

Report on the 13th GTC Users Committee Meeting

Held at IAC, La Laguna, Tenerife
February 4th and 5th, 2016

1. Context and general remarks

The GTC Users Committee (GUC; members listed at the end) was informed of the work carried out to operate, maintain, and develop the telescope and its instrumentation.

We are pleased to hear that several issues raised in the past reports have been addressed and fixed during this semester. In particular, we would like to recognize the following accomplishments by GTC personnel or by different teams associated to the GTC:

- We remark our appreciation of the continued improvement in the observing facility by the GTC team in the last semesters in spite of limited personnel and resources. We are glad to learn that new personnel is being hired.
- We congratulate again the GTC public archive team for the effort in the delivery of the GTC raw and reduced data and the improvements performed. We continue to encourage GTC users to help in delivering the reduced products to the community. This will increase the GTC data exploitation and its visibility, that benefit all the community.
- We are pleased that EMIR is not suffering more delays and its commissioning is imminent.
- The GUC is glad to see that the issue of the change of directorship has been solved with Dr. Romano Corradi being new director after Dr. Pedro Álvarez's retirement. We wish both of them success in their new endeavours.
- We are glad that the tension between the MEGARA and GTC teams has softened. We acknowledge that the previous report included the mistaken perception by the GTC community that the policy with regard to previous instruments that needed additional funds was different than that applied to MEGARA. We include here the clarification offered by GTC management in the sense that, with the exception of CanariCam, no additional funds had been provided by the GTC. Regarding CanariCam, GTC provided limited additional funds to cover some additional expenses associated to the observatory's delay in the commissioning of the instrument.
- We are glad to hear that some actions are being taken in order to solve the replacement detector for FRIDA. GTC team is searching for additional science grade H2 detector with a lower lamination-risk than the one actually available. Efforts are being made for it to arrive on time for FRIDA team's needs.
- We are glad to know that the relation/communication between GTC AO and FRIDA teams is now fluid. The adoption of joint members between the two teams should facilitate the development of both projects.
- We thank GTC for clarifying that the information about the procedure for future visiting instruments on GTC is already available on the GTC webpage. ¹
- We thank GTC for their effort to improve the publicity of telescope achievements and performance. Although there are limited resources to this effect in both GTC and IAC, they are negotiating an agreement on this matter.

¹<http://www.gtc.iac.es/instruments/media/VisitorInstrumentsGTC.pdf>

On top of these positive advances, we also find a few unsolved issues, namely:

- Although some efforts have been done by the GTC team, the lack of a clear updated and comprehensive instrumental plan available for the community is still a major issue. This point follows similar requests in previous reports. For the moment GTC is not going to release an instrumental plan for the users.
- OSIRIS possible improvements and timeline are still unclear. The search for the new detector for OSIRIS, far more efficient both in the UV and the NIR ends of the spectrum than the current one, is pending of the funds availability. A clear time-line for the temporary de-commissioning of OSIRIS till its final location at the Cassegrain focus is also missing.
- Although OSIRIS-MOS reduction pipeline was arriving last semester, it is still unavailable. GTC does provide users pipeline links but an official and supported pipeline should be provided to the community. It is still unclear to the GUC how much the community should wait for the official pipeline to be delivered by the OSIRIS team.
- EMIR imminent commission will force CanariCam to share the focus with CIRCE. It is still not clear what is going to be the policy for sharing this focus between CanariCam and CIRCE. It will be decided probably based on the users demand on both instruments.
- HORS necessary details for its use by the community (exposure time calculator, technical details, observing modes, efficiency, etc) are still unavailable. Actual efficiency problems may imply a delay in the instrument commissioning. If problems are not solved on time, HORS may lost its commissioning window and it will be delayed.
- Due to the scarce resources maintaining GTC webpages, it is not possible for the moment to provide the historical archive required by the GUC.

2. Input from the community

The users' feedback collected by the GUC can be summarized as follows:

- Florida community is concerned about two major issues: a) the possible necessity of extra funds for the improvement and maintenance of CIRCE. and b) the completion of MIRADAS. Due to the devaluation of the euro respect to the dollar, the already decreasing budget of MIRADAS is forcing to change the instrument configuration to 2 arms, as a default. Although some alternatives for funding are being studied by Florida and GTC, it is still an issue.
- Some users would be interested in having additional information about the awarded time in relation with the proposal requested parameters, such as required time.
- Some users would like that more standards were taken every night without using individual proposal time. Some users remark that the availability of standards in the data archive is not clearly stated in the GTC webpages.

3. Recommendations

- (a) Instrumental plan: One of the major issues remarked by the GUC in the last semesters is the demand of an instrumentation plan. It is necessary for the community in order to optimize their observation proposals and their long term research. The committee understands the difficulties that arise for the fulfilment of a time-line with a lack of resources and personnel. This lack of resources is driving to the GTC to make hard decisions and prioritise some instruments over others.

In an effort to make the communication between the GTC community and management more meaningful, the GUC has carried out a survey to inform and request feedback directly to the GTC community about specific areas of particular interest to the GTC management. The first such survey focuses on the implementation of the GTC instrumentation plan. The survey results, together with the GTC own assessment and recommendations, is provided as a separate attachemnet to this report.

- (b) GUC recommends that GTC make available the official OSIRIS-MOS reduction pipeline as soon as possible.
- (c) GUC would like GTC to provide with a clear time-line for the de-commissioning of OSIRIS.

GUC Members

Giuseppina Battaglia	Instituto de Astrofísica de Canarias
Hervé Bouy	Centro de Astrobiología – CSIC – INTA
Alberto Fernandez Soto	Instituto de Física de Cantabria
M. Cruz Gálvez Ortiz	Centro de Astrobiología – CSIC – INTA, Chair
Rafael Guzmán	University of Florida
Nicolas Lodieu	Instituto de Astrofísica de Canarias
Christina C. Thöne	Instituto de Astrofísica de Andalucía
Sergey ZhariKov	Instituto de Astronomía, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM).