

AstroGrid Project Leader Report

for AGLI Telecon 2006-12-18

Report on AGLI Actions primarily on me

Action 20060619-9: AL, Peredur Williams, TL, John Pye: *generate current statement of VOTECH and AG grants, with options for spend to end of project.*

Action 20061102-5 AL with input from NW, KN, TL - *Progress the construction of a consolidated budget showing state of AG spend (including staff).*

The PPARC-AstroGrid position has been thoroughly completed by John Pye, and is set out in an agenda item for this meeting. The VOTECH-UK position has not yet been comprehensive; y done, but in the paper on the AstroGrid budget I summarise the approximate position.

Note that we did agree to finalise expenditure at the December consortium meeting, but this didn't seem wise because of continuing uncertainty on the AG3 settlement and FP7 timing. Some things we can and should decide immediately, but others should be delayed for a little longer.

Action 20061102-3C AL: *rewording for 1c on WP A0.*

This was the feedback response for PPRP. Done.

Action 20061102-6 PMT: *Telecon 6 Nov 2006 at 10.00am to discuss preparations for the panel meeting and also the JISC VRE call proposed by TL.*

Done.

OTHER THINGS

PMT telecons. These are now occurring on a regular scheduled basis, every alternate Monday at 3pm. The AGLI are reminded that there is a standing invitation to join in any PMT telecon. Minutes are kept on the twiki.

New proposal status. Following the last AGLI telecon in November, the management team attended the PPRP "panel visit", aided by Len Culhane and Phil Diamond (as a Data Centre representative). The questioning was hard but the general atmosphere was good. Together with informal feedback we have had since, our impression is that we are very unlikely to get turned down, but that we will not get as much money as we requested. The final result will depend very much on competition with other lines that the Science Committee is considering; we are seen as strategically important, but the cash situation is tough. My gut instinct is no better than "somewhere in the range 40 to 80%".

Since our panel visit the PPRP has had a further meeting, but there is still no official feedback. A report is then produced based on the PPRP recommendations that goes to Science Committee for their decision, on January 30th or 31st. If they say yes, it goes to Council for final decision on March 7th. (Anything over £3M has to go to Council). Note that we have asked for new grants to October 1st; we did this to fatten up AG2 spending and not lose key staff. Given that we are underspending AG2, and given the lateness of the decision, this October start is now maybe not in our interest.

Should we formally request a start for new grants on January 1st 2008 ?

VOTECH status. We recently held a formal Board meeting (by telecon) for the first time for eighteen months. Given the accepted "umbrella" nature of VOTECH, it is going well overall, with a

good spirit. However, we are coming up to, or are formally overdue with, several key deliverables. Given that we will soon put in new EU proposals, it is vital to be seen to be the kind of project that delivers on its contract. The key deliverables in our power are the the Revised Project Plan, the Infrastructure Study Report, the Data Exploration Study Report, and the Science Framework Document. The latter is, for know reasons, very late. We need to submit the second Annual Report by mid-February. It is crucial to be able to state in that report that these deliverables are complete.

A reminder of staff status. Gary Smith (Portsmouth) and Richard Holbrey (Leeds) have both now left. Mark Holliman (60% VOTECH Web Developer/Sys Manager) is well embedded and doing very well. Brian Walshe (Edinburgh) is the new PDRA working on DS6, a brand new graduate of the Edinburgh e-Science MSc. Mark Taylor (Cambridge/Bristol) is 100% on VOTECH since July 2006, with a one year contract. Alasdair Allan (Edinburgh/Exeter) has a VOTECH contract that ends at the end of January 2007. John Taylor (Edinburgh) has a contract that extends to the end of December 2007, and Norman Gray (Leicester/Glasgow) to the end of October 2007.

FP7 plans. Framework Seven has finally been officially adopted by the Commission. Draft "work programmes" are starting to emerge. The first calls will be coming out in late December and January, with likely deadlines in April. So it is I am afraid time to gird the loins again ! I am intending to put a quick guide with links on the Board section of the VOTECH twiki. As before, there is some uncertainty as to whether to route through DG Info or DG Research. The calls run by DG Info looked better suited to DCA than to VOTC. It is possible that we will not be able to put together a single VOTECH-like EU project, but instead will need to insert JRA strands into several different proposals. This will make it much important to establish a clear sense of the VOTC as opposed to the VOTECH project.

JENAM. The European Astronomy meeting in Armenia in August includes a session dedicated to Science with the VO, set up by Areg Mickaelian, who heads up the Armenian VO programme. I am co-chair along with Areg. Speaker suggestions welcome.

IVOA stuff. Things made a fair amount of progress in Moscow, even though we didn't have a very strong showing. Since then, we have voted to make the Apps IG into the Apps WG, and given it the very real and concrete task of agreeing a protocol for application messaging, which of course we very much hope will put an IVOA stamp on PLASTIC.

Budget. John Pye has done an excellent job of dragging grant information out of the partners, and forecasting the final spend. As a result, we believe we have £285K extra to spend. John's report, and my cover note, are attached separately.

2007 AGLI meetings. We should agree dates for standard quarterly meetings....We should have a *physical* AGLI meeting very soon after we hear the result from Council, i.e. in mid-March.