

This cartoon illustrates the race between present builders of large telescopes and their instrumentation, put in order of first light on the sky. It may also help to remind us of the point made by the red Queen to Alice: 'HERE, you see, it takes all the running YOU can do, to keep in the same place. If you want to get somewhere else, you must run at least twice as fast as that.' (Lewis Carroll; *Through the Looking Glass*)



international competition, delivering facilities tuned to urgent new scientific drivers in a timely way through brand-new instruments or upgrades of existing ones, or using a “friendly” visitor focus in order to keep at the frontier of astrophysical research, remains crucial. Also, while the second generation projects so far tend to feature “almost” single mode instruments with fewer mechanisms, they nonetheless present some formidable technical challenges such as the KMOS multiple cryomechanisms, the MUSE 24 (!) spectrometers *cum* image slicers, and the extreme Adaptive Optics system required for the Planet Finder. Some of the suggestions above in our global approach for instrument procuring have already been transformed into policy. We will be working on more in the coming months to improve the overall process. It is clear that every attention should be given to ultimately make the second generation developments an unqualified scientific success. In that respect, the Forum has been both timely and useful.

As for ALMA, many of the lessons learned with the first generation VLT/I instruments apply. Institutions or Consortia of institutions in the community are responsible for major ALMA work packages in the areas of front-end and back-end electronics. While these are integral components of the overall facility, rather than instruments in the VLT/I sense, the relationship between ESO and the institutions is very similar, and the approach to ALMA largely derived from this instrumental experience. Two distinct differences are that ALMA will bear the full costs including labour, and that no guaranteed time will be granted to the contributing institutions. The relationship between ESO and the participating European institutions during design and development (the so-called ALMA Phase I) was essentially the full partnership model. As we move now into construction and series production to equip the 64 antennae, it is shifting to the customer–supplier model with correspondingly more formal contracts and active monitoring and man-

agement by ESO. In all these contractual aspects, the ALMA project is in fact much closer to the Gemini Observatory approach than the ESO one; it may be interesting to note that Gemini has however recently introduced a relatively small amount of guaranteed time observing to better motivate the instrument Consortia. Extensive “ALMA standards” are applied across the project, especially in software. Integration and Commissioning is an overall project responsibility with support to be provided by the sub-systems suppliers. Hence, any confusion due to shared responsibilities should be avoided.

Finally, we would like to extend warm thanks to the speakers, the panel members, and all participants from ESO and its Community. Such an event is not an easy one to tackle and could have easily degraded into a blame storming session. *Au contraire*, the maturity of all actors was impressive and reflects the increasing professionalism that is key to successfully developing ever more powerful scientific facilities.



L. GERMANY, *SciOps*

### 3.6M CONTROL ROOM HAS MOVED!

Finally, those who dwelt at the very top of La Silla have come to join the rest of us in the common control room of the RITZ. On June 19, the 3.6 m control room was moved into the RITZ and has

been operating successfully from there ever since. Congratulations to all those involved in the move, all of the careful preparation and planning paid off with no time lost at all! 3.6 m observers can now enjoy the community atmosphere of the RITZ along with observers at the 2.2 m and NTT.

### HARPS 2<sup>ND</sup> COMMISSIONING

This was scheduled for between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> of June but was unfortunately severely hampered by bad weather (eleven nights lost out of sixteen). Although we were not able to fully

characterise the instrument due to lack of time, we were extremely happy with how the instrument performed, with *P*-modes from a pulsating star clearly observed. More tests will be conducted before the instrument is offered to the community at the start of Period 72.

### NEW IR STAFF ASTRONOMER

We welcome Ivo Saviane as the new IR staff astronomer on La Silla. Ivo has been a La Silla fellow for the past two years working within the 2p2 team and assumed his new role for the observatory on July 1<sup>st</sup>.