

EC WORKING GROUP ON FUTURE LARGE SCALE FACILITIES

(GROUPE DE TRAVAIL POUR LES GRANDS EQUIPEMENT)

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1. Tasks of the Working Group

The tasks of the Working Group are: i) to promote the early discussion and dissemination of information on potential large scale astronomical projects
ii) to maintain an inventory of planned large scale projects in astronomy
iii) to further contacts and cooperation between different projects
iv) to identify areas of duplication and areas where clearly desirable efforts are lacking
v) to promote the development and maintenance of astronomical data archives with open access, and
vi) to investigate ways to involve smaller countries and agencies into projects of the larger countries

2. Activities 2000-2003

The Working Group focused on maintaining an up-to-date inventory of plans for future large scale facilities in astronomy and the status of those already approved but not yet in operation. Tables accessible from the IAU website contain entries for ground-based optical/IR, radio, space observatories, interplanetary and interstellar probes, and gravitational waves and astro-particle detectors.

The Working Group also organised an open one-day session on future facilities at the General Assembly in Sydney. This well-attended session included talks on a number of the facilities encompassing the interests of IAU members (GSMT, LSST, CELT, ELT, SALT, WSO/UV, new generation Deep Space Network, LISA, Pierre Auger Observatory, International Virtual Observatory, GRID, ALMA and SKA). In addition there was a lively one-hour discussion at the end of the day covering such issues as the desirability of the science cases for these large facilities being driven by the popular themes of today, how do we strike a balance between general purpose observatories and telescope/experiments built for specific goals, and what role could the IAU play.

Richard Schilizzi
Chairperson of the Working Group