating systems seem to work without problems for both Phase 1 and 2 preparations. The majority of users keep asking for more Mac support, especially for FIMS and FPOSS preparatory software packages.

The User Portal was positively evaluated, whereas there is still a problem with the science data products forum, which remains mostly unknown to users. Those who check the forum from time to time seem to be disappointed about its content.

About 20% of the respondents also answered the section regarding APEX. The overall feedback was very positive. Areas mentioned for improvement are the manuals, especially the sections on observing strategies and data reduction. Finally a significant fraction of the astronomers (20%) plan to submit a proposal for ALMA early science.

The feedback from the Austrian community at large is similar to what was just reported. The main criticism relates to data reduction. In this respect people ask for a better support regarding 64-bit Linux operating systems as several libraries need to be installed a second time, making the installation complicated. In regard to observing programs, it was mentioned that only a small fraction of B-class Service Mode programs that were started got actually completed. Users then asked whether carryover status to the next observing period could be granted also to B-class programs. Generally speaking, there is a very high degree of satisfaction with the services provided by ESO among the Austrian community.

Dr. Groenewegen (B) reports that he received only 5 responses, but he believes that this was due to the fact that the poll was circulated rather late and that contrary to previous years he did not send out a reminder. Despite the low number of responses, the feedback received was rather positive, and it identified a small core of people who will submit proposals for early ALMA science.

Prof. Trager (NL) forwarded the poll to 55 persons and 1/4 answered the questionnaire. Most feedback was related to the overpressure on UT2 in the last couple of semesters. The Dutch are heavy users of X-SHOOTER as well as FLAMES and UVES, and asked why X-SHOOTER is not moved to a different telescope to ease the situation. Besides, it was not clear to some why VIMOS was not offered for spectroscopic surveys, and there was one complaint about an unsatisfactory interaction with the scientific support on La Silla (PI tried to run a program beyond standard procedures, like defocusing the telescope to look at very bright stars and received very little feedback and help). Some users suggested moving the APEX web pages under ESO domain because they find them to be not at the ESO level; others would like to know what happens with the VLT instrument complement after 2015. The latter concern was raised at various levels in the Dutch
community: users would like to know where the 3rd generation instruments are and what ESO plans to do once the E-ELT and the VLT will be both operational.

Dr. Grygar (CZ) believes that 2010 was the most successful year in the history of the Czech Republic's community as plenty of answers to the poll were received and applications turned out to be more successful than in previous years. On the negative side, some of the Czech users still found the OPC feedback disappointing and others criticized the obsolete form to submit proposals, also claiming that the documentation is not very well organized.

Prof. Preibisch (D) reports that German users are mostly concerned about NACO and hope that a long gap for adaptive optics, especially in the thermal infrared, will be avoided. They expect a constructive proposal from ESO to solve this matter. As specified in the fact sheets, some German astronomers complained about long waiting times on Paranal. Besides, the majority of German users opposed to the need of strengthening Mac support, as 71% of them use Linux.

Dr. Katajainen (FIN) reports that despite the small number of responses, most Finnish users are very happy with ESO facilities, based on feedback he receives via other channels. OPC feedback was one of the negative points that were raised, with some users feeling that they had not been understood correctly. Users also criticized the lack of pipelines for polarimetric and spectropolarimetric data reductions and others said they would welcome a faster provision of Reflex-based pipelines. Overall, the majority of Finnish users are doing well with their own software. Poor support on La Silla, or rather the lack of any support, was also explicitly mentioned: one astronomer reported that he had great difficulties to find anybody (not necessarily a support astronomer) in order to have access to the computers. This is a concern, especially if one considers sending students to La Silla, who are not experienced users. Finally, Finnish users worry about the development of Paranal once the E-ELT comes into operation as they fear that its support could turn out to be similarly reduced as has been the case for La Silla.

Dr. Kumar (P) received 8 replies to the poll and all 8 PIs expressed to be really happy about ESO's excellent facilities, their quality and the way ESO works. However, almost everyone complained about the feedback received from the OPC; one user, for example, was asked to provide information that was already in the proposal. Hence, the impression is that proposals are not properly read in the first place.

Dr. Fuller (UK) reports that users from the UK raised two questions. They would like to know how it is decided which instrument is moved to which telescope since they are particularly concerned about X-SHOOTER and UVES which are both heavily used by stellar astronomers. Secondly, they are concerned about the decommissioning of NACO and ISAAC and would like to know how the lack of 3-5 microns spectroscopy will be solved. OPC comments and feedback remains a potential issue, which needs to be discussed as well.

Dr. Verdes-Montenegro (E) reports that she had difficulties to get 31% of the contacted Spanish users to answer the poll. One reason for this is that users, who did not get time yet, believe that the poll is only addressed to experienced users as the first part of the poll consists of questions, which can only be answered on this condition. Given the small size of the APEX community in Spain there were not many answers in regard to APEX. But this is not as negative as it may seem since, e.g., she has never applied for APEX but plans to apply for ALMA. Besides, Spanish users claimed to have difficulties to find information on the ESO webpages. She then worked on the set up of a website for the Spanish community asking them what kind of information they consider to be most important and useful. Most users asked for the split of the Call for Proposal. This was implemented and people were very thankful. The Spanish users also criticized the OPC feedback, emphasizing that their goal is not to get more time but to achieve better proposals, which is also advantageous for ESO. The application process for simple observations is considered to be too complicated and users wonder whether there is a way to simplify such applications. Furthermore, as half of the Spanish community uses Mac, developments in this respect are clearly encouraged. Finally, Spanish users are also worried about the decommissioning of NACO due to the reasons mentioned already by other UC members.

Leibundgut (DSC, OPO) intervenes to point out that the OPC is not working for ESO but it is a community activity. Consequently it does not consist of ESO staff but of people from the ESO communities. ESO is nevertheless trying to assist in the organisational matters, but it cannot be
The main concern in the community is however not more complicated because of its fragility.

Dr. Benetti (I) classifies the responses received from the Italian community very positive based on the fact that 80% of the contacted users replied to the poll. Most of the topics raised by the Italian users were already mentioned in Prof. Zeilinger’s (A) report. In addition, 3 Italian groups reported a strong issue concerning the public spectroscopic survey. They had submitted a Letter of Intent, they had received a positive answer from the panel, but they were afterwards told by ESO that the instrument VIMOS for which they had applied was not offered. Hence, they would like to know whether a new call will be published for VIMOS, if so when and what the policy of the call will be.

Dr. Grundahl (DK) reports that he received 7 replies, which is a satisfactory number compared to last year when no one answered the poll. Most feedback refers to topics that have already been raised, with a rather strong feedback on GTO observations and policies, an issue that was already addressed by Leibundgut (DSC, OPO) earlier today and discussed among the UC members in the closed session. Most of the Danish users use X-SHOOTER and/or FORS, thus the community is currently discussing whether the development of a near infrared camera for X-SHOOTER should be considered and if and how money for this project could be raised.

Dr. Schmid (CH) reports that 12 people answered the poll. Overall their answers reflect what the other communities have reported already. Most Swiss users are really happy about ESO services. Issues that were raised several times are the Mac interface and the replies received by the OPC. Senior scientists consider it very important especially for young astronomers to receive a sound OPC feedback so that they can understand why they got rejected. Finally, the Swiss community also expressed its concern about the decommissioning of NACO.

Dr. Puech (F) received 56 answers to the poll. French users are generally very happy with ESO in terms of logistics as well as with the provided support. Dissatisfaction, however, was clearly expressed in regard to OPC feedback. One specific point criticized in this respect, which has not been mentioned yet by any other UC member, is the lack of memory in the OPC as there were many proposals that fluctuated between being bottom- and top-ranked, depending on the period. Therefore users would like to know where the actual cut is, in order to better understand where their proposal stands compared to those that were accepted.

Dr. Ryde (S) reports to have received 5 answers to the poll, similar to previous years. When talking to Swedish users to find out why despite a reminder, no further replies were received, he was told that they are very thoroughly satisfied, therefore they do not respond to the questionnaire. They are proud of ESO and willing to offer more money to support its services. What users would welcome, however, is a more detailed way of reporting on new instruments development, as it is not possible to find specific information on ESO webpages. For instance, users who are not members of an Instrument Team cannot find accurate information in regard to the instrument’s start up to prepare for the Call for Proposals in due time. Besides, Swedish users would prefer P2PP being less dependent on the Java version, since after updating their Mac they found out they could no longer go back to the old Java version and consequently no longer use P2PP either. Furthermore, they wonder why the EEV CCD on FORS is only offered in Visitor Mode, as it is a very competitive instrument.

13.1. Follow-up Discussion

NACO decommissioning and its consequences

Most of the discussion took place between Prof. Trager (NL) from the UC side and Leibundgut (DSC, OPO) and Kaufer (DOO, LPO) from ESO side. ESO is fully aware of the concerns the community has expressed about the decommissioning of NACO, but there are three new instruments ramping up for the VLT plus a year later the AOF. Nevertheless, there is the plan presented by Kaufer (DOO, LPO) to possibly place an improved version of NACO with a new camera on UT4 and ESO is currently investigating whether this is feasible. Moving instruments to different telescopes in order to extend their lifetime may seem an appealing solution, but the move of ISAAC some years ago was already a major undertaking, for NACO this would be even more complicated because of its fragility.

The main concern in the community is however not the availability of another AO instrument,
rather the absence of 3-5 microns coverage. Current demands for the L-M band, however, are smaller compared to other bands.

Kaufer (DOO, LPO) remarks that there is a long-term instrumentation plan for the VLT. First, instruments are not distributed randomly. Their location has been planned from the outset together with the STC and they are part of the first instrumentation plan as well as of the second- and third generation instrument plans. ESO keeps the STC informed about instrument related plans and they have now approved ESO recommendation in regard to NACO. Secondly, one has to keep in mind that ESO has signed contracts with Consortia, which make great efforts to develop those instruments. In return, they expect to benefit from the GTO. Hence, there are certain changes that simply need to happen. In this specific case, ESO has completed in cooperation with the STC the optimization process aiming to keep the users’ dissatisfaction as low as possible. The baseline plan that has been approved with the STC agreement and which has recently prompted the discussion about NACO, is based on discussions that ESO has had with individual committees and the Instrumentation Division over the last two years. On one side ESO will try to minimize the gap of NACO’s unavailability, on the other side ESO has a strong commitment to bring in a new instrument that will replace its main modes. These are decisions the UC and all the users need to know, but the decisions are taken by ESO and the STC as far as technical and scientific issues are concerned. STC is fully supportive of ESO’s decision in this respect and has even allowed ESO to negotiate with the second-generation Consortia if they would be ready to delay their instrument.

At this point, Dr. Fuller (UK) notes that the UC at large does not seem to be fully aware of what ESO’s plans are and how they are made, suggesting that ESO may want to check how and to what extent it advertises this kind of information. Kaufer (DOO, LPO) explains that future developments are usually announced in the Call for Proposals (CfP), which is exactly where the decommissioning of NACO upon arrival of MUSE was announced. The fact that ESO is looking into different solutions on how to bring it temporarily back at another UT was also announced in the last CfP, which reflects the state of affairs back in February 2011 when the document was assembled and then released. Bringing NACO back also means that another instrument will have to be removed, and this decision needs to include a scientific evaluation.

Making this information available through the CfP allows for an update timescale of six months, notes Dr. Fuller (UK). However, developments of such plans extend over a much longer period, thus he would like to know how ESO informs its community about its long term planning so that users can take such developments into consideration for future proposals.

Kaufer (DOO, LPO) points the UC members again to the CfP, in the specifics to the section that refers to “upcoming changes over longer (> 6 months) timescales”.

Prof. Trager (NL) reports that the vast majority of the users admit to just skim the CfP and that he himself had not realized that there is a section on future outlooks. Both UC and ESO should emphasise to the users that this kind of information is actually available in the CfP. Dr. Fuller (UK) notes that ESO web pages would be a more logical place to look for this information.

ESO feels that no matter where this information is announced, there will always be users claiming that they have overlooked it as it was placed in the wrong place according to their opinion. Leibundgut (DSC, OPO) reminds the UC that the actual existence of Section 1.3 (future outlook) of the CfP has been included in the CfP document upon explicit request from the users. As a final remark on the CfP, Dr. Kumar (P) thinks that the document is too long, and it should be split into separate sections, with most important information highlighted. Leibundgut (DSC, OPO) agrees that the current Call for Proposals contains too much detailed information. Personally, he would welcome a lighter version with more pointers, and hopes that the upcoming Head of OPO, Dr. Patat, will look into this matter once he has taken up his duties.

Overpressure on UT2

Prof. Zeilinger (A, Chair) voices the concern expressed by several users on the overpressure on UT2 and asks whether there is any possibility to reduce it. Prof. Trager (NL) remarks that people are even more concerned now, with possible upcoming spectroscopic surveys.

Leibundgut (DSC, OPO) replies that UT2 has X-SHOOTER on which about 150 nights of guaranteed time spread over 3 years have been reserved. ESO has allocated 30 nights per semester to X-
SHOOTER, which accounts for almost 1/6 of its total availability, and which automatically increases the pressure on the telescope as time belonging to guaranteed time holders is not available for anyone else. Once the X-SHOOTER guaranteed time has been used, the pressure should go down. Kaufer (DOO, LPO) adds that this is a general problem, which does not concern only UT2. Overpressure is actually expected to be extremely high on all telescopes next year. It has been considered to swap X-SHOOTER and VISIR, but at the moment it is not clear whether big surveys are going to be executed on VIMOS. The latter will be given high priority, making the move of X-SHOOTER to UT3 not very effective. Leibundgut (DSC, OPO) also notes that UT4 will be offline for a couple of months during the installation of the AOF module, which will create a rather high pressure on that telescope.

Spectroscopic surveys for VIMOS

Leibundgut (DSC, OPO) reports to the UC the outcome of the Call for Public Spectroscopic Surveys: out of 24 Letters of Intent that were received, 15 asked for VIMOS. All VIMOS cosmology proposals were submitted for the same three fields on the sky, which considering the maximum amount of time that each proposal was allowed to ask (300 nights) created immediately a problem with their execution, taking into account that these are the same fields on which a significant backlog already exists. If ESO were to approve a new survey, the awarded users would have to wait for about 2 years until the initial backlog has been cleared. This is why the Public Spectroscopic Survey Panel decided to ask again for new Letters of Intent once the already granted time has been used. Leibundgut (DSC, OPO) also notes that there are astronomers who are listed on five different Letters of Intent, and that in his opinion it would be very helpful if the community could organize itself in larger teams. Of course the Panel is allowed to merge surveys, however, it definitely makes more sense if users organize themselves ahead of time in order to submit stronger proposals.

Prompted by Dr. Fuller (UK) who thinks that if the combination of surveys is important before submitting a Letter of Intent this needs to be communicated more efficiently to the community and subsequently refers to a merged proposal on a different telescope, Leibundgut (DSC, OPO) answers that the FLAMES proposal just mentioned as an example was actually merged upon suggestion by the Panel and it represented a very clear case. On the other hand, it is much more difficult to suggest mergers, when 15 different Letters of Intent are received. He also adds that the communication channel consisted of a letter that was sent to all PIs. In this letter they were informed about the comments provided by the Public Spectroscopic Survey Panel and told that there will be another call for VIMOS in the future. Being still in the selection process, ESO could not announce any final decision in these letters. The issuing of a new call for VIMOS is tied to a successful processing of the existing backlog. Consequently it has already been decided that observing fields for surveys need to be distributed over the sky. Otherwise ESO will not be in the position again to commit time allocations amounting to 300 nights.

Future of Paranal

Most of the discussion took place between Dr. Katajainen (FIN) and Prof. Trager (NL) from the UC side and Kaufer (DOO, LPO) and Leibundgut (DSC, OPO) on ESO side. It focused on what will happen to the VLT (and the operation of its 2\textsuperscript{nd}/3\textsuperscript{rd} generation instruments) if one considers the financial constraints resulting from E-ELT construction and ramp-up. Users are concerned about Paranal following a similar path to La Silla, the support of which has been strongly reduced.

Kaufer (DOO, LPO) reassures the UC that this risk has been mitigated by the fact that all ESO committees supported that priorities will be set in the following order: VLT/VLTI, ALMA and then the E-ELT. Any proposed deviation of budget lines targeting the use of resources scheduled for the VLT in order to support the E-ELT construction generated considerable debates and were re-established. This shows that there is a clear, constant budget line for VLT instrumentation and for VLT operations in general; to the extent that it now has to decide what to implement best at the VLT with all this money. Despite the fact that many institutes want to be involved in building E-ELT instrumentation, this may become a critical situation, as ESO has limited resources to realize those requests.

He also mentions that the VLT and the E-ELT will be placed in an integrated observatory. Thus
instrumentation is also part of an integrated plan. ESO will try not to duplicate capabilities on the VLT, which turn out to be better suited for the E-ELT. These kinds of discussions are already ongoing. At the moment the driving factor is indeed E-ELT instrumentation, as the planning teams need to be instructed accordingly. For this purpose ESO is reviewing together with the STC the whole instrumentation plan of the VLT, the VLTI, and E-ELT together.

Asked by Prof. Trager (NL) if ESO is planning to have more 2nd-generation instrumentation type of workshops, Leibundgut (DSC, OPO) replies that first of all ESO is trying to get away from the generation nomenclature and pattern. He believes that there is room for another workshop in order to explore what users want. The interplay between the E-ELT instrumentation and VLT instrumentation and as a matter of fact the instrumentation on La Silla too could be one possible criterion. However, ESO will also consider initiatives like the so-called HARPS model for La Silla. This means that if users or teams are interested in building an instrument for a specific scientific experiment and to offer it to the community, they are welcome to do so and will be granted guaranteed time as a repayment for their investments.

14. OLD ACTION ITEMS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

UC34 Old Action Items and Recommendations

UC32.AI.4: ESO should develop a mechanism through which restricted access of Co-Is to specific runs can be provided, following authorization by the PI. Upheld.

UC32.R.6: The current latex forms for Phase I proposals are hard to handle efficiently. ESO may consider developing a new web-based form with online help. Upheld.

UC33.AI.3: The UC should advertise amongst its constituencies the electronic forum for data reduction. Upheld.

UC33.AI.6: The UC Chair and STC Chair should have a Telecon to discuss how best to share information between their meetings. Upheld.

UC34 New Action Items and Recommendations

UC34.AI.1: ESO will formally confirm that the UC minutes may be approved (and hence made public) by e-mail, shortly after the draft minutes become available. Closed to be converted into new action item

UC34.AI.2: ESO will report at the next UC meeting on their first experiences with the coordination of ARC nodes and their use by the community. Upheld

UC34.AI.3: ESO will write an ESO Messenger article explaining their current and future policies with regard to Guaranteed Time Observations. Upheld

UC34.R.1: Some time should be reserved at the next UC meeting, to discuss the impact on ESO users of Guaranteed Time Observations policies. Closed

UC34.R.2: ESO will look into supporting Mac OS X, with consideration of a list of priorities to be provided by the UC. Upheld

UC34.AI.4: The UC will provide ESO with a list of priorities for support of Mac OS X. Closed

UC34.AI.5: The UC will poll the users on their experiences with Guaranteed Time Observations. Closed

UC34.AI.6: The UC will discuss with the STC Chair the future capabilities at ESO for 3-5 micron Adaptive Optics observations. Closed
UC34.AI.7: The UC will discuss with the OPC Chair the OPC Working Group and a possible reduction of the page limits of regular type proposals. **Closed**

UC34.AI.8: The UC will take steps to involve the European radio astronomical community in liaison with ESO as the European partner in the Joint ALMA Observatory. **Closed**

### 15. CLOSED SESSION

### 16. SPECIAL TOPIC: “APEX Operations”

#### 16.1. ESO Introduction

Carlos de Breuck (APEX Project Scientist, ARC) and Thomas Stanke (APEX operations, ARC) introduce “APEX at ESO” (attachment 7).

A few questions and remarks followed the presentation and dealt with APEX web pages, data transfer, support pages and information, and proprietary period.

Prof. Trager (NL) initiates the UC feedback by reporting that he has received a couple of comments from Dutch APEX users, who claim that the APEX webpage is not particularly well set up, e.g., one user reported that depending on what sub-page is used the Exposure Time Calculators for the same instrument differ. Another user pointed out that the last update of the APEX webpage dates back to quite some time ago. He thus wonders who is responsible for the maintenance and update of the APEX web pages and suggests consulting a frequent user in order to get an objective judgement on whether the web pages need to be reworked. Dr. Fuller (UK) adds that he also experienced problems with the APEX webpage when trying to find what heterodyne instruments were available. There was contradictory information and the list of all heterodyne instruments he found is not of actual interest. De Breuck (APEX, ARC) replies that he is positive that the web pages do not contain different Exposure Time Calculators for the same instrument and clarifies that the responsibility of the web pages lies with the APEX site manager. APEX staff in Chile maintains the web pages and they are receptive to suggestions for improvements; if received, he would be pleased to pass them along.

Prof. Trager (NL) also reports that Dutch users highly appreciated that the data transfer problem is being resolved. Dr. Fuller (UK) agrees that this is a step forward, however, as a millimetre observer, he would like to receive the quality control reductions. Being able to have a quick look at already reduced data would allow for immediate feedback. De Breuck (APEX, ARC) admits that in principle this could be done, but he points out that ESO quick reductions are executed while observing, i.e. there is no guarantee that they are flawless, for example those for the more complex photometry mode that requires inclusion or exclusion of some of the scans. De Breuck (APEX, ARC) also notes that once the user downloads the first quick reduction file, the proprietary period starts and that final data products released at a later stage may actually differ. Therefore, all these risks need to be carefully evaluated. Although he agrees with the need for such an assessment, Dr. Fuller (UK) emphasizes the importance of the quick reductions, not only to see how the project is progressing but also to identify potential errors. Other UC members share the same position as well.

Dr. Verdes-Montenegro (E) reports that she has received very positive feedback from the Spanish users in regard to APEX. They praised the very good interaction with the APEX staff and expressed their pleasure about this positive working atmosphere. A question posed was whether the TWIKI pages, currently only available to people observing at the telescope, could be made accessible to the public as well. In her opinion, this request makes sense since users need to be able to follow up their run and to modify the remaining observations, especially for exploratory programmes. De Breuck (APEX, ARC) explains that this is currently not possible due to security reasons: the current set up of the TWIKI pages would allow one to access not only their own project, but all approved programmes. This is not supposed to happen in the first place; moreover the network load should be kept low. An alternative option would be to keep all information in one place and forward the whole TWIKI page instead, including the possible dispatch of quick reductions. However, some of the information in there is not supposed to be logged in the ESO Archive, e.g. PI telephone
numbers and emails. Concerning the modifications that users may want to make to their programmes, De Breuck (APEX, ARC) clarifies that users are not supposed to resubmit the entire web-form but just adapt the script. Unfortunately, this step requires expert training, which explains why adaptations and/or revisions currently fall under ESO responsibility. Dr. Verdes-Montenegro (E) says it makes no sense for a PI to suggest modifications if the data can be viewed only once everything is completed. Besides, she believes that the proprietary period should only start when the observations have been completed. Dr. Fuller (UK) shares the same view and even if he can understand that this is due to technical software related issues, he finds the concept nevertheless senseless. Romaniello (DPD) reminds the UC that this procedure was chosen due to overarching ESO policy, which applies to all data gathered, independently of the telescope. No matter what ESO data is concerned, the proprietary period starts at file level. That is why the system laid down so far is adhered.

Finally, Dr. Verdes-Montenegro (E) asks whether frequency switching will be implemented. De Breuck (APEX, ARC) reports that there have been a few tests in this respect, but these have not been satisfactory. The way frequency switching is implemented into the APEX control system requires doing an off position first in order to allow for this function. He promises to raise this point again.

16.2. Feedback from APEX Frequent Users – part I (M. Albrecht)

Dr. Marcus Albrecht (Argelander Institut für Astronomie, Bonn) was unable to attend the meeting due to health reasons. However, he sent ESO the presentation he was supposed to give (see attachment 8), which was open for discussion at the meeting.

16.3. Feedback from APEX Frequent Users – part II (R. Maiolino)

Prof. Roberto Maiolino (INAF, Astronomical Observatory of Rome) presents his experience with APEX and provides feedback (see attachment)  

16.4. General Discussion

The discussion focused on different aspects of the APEX facility, with some emphasis on current and future APEX instrumentation and their competitiveness in the ALMA era. According to Maiolino, it is clear that, e.g., heterodyne spectroscopy will have to take a different role once ALMA comes online, which is why APEX is investing in back end receivers such as wide area surveys and wide broadband line surveys mostly for nearby sources. Prompted by a request made by Dr. Fuller (UK), De Breuck (APEX, ARC) comments on the role that current and future APEX instrumentation may have when ALMA becomes operational. LABOCA, the Large APEX BOlometer CAmera, is the first example of a valuable instrument: its 300 pixels make it currently the fastest sub-mm mapping instrument in the world. Another instrument is the Artemis sub-millimetre camera, which will provide simultaneous fully sampled images in 3 focal planes at 450, 350 and 200 microns. Artemis is built by CEA Saclay, and uses the Herschel/PACS detector technology adapted for ground-based observations. Finally, there is the idea to invest in MKID bolometer arrays, but it is at this point too early to say whether it will be possible to install this technology at APEX.

Continuing with the APEX instruments suite, De Breuck (APEX, ARC) reminds the UC that the existing APEX focus stations have to be distributed among the APEX partners. MPIfR has a large instrument development team that brings forth a lot of PI instruments. Therefore, APEX needs to find time to also make MPIfR instruments available. Currently APEX has the Z-Spec spectrometer, which covers the 180 – 310 Gigahertz range in one go, which makes it an ideal redshift finding machine. It is currently offered as a PI instrument, i.e. in collaboration with the instrument team every ESO member state astronomer can apply for it. On the spectroscopy side with a bandwidth of 100 Gigahertz APEX is definitely still competitive with ALMA. Besides, there is the CHAMP+ heterodyne multi-beam receiver, which will also allow APEX to keep up with ALMA.

Dr. Fuller (UK) notes that, with regard to heterodyne systems, one has to consider that the 350
GHz system on APEX is single pixel, whereas other telescopes have much larger arrays nowadays and are thus much more efficient. He wonders if there are first of all plans for securing more pixels at these frequencies, and secondly if there are plans in regard to the back end for heterodyne spectroscopy. De Breuck (APEX, ARC) reports that APEX has indeed looked into the possibility to upgrade the back-ends and now it is going to get the so-called XFTTS units, which are 2.5 Gigahertz wide. Two units of them will cover the full IF bandwidth of the SHeFI receivers and these will be installed in June. There will be competition with ALMA, where the same science can be done in less time, but he hopes that the oversubscription on ALMA will feed back users to APEX.

As far as multi-beam receivers are concerned, there has been some interest expressed and MPIfR carried out a first design study, because they were planning to build a multi-beam receiver named LASMA at 350 Gigahertz. Unfortunately, this project is currently on-hold because the GREAT instrument for SOFIA received higher priority within the MPIfR receiver development group. Nevertheless he believes that it would be quite valuable to have a low frequency multi-beam receiver, but it has to be seen whether there is money available for such a development. Maiolino then adds that another nice instrument at APEX is the Terahertz receiver. This band is so difficult to observe that one can only succeed on Chajnantor. ALMA wants to have the receiver there and people are very eager to observe in this band. He failed to do so due to the back-ends, which are extremely narrow at that frequency. However, if the back-ends are improved then it will become an appealing band to do really cutting edge science, also for nearby objects.

Dr. Fuller (UK) agrees with Maiolino that receivers at those frequencies are of real interest as they offer more observing time. Thus one would really win by having multiple pixels on sky once the rarely good weather arrives. In regard to the comment Maiolino made earlier about the lack of access to PI instruments, he wonders whether facility instruments at these frequencies would be an alternative. As an active astronomer and UC member he admits being confused about the differences among facility vs. PI vs. other classes of instruments.

De Breuck (APEX, ARC) explains that the easiest instruments to handle are the facility instruments, which all APEX partners and collaborators have paid for. These are LABOCA, SABOCA and the SHeFI receivers and are open to everybody, without the need for any special collaboration. As far as ESO is concerned, one can also bring visitor instruments to APEX. The procedure is similar to the one in place for Paranal or La Silla, i.e. the instrument team applies for it and provides a detailed description of the instrument, its capabilities and its restrictions. In regard to PI instruments one has to differentiate between ESO PI instruments and MPIfR PI instruments (currently there is no Swedish PI instrument). Z-Spec is operated as an ESO PI instrument, although it is not financed by ESO. These instruments are offered in the ESO Call for Proposals, but require the team of instrument experts at the telescope to operate them. The community has access to them but in collaboration with the instrument team member(s).

The same rules apply for the MPIfR PI instruments CHAMP+ and FLASH. However, operations of these instruments are a bit more complicated. Because they are both quite sensitive and cannot be remotely tuned, MPIfR people want to be the only ones operating them. In practice, since the APEX observing time is divided in fixed time blocks, CHAMP+ observing runs are basically blocked together, and no compensation is foreseen should the weather turn bad. This is possibly the major difference between ESO and MPIfR PI instruments, because ESO allows for the team of experts to be in stand-by so that optimal use of flexible scheduling can be applied during the slots assigned to ESO.

Dr. Groenewegen (B) asks how this schema affects the pipelines, as one feature of ESO instrumentation is the availability and support of pipelines. He personally had a look at BOA and was wondering whether there is any ESO involvement in this respect. Besides, he would like to know if the APEX team supports questions by users regarding BOA and LABOCA data reduction systems. De Breuck (APEX, ARC) explains that BOA is a Max Planck deliverable to the APEX project and with some pressure from the other APEX partners MPI finally developed and released its new version. Stanke (APEX, ARC) adds that he gained some expertise with it for his own scientific work, hence he is always happy to answer users’ questions to the best of his knowledge. However, for very specific questions the users still need to contact the Argelander-Institut für Astronomie in Bonn. Finally, De Breuck (APEX, ARC) mentions that it is unfortunate that Dr. Albrecht could not attend the meeting, as he is one of the expert BOA users. Thus he would recommend consulting
his presentation in order to see whether he has listed some suggestions in this respect.

Prof. Zeilinger (A, Chair) shifts the discussion to ALMA and invites UC representatives to address questions also to the ARC node managers attending the meeting. He mentions that judging from the UC Users’ Poll, users seem to be quite happy. The communication with the ARC nodes appears to go well and 20% of the 250 users that replied to the poll plan to submit a proposal for ALMA early science, i.e. cycle 0.

Dr. Fuller (UK) goes back to one of his initial discussion points and asks what strategy ESO has in terms of synergy between the two millimetre telescopes. He has the impression we are moving into an era where the sub-mm/radio domain becomes similar to the VLT, in the sense that VLT has now two survey telescopes (VISTA and VST) feeding sources to it and the two millimetre telescopes need a similar source of surveys. According to Andreani (ARC), there are actually no plans at the moment in this respect, possibly also because ALMA is an international collaboration hence its partners would need to be consulted on such matters. As pointed out by De Breuck (APEX, ARC) different time allocation committees will evaluate ALMA and ESO-APEX proposals, which may complicate the implementation of this synergy. But he notes that in the current ESO observing rules there is already some time exchange with, e.g., XMM. Thus one could in principle find a similar solution also for ALMA, where for example 10% of the ESO APEX time is reserved for such proposals that are then submitted as part of the ALMA proposals. In other words, people submitting ESO ALMA proposals could also apply for a limited amount of APEX time.

Prof. Zeilinger (A, Chair) changes topic and asks if there is any reasonable estimate of how many early science proposals will be submitted from the ESO community. Andreani (ARC) says that JAO (Joint ALMA Office) is stuff and panels have been appointed to evaluate ~300 proposals worldwide. In her and many others’ opinion, this is a very unrealistic number, and as a matter of fact the JAO has already appointed ‘shadow’ members for all panels. Hence, additional referees exist in case 1000 or more proposals are received by the deadline. Prompted by a question from Dr. Verdes-Montenegro (E), Andreani informs the UC that the final number of submitted proposals will be made public soon after the deadline (set for June 30).

Prof. Trager (NL) then asks the ARC nodes managers present at the meeting, whether they have any idea of how many will be applying for early science in their respective communities.

Dr. Gueth (IRAM ARC node, F/E) believes that the number will be definitely high as ALMA is a major observatory that has been now advertised for many years. He agrees with Andreani (ARC) that 300 proposals is a very low estimate. He reports that all tutorials that have been organized had been heavily oversubscribed, but of course he does not know the exact final number. Dr. Muxlow (ARC Node, UK) agrees with Gueth, reporting that most of the community is actually looking at how early science configurations match their actual science requirements. There is a huge interest in using ALMA, and it is just a matter of time when applicants are going to get involved with ALMA. He believes that a lot of them will come in already at early science with preliminary investigations for developing future programs.

Prof. Zeilinger (A, Chair) wonders if potential users are going to be satisfied with the current ALMA configurations, as far as number of offered antennas and receivers are concerned. Dr. Brand (ARC node, IT) is confident that users will just take ALMA as it comes and use the features that are available and for which they can request observing time. He at least has not heard anyone complaining not being able to do early science with 25 antennas. Dr. Conway (ARC Node, S) adds that users are fully aware that there will be a cycle 1 after cycle 0. Thus, the types of science that cannot be executed with the current number of antennas will have to wait another nine months. However, the antennas ALMA got so far represent already a collecting area which is comparable with the largest collecting area in the northern hemisphere. Actually, it is even better because the site is at a higher altitude, therefore the observing conditions should be much better.

The discussion ends with Andreani (ARC) explaining the procedure regarding the evaluation of ALMA proposals, upon request by Prof. Zeilinger (A, Chair). There will be a single, very well staffed evaluation committee, which Chile has agreed to join as well. The evaluation procedure will be very similar to the one being applied to the VLT. Science categories will be split and distributed to various evaluation panels. Panel members will have access to a tool, where they will enter their scores as well as their reports and at the end of the evaluation process the PI will receive from the
Chair of the panel an email with the consensus report including also the technical feasibility of the proposal.

17. CLOSED SESSION

18. ACTION ITEMS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Prof. Trager (NL, Vice Chair) takes over the chairmanship of the final session of the meeting since Prof. Zeilinger (A, Chair) had to leave earlier.

Before announcing the action items and recommendations he informs ESO that the same setup has been confirmed also for next year’s UC Meeting. Prof. Zeilinger (A) will be the Chair of the next UC meeting and Prof. Trager (NL) his Vice Chair.

UC35 Recommendations

The UC recommends:

UC35.R.1: ESO should develop a mechanism through which restricted access of collaborators to specific runs can be delegated, following authorization by the PI.

UC35.R.2: ESO should discuss plans how to change the current LaTeX based Phase 1 forms into a more user-friendly tool.

UC35.R.3: ESO should start a knowledge database on issues related to data reduction.

UC35.R.4: ESO should consider approving the UC minutes formally in the autumn UC meeting and release it to the public.

UC35.R.5: ESO software should be platform independent.

UC35.R.6: ESO should develop suggestions how to improve the OPC evaluation and feedback process, preferably in preparation of the autumn UC telecon.

UC35.R.7: ESO should provide associations between calibration and science frames in the data archive.

UC35.R.8: ESO should redefine the proprietary period, which should not depend on the time of the first download.

UC35 Action Items

The UC will undertake the following tasks:

UC35.AI.1: The UC Chair and the STC Chair should have a Telecon in order to discuss how to best share information between their meetings.

UC35.AI.2: The UC will discuss with the STC Chair the future capabilities at ESO for 3-5 micron Adaptive Optics observations.

UC35.AI.3: UC is concerned about the feedback of the OPC to the users. The UC will produce recommendations to ESO concerning the feedback and evaluation process for the autumn UC telecon.
19. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Dr. Grygar (CZ) would like to propose a different name for the E-ELT telescope that he personally finds more appropriate, especially now that Brazil is becoming an ESO Member State. He suggests “Jan Oort Telescope” as Jan Oort was the founding father of ESO and he is an astronomer of international renown.

Leibundgut (DOS, OPO) thanks him for the suggestion and says that there might be a name competition once the E-ELT has been approved.

20. CLOSING REMARKS

Kaufer (DOO, LPO) thanks everyone on behalf of the ESO Director General for the very constructive meeting, for the attendance as well as the preparatory work that went into it. ESO is aware that it is not an easy task for the UC members to collect and filter information from such a diverse and large community and then condense all feedback received into key points to be brought up at the annual meeting. Thus, it was very good to see that the discussion focused on important issues, which were also well reflected in the recommendations formulated. He stresses that ESO takes them seriously and ESO hopes to be able to report progress on the different issues at the next UC meeting. He furthermore thanks all ESO staff involved: given that the UC meeting is fortunately a growing group he is aware that the attention and preparatory work required is considerable.

An exciting year with important challenges and decisions to make lies ahead of ESO. Thus it is good to see that the communication flow towards the community is working well. As always, ESO would like to ask the UC members to continue diffusing information like for e.g. the upcoming instrument changes and the developments in the E-ELT project to their respective communities. The UC will certainly have a meeting next year where the first results of ALMA early science will be discussed in detail. In this respect, he thanks the UC at large for proposing to develop into a committee, which also represents the community in the ALMA era. This was quite a step to undertake and mastered successfully judging from the discussions earlier today.

Prof. Trager (NL, Vice Chair) also thanks everyone for this year contributions. He believes the meeting was very productive and is personally looking very forward to the follow up telecon as well as to the next annual meeting.