

Notes of the ILT TO Telephone conference 2015-09-22

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	Organization:	Date:
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ASTRON-FO-018 2.0

1 Attendees

Chair	R. F. Pizzo
Notes	R. F. Pizzo
Participants	DE601: - DE602: - DE603: Matthias Hoefft DE604: Gottfried Mann DE605: - FR606: Jean-Mathias Griessmeier SE607: Tobia Carozzi, Henrik Olofsson UK608: Derek McKay DE609: Joern Kuensemoeller KAIRA: Derek McKay POLFAR: Hanna Rothkaehl NL: Bianca Bult, Henri Meulman, Menno Norden, Roberto Pizzo, Klaas Stuurwold

2 Minutes of the Previous Telephone Conference

- No comments

3 Announcements

- The LOFAR Cycle 5 proposal deadline was September 9th, 12 UT. 34 documents were submitted, of which 24 are regular proposals and 10 are long-term proposals. 1 long-term proposal was submitted by M. Serylak to use DE601, DE602, DE603, DE605, FR606, SE607 and UK608 in stand-alone mode for maximum 24 hours per week till the end of Cycle 8. In the proposal, the PI mentions that, prior to the submission of the proposal, he has checked with the owners of these stations that local resources can be made available during the forthcoming 4 Cycles (5 through 8) to support his project.

Note: during the telecom, it was reported that not every station owner has been explicitly contacted by M. Serylak with a formal request. R. Pizzo invited these stations owners to proactively contact him in case of concerns with the availability of local equipment during his proposed observations.

Hanna Rothkaehl mentioned that the request from M. Serylak to use also the Polish stations under this project when these will become available will have to be discussed in due course, as no commitment can be made now. R. Pizzo mentioned this point during the technical review meeting of the Cycle 5 proposals, which took place on 23 September. This comment has been included in the technical reviews and will also be fed back to M. Serylak after the PC meeting.

- Minutes of ILT TO telecons are now collected on the Wiki:

http://www.lofar.org/operations/doku.php?id=ilt_to_telecons:start

4 Action Items

Nr	Description	Assigned to	Due date	Status
19/2	Jean-Matthias will contact Klaas for practical network issues regarding “data-cloning”	J-M. Griessmeier	26/02	Open
21/2	Make usage and error statistics of station switches available on a web-page	K. Stuurwold	23/04	Open
24/1	Implement comments/remarks from FR606 and DE609 to web page https://proxy.lofar.eu/array_status/STATIONS/HTML/index.html	S. ter Veen	27/08	Open
24/3	Document DAB issue at DE609	J. Kuensemoeller	27/08	Closed
25/1	Contact Andre Saar to arrange trouble shooting time for OoB (Out of Band) intranet connection issue at DE604 + to fix the connectivity between the interface computer and the LCU.	K. Stuurwold	22/09	Closed
25/2	Check timeline NenuFAR	J-M. Griessmeier	22/09	Closed
26/1	Compile document on practical guidelines on how to mitigate/deal with DAB issues at DE609	M. Norden	22/10	Open

Comments

19/2: no progress – action remains.

21/2: no progress – action remains.

24/1: According to Sander, Jean-Mathias concerns have been addressed, but Jean-Mathias does not fully agree – to be followed up offline. Comments from Joern were not received yet (they are now).

Action remains.

24/3: Document has been written and has been sent to Menno. Further discussions now need to take place to find a technical solution to the issues (new action item open -> 26/1).

Action closed.

25/1: Solved – action closed.

25/2: The NenuFAR progress report is:

- 15 mini-arrays of 19 antennas are installed & operational
- +7 mini-arrays to be installed in November or December
- +11 mini-arrays to be installed in spring 2016
- +7 mini-arrays to be installed either in spring 2016 or somewhat later
- Analog phasing almost ready
- Current backend can process full data stream from 3 mini-arrays
- new backend: delayed. Will be installed and ready to process 12 mini-arrays in ~December 2015
- in the beginning, this backend will be for statistics files only
- New backend will be able to process full (high-speed) data stream ~March 2016

Action closed.

Nr.	Resolution / Decision	Meeting
1	The director ILT will require a written request for data cloning. A permission from the ILT operations is required prior to each data cloning observation.	2014-12-11
2	For proposals requesting the use of the international stations in single-station mode during ILT time, it is the PI's responsibility to verify – before submitting the proposal - that local resources are available to run such projects at the international stations. In its deliberations, the LOFAR Program Committee will assume that the submission of such projects are indicating that local resources will be available to accommodate it.	2014-12-11
3	DE601, Rubidium/ Maser switchover: As long as we switch back to the Rubidium after using the Maser, this will not affect ILT operations. We will use the Maser only very infrequently, so Menno agreed that we will probably manage to remember to switch back to the Rubidium whenever we use the Maser.	2015-01-29
4	Airco unit require a complete overhaul every year including a check on the coolant level	2015-01-29

5 Station Roll Out

POLFAR (Hanna Rothkaehl)

- PL610 (Borówiec): the station has been successfully assembled and commissioning will start on 5 October.
- PL611 (Łazy) is under construction and will be ready in a few weeks.
- PL612 (Bałdy) is working.
- The POLFARO - the operation representative of POLFAR - was established. POLFARO is going to apply for operation funding for the coming year and will sign the ILT contract.
- The POLFARO will not support the proposal submitted by M. Serylak for Cycle 5.

6 Station statuses

6.1 Dutch Stations (Menno Norden/Henri Meulman)

- Found a few power supplies broken – this was caused by switching between observing modes. This has been solved in software deployed at the last roll out.
- Maintenance is still on going.

6.2 DE601 Effelsberg (Andreas Horneffer)

- No input received.

6.3 DE602 Unterweilenbach/Garching (Ado Arnolds)

- Nothing to report, everything runs smoothly from our point of view.
- LBA 33 was replaced on Sep 17, LBA 79 works again after verifying connectors; HBA 60 will be checked during the next visit.

6.4 DE603 Tautenburg (Matthias Hoefft)

- Nothing to report – the station is functioning properly from our point of view.

6.5 DE604 Potsdam (Christian Vocks)

- Station DE604 has suffered a cut of the 10 G data link due to construction work on 14 September. The cable should have been repaired in the evening of 16 September.

6.6 DE605 Jülich (Arpad Miskolczi)

- No input received

6.7 FR606 Nançay (Jean-Mathias Griessmeier)

- Still having occasional problems with RSPBoards. It seems it is not the same RSPBoard number every time. We keep an eye on this. We are surprised to see this more often than other stations. We have not yet implemented the recommended solution to automatically reset the 48 V in case of problems.
- Nancay staff is very busy with NenuFAR, and had no time to fix broken antennas.

6.8 SE607 Onsala (Tobia Carozzi, Henrik Olofsson)

- After mild storm, on the night of Wednesday 16 September, main power to SE607 was cut at 04:21 UT. Station was in LOCAL mode and observations went down. UPS kicked in and lasted an hour until 05:19 UT. Full power restored at about 08:00 UT. Subsequently found that station was not functional; ASTRON suspects that the rubidium clock is broken. ASTRON sending replacement, which we hope will be installed this week (done).
- We have a Call-for-Proposals (CfP) out. See: <http://www.chalmers.se/en/centres/oso/radio-astronomy/proposals/Pages/Swedish-LOFAR-station-proposals.aspx>

6.9 UK608 Chilbolton (Derek McKay, Alan Doo)

- We have experienced LBA damage in recent weeks. As discussed with Menno, dipoles #07 #34 #41 #45 #53 and #86 have all been reinstated. Some fell due to animal damage to elastics, but half were due to failed elastics and one had no obvious sign of trouble, but the elastic had disconnected from the peg; it was not loose when reinstated!
- No station check has been posted on the website since before the remedial work so we have yet to see if there are any additional problems.
- Temporary rabbit-mesh patching has been conducted, though this is becoming difficult due to possible UV degradation of the mesh. Replacement of the existing mesh is anticipated.

- *Menno: we suggest using plastic sleeves to protect against animals.*

6.10 DE609 Hamburg/Bielefeld Station (Joern Kuensemoeller)

- Station inauguration went well.
- M. Brentjens was checking on the rubidium setup and mentioned a potential problem with our station. According to a mail conversation between O. Wucknitz (Bonn), Menno and Carmen, the problem is not in hardware but originates in outdated calibration tables that were created before introducing a T-adapter for the rubidium output - new tables produced by Luciano have now been deployed.

6.11 KAIRA (Derek McKay)

- A new 45 kV line has been built between Karesuvanto and Kilpisjärvi, which should have increased power stability/reliability.
- KSW (KAIRA Software) backups and data transfers (KDT) are now automated.

Questions, Issues, Remarks

- Jean-Mathias: FR606 is in ILT mode 4 days per week. During that time, what is the fraction of time the station is actually used? How much of this time is spent in LBA and HBA mode? *R. Pizzo: Proper statistics would need to be collected by querying the database. By looking at the schedule of the past few weeks, we can conclude that each international station was used 80% of the time while it was in ILT mode. The rest of the time refers to gaps during the night (when switching to ILT local mode is not possible). Most of the observing time is in HBA. Henrik Olofsson mentioned that observing statistics for the international stations can be obtained by using a tool that is advertised on the Wiki.*
- Joern Kuensemoeller: 'There are already workshops / data schools etc. on how to use the available software for science purposes. After talking to technical staff in Hamburg, my idea is to organize a workshop with a more technical perspective:
The purpose would be to better understand what the software (primarily the one provided by Astron) does internally, what hardware requirements emerge from that, and what options are provided by the software packages to optimize the installation for existing computing clusters etc.
I would try to get someone from the software group at Astron and from Jülich who are e.g. adapting pipelines for the supercomputing facilities and then discuss the systems and software issues they face in Hamburg and other institutes.
So the audience would be technicians who administer the facilities or advanced users with direct access to these systems.

There is no date yet (end of this year?), but if you are interested in participating in such a meeting/workshop, please let me know (jkuensem@physik.uni-bielefeld.de).

- Henrik Olofsson mentioned that they recently moved away a lot of wood from the area nearby the Swedish stations. We should keep this in mind if we see anything peculiar with the quality of the data from SE607 in recent observations.

7 AOB

- None

8 Date of next conference

Schedule for ILT telephone conferences in 2015:

- Thursday, October 22
- Thursday, November 26
- Thursday, December 17