

The VLT Progresses as its Programme Management is Adapted

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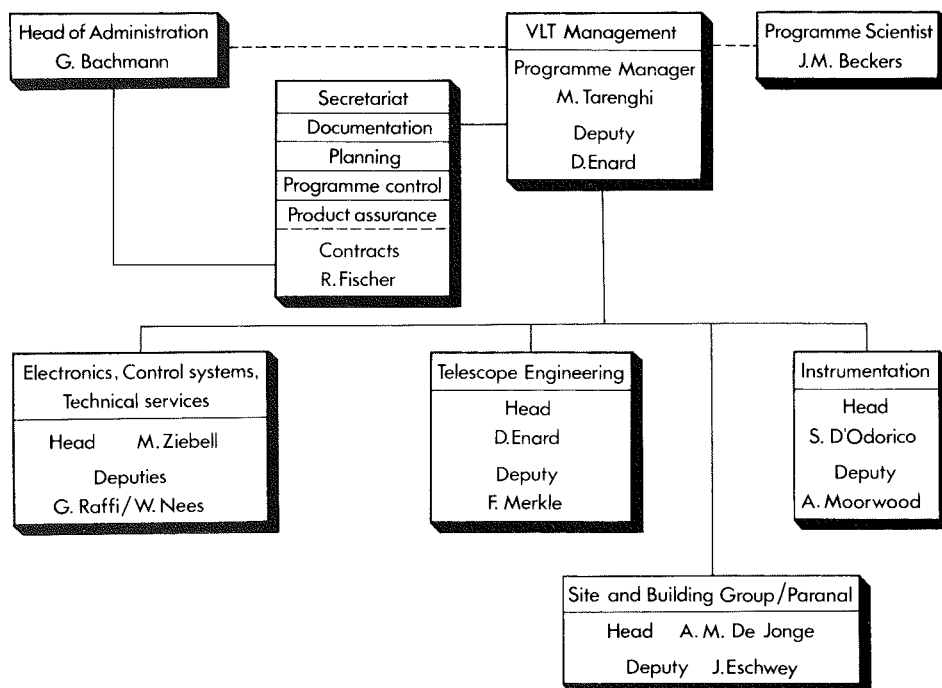
Every issue of this Quarterly in the last several years has demonstrated the progress of the VLT Programme and this one is no exception. This fifth year after the go-ahead decision of December 1987 promises to be the last in which the VLT Division, along with many in the Administration and myself, spend our time mostly in preparing Calls for Tenders and Calls for Proposals, then assessing the responses. By the end of 1991 we had contractually committed over 40% of the VLT capital budget; by the end of this year this level will rise to 70%, with another 15% in the tendering process. From 1993 onwards the greater portion of the in-house engineering efforts will consist of monitoring problems and progress of both industrial and institutional contracts.

Those who think a small organization like ESO can achieve the demonstrated

progress of such a large programme without difficulties, harbour illusions. In the course of 1991 we had plenty of problems to stay on course, i.e. to maintain the schedule and continue within budget while respecting our specifications. But stay on course we did, thanks to the talent and sheer dedication which mark ESO's VLT team. We had to let our programme manager, recruited in industry, go and I decided against another attempt to find outside talent. We therefore mustered inside competence, re-shuffling some to put "the right men in the right place". The VLT Division is now headed by Massimo Tarengi, who has a programme office staff to assist him in the running of the VLT Programme. Three departments make up the division's substance in Garching: Telescope Engineering headed by Daniel Enard, who also serves as Massimo's

deputy; Instrumentation, headed by Sandro D'Odorico, and Electronics Systems, headed by Manfred Ziebell. The VLT construction manager is Peter de Jonge, who recently moved to Chile and will oversee all activities in ESO's Paranal area. The Contracts and Procurement Department, headed by Robert Fischer, is the VLT's prime link to the Administration. The science optimization of the VLT's design and construction progress is the responsibility of the VLT Programme Scientist, Jacques Beckers, who reports directly to me. These senior staff and their deputies are mentioned in the accompanying diagram. Not shown but very actively present is a VLT Division staff of some sixty people who thrive on the challenge to build European astronomy's most ambitious observatory yet.

THE VLT DIVISION



VLT News

M. TARENGHI, ESO

During the last few months, major milestones towards the completion of the first 8.2-m VLT mirror took place. At SCHOTT the programme of casting and machining of the 8.6-m blank is continu-

ing as scheduled. The photo on the frontpage illustrates the progress of the activity and gives the first visual impression of this new domain in mirror technology. A long series of experiments,

including tests on a 4-m spin-cast Zerodur, carried out during the past few years by SCHOTT even before the VLT contract was signed, have made it possible to control the process. In the