

STFC Science Programme 2010 – 15

Astronomy implementation issues

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Science & Technology
Facilities Council

Funded astronomy projects

Ground-based

- KMOS, VISTA, Dark Energy Survey, SuperWASP, e-MERLIN,
- E-ELT R&D, SKA R&D
- Funded until 2012:
 - JCMT
 - Gemini (until end 2012)
 - ING (to 2012)

Space

- Cosmic Vision R&D, GAIA, Herschel, JWST-MIRI, Planck, Swift
- Hinode, Stereo
- Aurora - ExoMars, Bepi-Colombo, Rosetta



Astronomy projects subject to managed withdrawal

Ground-based

- ALMA regional centre
- JIVE
- Liverpool Telescope
- UKIRT
- Additional reduction imposed on ongoing projects of £16m



Astronomy projects subject to managed withdrawal

Space

- Cassini
- Cluster
- SOHO
- Venus Express
- XMM
- Additional reduction imposed on ongoing projects of £28m



Implementation

- Not sugar coating the impact
- By the end of any transition period, there will have been a significant reduction in grants and projects support for universities
- 25 % reduction to studentships/fellowship uncommitted budget – no impact on existing students/fellows. Hope to restore studentships and fellowship funding to higher levels once the economic situation improves, given the strategic importance of the STEM skills agenda.
- 2010 PDF round cancelled but will consult on the balance between studentships and fellowships from 2011 onwards.



Grants

- Astronomy Grants Panel (AGP) including outcome in current recommendations, due for PPAN approval 27/28 January
- AGP examining whether rolling grant support justified for groups with only small numbers of approved PDRAs
- Additional support from other RCs alleviates impact in 2010-11, but in the long term the new grants level will be 25-30% below current
- When all unfunded project/facility support removed, mid-term likely impact is move from 80-90 new PDRAs p.a. (total complement ~ 270) to around 60 new PDRAs p.a. (total complement 180)



Telescopes

Gemini:

- formally notified the Board of our intention to withdraw from the partnership by 31 December 2012

Joint Astronomy Centre:

- Discussions initiated with U of H on withdrawal of operational support for UKIRT by end 2010
- JCMT post-2012 dependent on science results from SCUBA2

E-ELT & SKA

- UK E-ELT and SKA PIs informed of reductions in R&D planning budgets
- Commenced discussion with PIs on programmes to fit the available funds



Radio astronomy

LOFAR

- Prioritisation did not include funding for LOFAR in UK
- LOFAR-UK and SKA collaborations expressed interest in exploring options from within overall radio astronomy funding envelope to support LOFAR at minimal level
- Will consult with community to develop further



Northern Hemisphere Access

- PPAN considered, but did not make funding provision for, 40 nights per year of 8-10m access at £50k each
- Are there imaginative, cheaper solutions?
 - WHT?



Overall Vision for Astronomy

- Concentrate instrumentation and operations on the highest priority facilities
- ESO – VLT, VISTA, ALMA
- Prepare for ELT and SKA

- New space-based observatories
- Science on Mars

