Report on the CTAC meeting October 20th and 21st 2022

Dan Dicken – 17th November 2022

Summary

The OPTICON-Radionet Pilot (ORP) 2023A common call for the optical trans-national Access opened in early August 2022 and closed at 23:59 UT on 31 August 2022 (https://www.orp-h2020.eu/optical-call-2023a). The CTAC meeting took place in person for the first time since in the ORP contract and was hosted in Edinburgh with all seven members present. Because five out of the seven TAC members were new to process we did not have a chairperson volunteer for the meeting from the TAC members themselves, as per previous meetings. However, because we have two leads for optical trans-national access at this time in Edinburgh, John Davies was able to chair the meeting as a non-voting participant while Dan Dicken took care of the adminstrative tasks.

Figure 1 – CTAC for 2023A in Edinburgh. Left to Right. Emeric Lefloch, Kari Nilsson, Victor Bejar, John Davies, Paola Severgnini, Edita Stonkute, Elmé Breedt, Dan Dicken, Tom Wilson . There is an ORP logo on the cake.

Statistics on 2023A call

Fifty proposals were submitted to the 2023a call. This is near the average for the ORP contract, albeit the lowest number in the ORP so far. We had 60, 57, 52, 51 in the previous calls 2021A to 2021B. The lowest number of proposals is also true if you look at unique PI's, to account for the fact that some PI's make multiple proposals in each semester, where we had 46 proposals for 2023A from unique PI's and 56, 55, 49, 47 for the previous semesters in the ORP contract. We note that the UK submitted half as many proposals in 2023a than 2021a at the beginning of the contract – 11 and 22 proposals respectivley. Therefore, although small number statistics for the 5 semesters, the trend in the ORP is towards less proposals per semester which should be monitored throughout the rest of the contract.

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2023a also saw proposals submitted in all of the seven science catgories previously defined in the OPTICON project. As in previous calls, proposals were most numerous for the science categories of exoplanets, stars and stellar populations and time domain astronomy. We saw an increase in time domain proposals and a decrease in proposals on stars and stellar populations compared to previous semesters. Only 1 proposal was received for ISM and solar system studies.

Table 1: Total number of proposals for each semester of the ORP contract – divided by science category

Call	2021A	2021B	2022A	2022B	2023A	Grand Total
Science Category	**Type (Count All)**					
CSM and star formation	5	3	2	3	2	**15**
Exoplanets	19	16	12	9	11	**67**
High-z Universe	2	4	4	4	7	**21**
ISM and PNe				2	1	**3**
Low-z Universe	3	2	2	3	4	**14**
Solar System	2	4	3	2	1	**12**
Stars and stellar population	12	15	14	18	9	**68**
Time Domain Astronomy	17	13	15	10	15	**70**
Grand Total	**60**	**57**	**52**	**51**	**50**	**270**

The number of proposals requests for each telescope in 2023A was simarly spread to previous semester with a notable increase in demand for SALT with 8 requests, its highest so far. All telescopes recevied requests accept Aristacos and TBL. In total, only four (4) telescopes were oversubscribed (NOT, SALT, TNG and AAT) with the highest oversubscription for proposals with SALT at a factor of 1.45. The oversubscription, calculated in terms of available funds (350,000 euros), was about a factor of 2.5 which was identical to the previous semester and slightly lower than earlier semesters.

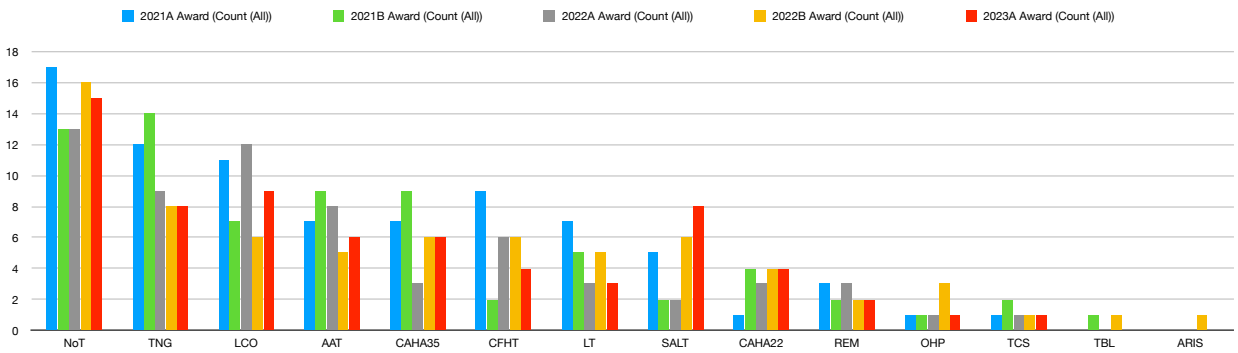

Figure 2 – Showing the number of proposal requests for each telescope in the ORP contract. Colours indicate different semesters where 2023a is shown in red.

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Proposals were submitted with PIs from 14 different countries in 2023A, of which 11 countries were successful in getting time. As per previous calls, Germany and the UK were most active, with 17 submitted proposals although, as mentioned above this is lower than the average from both countries. It is noteworthy that Germany and the UK don't have any national infrastructures in the ORP contract, unlike other European countries such as Italy, Spain, France and Greece.

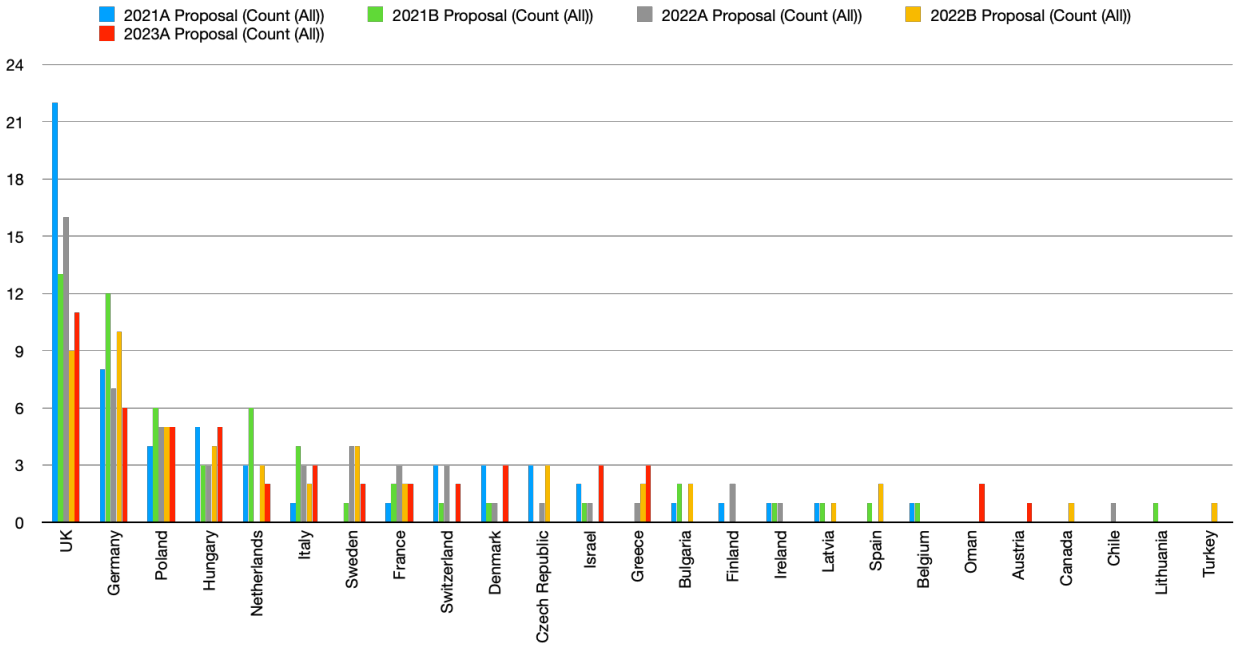

Figure 3– Showing the number of proposal requests from all countries that have applied for optical trans-national access in the ORP contract. Colours indicate different semesters where 2023a is shown in red.

Details of the CTAC meeting and results

All the submitted proposals in the 2023A call were discussed by the CTAC – there were no proposals that were needed to be withdrawn for any reason, technical or contrary to the OPTICON rules. The meeting took approximately 1.5 days consistent with previous meetings where there was just under 10 mins per proposal for discussion. To avoid any bias in the order that the proposals were discussed they were grouped in scientific theme in the order they were submitted and then discussed in alphabetic order of scientific theme.

Time was awarded to 19 of the 50 proposals for the 2023A semester. The cut off for funding was a clear cut from the ranking of the proposals and the availble funds (350,000 euros). The scores given by the CTAC were verified against the weighted mean or each TAC members scores and no bias was found in the rankings.

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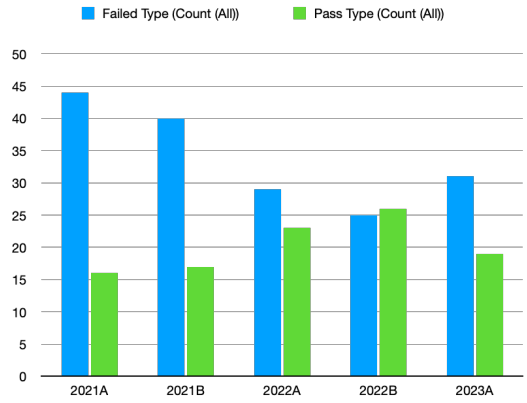
Table 2- Showing the number of passed and failed proposals for all five semesters of the ORP contract

Award	Failed	Pass	Grand Total
Call	Count proposals		
2021A	44	16	60
2021B	40	17	57
2022A	29	23	52
2022B	25	26	51
2023A	31	19	50
Grand Total	169	101	270



The most amount of time (nights) in the 2023A call was awarded to LCO, followed by the AAT, followed by REM. This is broadly consistent with previous semesters although there is a larger scatter in this statistic. Also, it worth noting that many of the LCO proposals are for triggered follow ups that may not get observed.

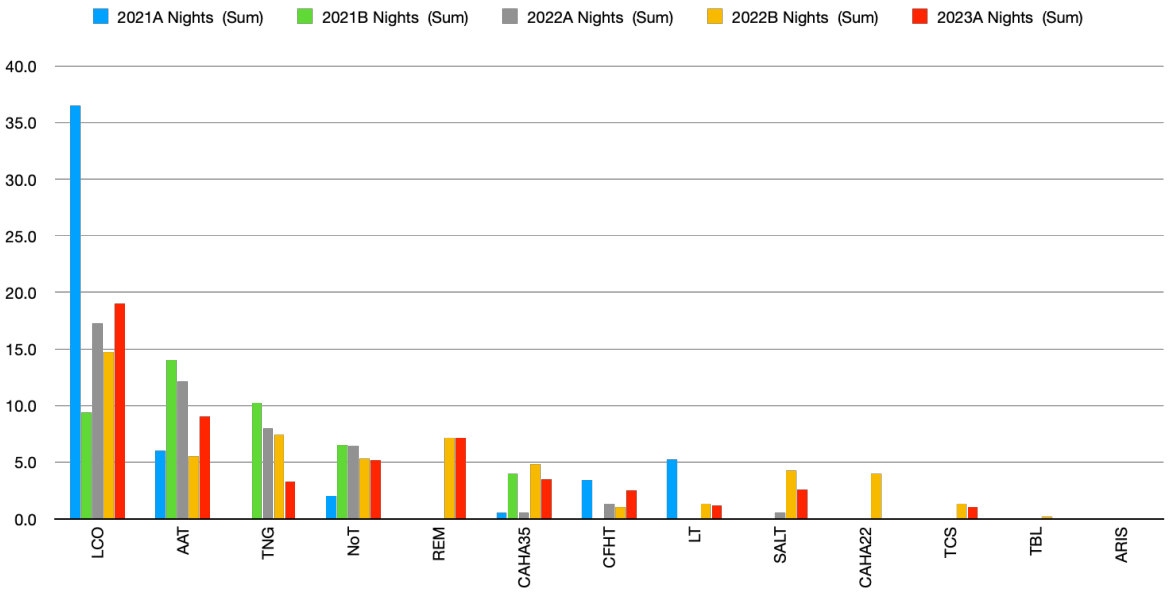


Figure 4 – Total number of night awarded per semester. For telescopes that are allocated in hours, one night was made equal to 8 hours. Colours indicate different semesters where 2023a is shown in red.

Four out of the seven science categories had successful proposals in 2023A with time domain science awarded the most (10) followed by exoplanets (4) and stars and stellar populations (3). No proposals in star formation, low-z universe or solar system were funded. This is broad consistent with previous semesters but we have seen the highest number of proposals awarded to time domain science in 2023A.

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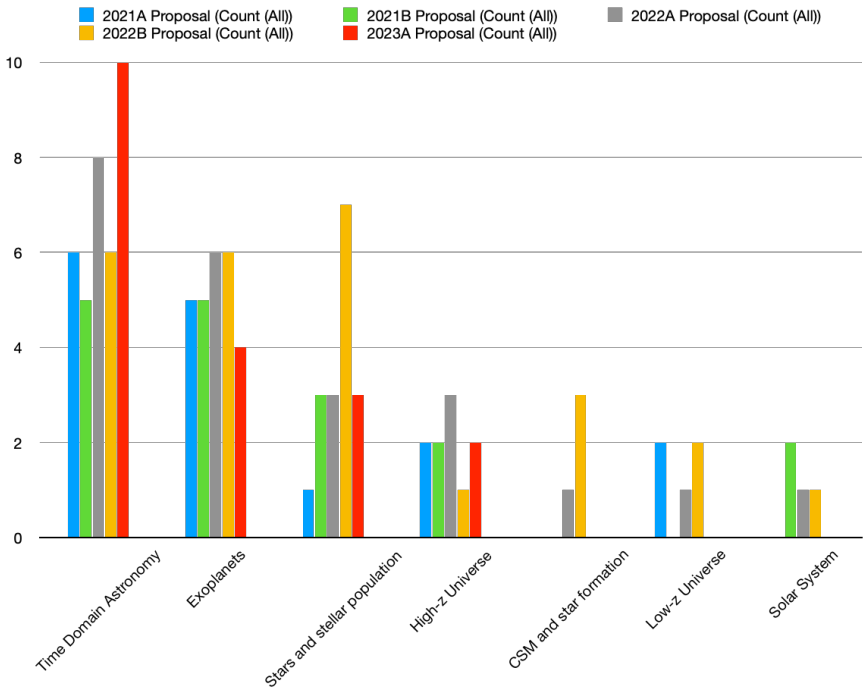

Figure 5 – The number of successful proposals in each science category per semester. Colours indicate different semesters where 2023a is shown in red.

Feedback and expectations for 2023B

Feedback from the TAC was good and everyone one was satisfied with how the process was run. There was a discussion about the idea of having multiple semester proposals as we do see a lot of the same proposals return from one semester to the next. Also the idea of having anonymous proposals was discussed but this is heavily dependent on the access to a new proposal tool as this can't be adopted in NorthStar.

Victor announced it will be his last time serving on the CTAC and a replacement for 2023B will be found.

Edita has offered to be the host of the next CTAC meeting in Lithuania.

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