

ESO/Cou-882

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**For
information**

COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL

60th Meeting

Antofagasta, 12 March, 2003

REPORT FROM EUROPEAN ALMA BOARD

REPORT FROM EUROPEAN ALMA BOARD**Meeting on 20 February 2003****1. European Science Advisory Committee (ESAC)**

The new membership of ESAC, as agreed by Council, was noted.

The EAB was given an update report by the new ESAC chairperson, based on a questionnaire circulated to attendees of the well attended ALMA day in November. The EAB noted the recommendations, and in particular that:

the optimal model for the Regional Support Centre required a strong central node;

in any enhancement programme priority should be given to the ACA and then to the additional higher frequencies;

ASAC should decide overall ALMA priorities;

European interest in the development of an enhanced correlator was valuable and should be incorporated in the EU FP6 proposal.

2. Situation in France

L Vigroux reported on recent progress. It was hoped to remove the *ad ref* before the June Council meeting.

3. Progress Report on Activities in Europe

R Kurz described the ALMA structure in Europe and within ESO and provided a progress report on the Phase 2 contracts to institutes. The EAB expressed concern over the management of these major work packages, especially in the production phase, and suggested that ESO might consider strengthening that by providing managers for some of the key elements. Such posts could be created through a re-distribution of effort within the ALMA workpackages.

S Stanghellini provided an update on the prototype antenna. The EAB noted progress and that the expected date for acceptance in New Mexico was July 2003.

4. Antenna Procurement

Current proposals for production antenna procurement were discussed. The EAB endorsed the principle of a competitive process in late 2003, with evaluation early in 2004 and contracts placed later in 2004 for a single design, as proposed by the JAO, was strongly supported. The EAB was concerned that a decision on the principle of whether or not two antenna designs were acceptable in the final array should only be taken after the evaluation of both prototypes. Such a decision required careful and quantitative evaluations of the scientific and financial impact of using two different designs, based on actual information from the prototypes, and the EAB was concerned to ensure that this took place.

5. ALMA Chile

The EAB noted recent progress as reported in Progress Report #7.

In broad terms the EAB favoured Vitacura as the site for the ALMA Chile centre, if the political problems could be resolved.

6. NAOJ Proposal

It was regretted that the NAOJ proposal had come too late (12 February) to be analysed by the JAO before the meeting of the EAB. (A preliminary evaluation was received late on 21st). While there remained very strong scientific support for the enhancements that NAOJ participation could bring, the Board repeated its concern over the impact on the Bilateral project of integrating the Japanese enhancements, and on the demands it would place on the JAO. Serious face-to-face negotiating meetings should only take place with NAOJ when the JAO had evaluated the NAOJ proposal and its potential impact on the Bilateral project, and the ALMA Board had met to consider the JAO conclusions and recommendations. This implied a meeting with NAOJ could only take place after the May ALMA Board.

There was serious European interest in an enhanced correlator, with development over the period to 2009, as opposed to a full “second generation” delivered at an early stage. A compromise programme with NAOJ might be possible and so the NAOJ proposal for a second generation correlator should not be rejected out of hand.