



NEWSLETTER #3

Latest updates for the ORP Consortium

Dear ORP Consortium members,

Cooperation and collaboration are at the heart of the ORP project. By uniting two strong and thriving communities, the ORP partners are committed to collaborate and work hand-in-hand for a better future for the astronomical field.

Launching such a project in the context of a pandemic challenges us all, but it is important to keep the bigger picture in mind and recognise that the operation of radio and optical observatories face similar constraints and difficulties. Joining forces not only facilitates the work of the users but should also benefit the overall facilities. With actions such as this newsletter, we hope to support the creation of the ORP community and to create a feeling of ownership, since without you, ORP won't exist.

The ORP team would like to encourage its partners to continue to do their best to create new opportunities for cooperation. In this sense, we welcome the actions of JA 1.4 'Accessibility, equal opportunities and diversity' and JA 1.5 'Preserving the Skies' that have succeeded in getting members of both the optical and radio communities to work towards a greater and common goal. We look forward to their actions and results.

We wish you a good read!

The ORP Team

Current ORP TA Opportunities Open

In the following, we list the current ORP Transnational Access opportunities that are open:

- [European ARC Network](#)
- [100-m radio telescope Effelsberg](#)

Upcoming Mapping of Gender Equality and Diversity Indicators and Best Practices in Transnational Access

The ORP project recognises the importance and added-value of a gender-balanced and diverse workforce and therefore aims at building its sustainable model by integrating gender and diversity dimensions into all its access activities and processes from the outset.

The Joint Activity 1.4 *Accessibility, equal opportunities and diversity* is leading this work and at its kick-off meeting (held on 8 September 2021) it was decided to start mapping the most relevant indicators and best practices in VA/TA facilities in order to establish commonalities on which to build further.

The Mapping of Gender Equality and Diversity Indicators and Best Practices in Transnational Access will start in the coming days and will target TA managers, telescope directors, responsible for time allocation committees and schools/training departments. We encourage you to take the survey to contribute to pave the way for more inclusive and diverse approaches that can then serve as positive examples for the community at large.

Optical CTAC results

The ORP optical Common Time Allocation Committee (CTAC) just released its report on the 2022A common call for the optical Trans-National Access programme. It provides a detailed analysis of the time allocation plan and the application received (52 proposals in total on all science topics).

The report notes that the demand for telescopes was also not evenly spread, but not wildly different than previous semesters. There were no proposals for Aristarchos nor TBL, while the remaining telescopes were all requested. Time could be allocated for 22/52 proposals. After a highly competitive semester in 2021B, the cut-off was again at more reasonable levels and was clear in both the absolute and reweighted scores with scores enough apart to draw the line.

The CTAC wanted to make sure that the ratio of the approved and non-approved proposals for CEE and non-CEE countries was comparable without compromising the quality of the accepted proposals. While a lot better than last semester, there is still a divide between the two sets of proposals.

After consultation with the CTAC chair and the SALT team a further project, intended as a feasibility test for a range of potential SALT projects, was approved for 4hours of 'discretionary time'. This did not originally reach the science threshold due to technical uncertainties which have now been resolved.

[More information](#)

First ORP Time-Domain Astronomy meeting 2021

About 80 scientists met on 8-12 November 2021 in FORTH on Crete island in Greece for the [12th GAIA Science Alerts Workshop](#), a hybrid meeting on time-domain astronomy in optical and radio in the context of Gaia Science Alerts. This is the 12th meeting in the series, but the first within the new ORP grant.

Find [here](#) more details on the Workshop, its programme and how to watch the recordings.



Status of the Call for instrumental teams and observatories to proposed VPHG based dispersing elements to be designed and built within ORP JA3

On 16 June 2021, there was a half-day workshop on “Tailored Dispersing Elements for Astronomical Optical Spectrograph” to present the capabilities and activities in the design and manufacturing of VPHGs to improve the observing capabilities of astronomical facilities especially working in the ORP world. The following action was the opening of the first call of these elements: “Designing and Manufacturing Of New Dispersing Elements Based On VPHG”. A total of 5 proposals with good quality and high scientific value were received. At the moment, a feasibility study is being performed, which is going to match our manufacturing capabilities with the requirements of the VPHGs. After that, a choice of 2-3 elements will be carried out considering the feasibility of the requested items. Before manufacturing, details will be discussed with the proposers.

Report from ORP Activities

During the period 15 September - 15 November 2021 the following activities have been organised:

JA4 Training Group meeting | 22 September 2021 - On 22 September 2021, the ORP WP5 JA4 Training (radio part) group met in an online meeting and group members brought each other up to date. In this second JA4 meeting, the working group was informed about the general status of the project and John McKean (ASTRON) as leader of JA4 and the organisers of the future events from JIV-ERIC, IRAM, UNIMAN, ASTRON and ESO met to talk about the status and the future of the activity. An update on training plans from facilities such as the EVN, e-MERLIN, LOFAR, IRAM NOEMA, IRAM PV and ALMA was given.

Both leaders of the radio and optical training worked out a common approach on the registration form and feedback form for the offered event. This will allow to obtain an overall statistic information and also to respond for new demands,

JA2.2a Time-Domain Multi-Facility & Multi-Frequency access to Research Infrastructures #1 meeting - kick-off | 30 September 2021 - On 30 September 2021, staff from the JA2.2a partners from the optical and radio domains for the first time had the chance to meet and get to know each other. The presentations showed an overview of what the optical and radio have to offer or are planning and was well received, especially connecting the two domains. The meeting initiated discussions, amongst which those about vocabulary; it appeared that the same abbreviation had totally different meanings in the two communities and we expect that there will be more of those. Special focus was put on:

- Currents status and expansion plans of Black Hole Tom (BHT)
- 20 years of REM
- Including the VLBI Network in the BHT project

All presentations and a recording of the meeting have been uploaded to the meeting's webpage and ORP Redmine, respectively.

JA1.5 Preserving the skies on 8 November 2021 - On 8 November 2021 the second JA1.5 group meeting took place. Group members updated each other on the activities that happened since the last group meeting held on September 6, 2021. They decided to set up a calendar with important events on the issue and collecting legal contacts for expected legal questions in the future. The next meeting will take place at the end of 2021 / beginning of 2022, where the strategic plan, aims and objectives will be more concretely elaborated.

Upcoming ORP Activities & Events

- ORP Telescope Directors Forum | 1-2 December 2021
- JA2 Seamless performance group meeting | 12 January 2022
- JA4 Training group meeting | 26 January 2022



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