ISAAC NEWTON GROUP OF TELESCOPES
Roque de Los Muchachos Observatory, La Palma

Opportunity for Extended Service Observing

Deadline 29 February 2008

The ING is pleased to announce a special call for proposals to the WHT service programme, for up to 18 nights scheduled from May to July this year. This opportunity, which extends to all our communities, has arisen out of the wish to exploit the newly commissioned laser guide star beacon, GLAS, working in conjunction with the NAOMI Adaptive Optics module and associated instrumentation. The available service time under this special call will be managed in queue scheduled observing mode, as was successfully demonstrated last year and allows us to best exploit the excellent observing conditions on La Palma.

Dates and Instrumentation

It is planned that four nights between 20-25 May, four nights between 11-15 June, and ten nights between 16-29 July will be used for service observation and science verification of the GLAS and NAOMI system. Most of the time is in bright-of-moon, with a few grey and two dark nights.

During these nights the Adaptive Optics (AO) instrumentation suite (the OASIS optical integral field spectrograph, INGRID nIR imager and the OSCA coronagraph) will be available, with the use of the GLAS Rayleigh laser system. For a brief introduction to the laser project see http://www.ing.iac.es/Engineering/glas_web_announcement.htm

It should be noted that the performance verification of the laser system is in progress and hence at this point in time only limited information on the expected performance of AO correction under various observing conditions is available. A reasonable assumption is that the performance of the NAOMI AO system with the GLAS laser is comparable to that of NAOMI with a bright natural guide star. Laser-assisted AO still requires a natural guide star in the neighbourhood of the science target. This guide star should be at least as bright as V=17 and best be located within 1 arcmin from the science target. For further details on NAOMI performance see http://www.ing.iac.es/Astronomy/instruments/naomi/aoperf.html

Although this call is inspired by the advent of the GLAS laser, time can also be requested for NAOMI in natural-guide star mode, or for the use of the ISIS intermediate dispersion spectrograph (in May/July), and during the June period for the LIRIS nIR imager and spectrograph, and the Aux Port Imager (any time). For the non-AO instruments, proposals with relaxed seeing constraints are particularly welcome. Applicants should refer to the web pages of the respective instruments for further information on their performance; these pages are linked from the ING Astronomy page: http://www.ing.iac.es/Astronomy/

There are some restrictions on the observing modes offered for ISIS and LIRIS in service observing; details for ISIS are available at: http://www.ing.iac.es/Astronomy/instruments/isis/isis_service.html and for LIRIS at: http://www.ing.iac.es/Astronomy/instruments/liris/liris_sm.html

Proposal Submission and Deadlines

Proposals should be submitted by 29th February 2008 through the usual web application forms:

http://www.ing.iac.es/Astronomy/observing/service/

For this special call proposals requesting up to 8 hours excluding overheads, will be considered. Applicants should remember to include in their proposal a URL to clearly annotated finder charts.

Proposals will be refereed promptly and all applicants informed of their grades and status in the queue. Observations will be queued according to scientific ranking, with the goal of completing as much highly-ranked science as possible.

René Rutten, 31st January 2008