

Call for Proposals for a Third Generation Instrument for the NTT

Introduction

The scientific mission of the La Silla Observatory is periodically reviewed (typically every 3 years) by special *ad-hoc* Committees, appointed by the ESO Director General and composed of members of the User's Committee (UC), the Scientific Technical Committee (STC), and ESO staff. The reports of these Committees have been presented to STC and Council and used in planning the long range strategy of ESO. The three successive La Silla Committee reports (LS2000, LS2000+, and LS2006+) have been widely distributed in the community, and one of them (LS2000+) is available on-line through the ESO web site (www.eso.org).

One of the key recommendations of the LS2006+ Committee (chaired by A. Cimatti of Arcetri Observatory) was to quickly replace one of the existing instruments at the NTT by a next generation one, in order to keep the telescope facility fully competitive beyond 2006. Present instruments in operation at the NTT are: 1) EMMI, a multi-mode spectro-imager in the Visible domain, installed in 1990; 2) SUSI, the SUpber-Seeing Imager installed in 1991 and upgraded to SUSI2 in 1998 and 3) SOFI—Son OF Isaac—a near-IR spectro-imager, which originated as an early spin-off from the development of ISAAC for the VLT and was put into operation also in 1998.

Five years into VLT operations and after 15 years of successful NTT operations, it is indeed timely—as proposed by the LS2006+ Committee and recommended by the STC—to reassess the scientific mission of the existing NTT instrumentation and how it could be partly or totally replaced with a new instrument and/or with easy access to a visitor focus. Any new instrument would have to physically replace either SOFI/SUSI or EMMI. It should offer to the community an end to end observing capability at the frontier of present astrophysical research, taking into account the medium size and ex-

cellent quality of the telescope and the superb observing conditions at La Silla. It should complement the VLT and other future facilities (VST, VISTA, ALMA), provide unique scientific results in its own merit and address the needs of a significant segment of the community. On the technical side, ESO would favor an instrument easy to operate and with a reasonable cost.

This Call is addressed to all past or potential users of the ESO telescopes. Any astronomer working in an ESO member country (including ESO staff) is warmly invited to provide his/her input. This can be in the form of a recommendation on how to proceed or as a formal letter of intent expressing the interest in developing a new instrument, as spelled out in the next two sections.

Survey on the observing modes to be offered at the NTT

ESO is interested in your properly justified view on these specific points:

(a) Which among the existing NTT instruments will be mostly needed beyond 2006 and with what mode(s);

(b) Which observing mode(s) currently not offered at the NTT would be most interesting to complement the VLT capabilities and make unique science.

(c) Whether an NTT focus for visitor instruments should be given high priority

Please add any other consideration relevant for the choice of future NTT instrumentation. In particular, you may comment on the need for a new general use capability or instead on some new facility dedicated for a large fraction of NTT time to a specific and challenging scientific goal (like the extensive exo-planet search with HARPS at the 3.6 m).

Your contribution should be sent by email to epompei@eso.org and sdodoric@eso.org.

As Subject, please enter: Survey on fu-

ture observing modes with the ESO NTT.

Deadline: August 31st, 2003

Intent to submit a proposal to build a new instrument for the NTT

ESO solicits proposals to build a new instrument for the NTT from Institutes or groups of Institutes. The project could be developed in collaboration with ESO, and in particular with the La Silla Observatory. The framework would be the one used in other VLT or La Silla collaborative projects, where the contribution by an external Consortium in manpower and/or cash is rewarded with guaranteed observing time.

In this case, the PI should forward (1) a conceptual description of the instrument he/she is proposing and of its scientific drivers and operating model; (2) the main Institute(s) which are expected to be associated to the project and the preliminary endorsement by the Director of the leading Institute and (3) the contribution expected from ESO.

For technical information on the NTT, please contact Emanuela Pompei (epompei@eso.org) at La Silla Observatory.

The above expression of intent should be forwarded by e-mail to gmonnet@eso.org and to jmelnick@eso.org. As Subject, please enter: Proposal to build an instrument for the ESO NTT.

The e-mails should be timely followed by a formal Letter of Intent addressed to:

Head Instrumentation Division
Attention: G. Monnet
Subject: New NTT Instrument
European Southern Observatory
K. Schwarzschild Str. 2
D- 85748 Garching b. München

E-mail deadline: August 31st, 2003

The proposals will be technically and managerially assessed by ESO and presented to the STC in October 2003 for a recommendation, together with the results of the survey in the community.

Kurt Kjär retires from ESO



After a long and dedicated service to ESO, Kurt Kjär is retiring from the post of Technical Editor which he has held during an unprecedented period of almost 30 years.

From the beginning, ESO has profited enormously from his solid technical expertise and thoroughness, great sense for form and content and, not least, impressive knowledge of languages. He has been deeply involved in and has put his personal stamp of quality on hundreds of ESO publications at all levels and scopes, ranging from the Annual Report, the ESO Messenger, ESO conference proceedings and scientific preprints to technical reports and brochures, etc. Much time and many resources have been saved thanks to his profound knowledge and enormous ex-

perience, especially visible during the all too frequent hectic periods to meet imposed deadlines. The European astronomical community has witnessed the steady progress of the ESO Messenger from the first thin issue in 1974 to the current, very comprehensive ones. This would not have been possible without a close and friendly, highly effective collaboration between Kurt Kjär and the various Messenger editors. As one of these, I am happy to testify here to the fantastic stimulus and help it has been to work with a person like Kurt. We are all deeply thankful to him.

Kurt Kjär will retire to live with his wife in Oberschleissheim, a few kilometres from the ESO Headquarters.

Richard West