

Comments on the issue of single PRC (agenda #5 “Time Allocation Committee”)

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How to deploy the Program Review Committee(s) (PRC or PRCs) for the scientific operation of ALMA is a very important issue. We had a teleconference with ALMA-J advisory committee members to discuss the issue last week. I summarize here the discussion.

1) **Diversity of Science and Variation of Approaches**

ALMA will be a unique instrument with super performance at millimeter and sub-mm astronomy, and designed to contribute to a large variety of scientific projects all over the world. Some key projects, considered of general interest to the astronomical communities, should be run by ALMA in parallel with others (some of which might be avant-garde ideas), which may be of more modest scale and not so general interest (e.g., regional/local flavor of science or various approaches to a common subject), but that may end up producing profound changes to prevailing paradigms, and/or open new fields. It is therefore quite important to design the operation of ALMA and PRC (or PRCs) around both lines of scientific endeavor to fully exploit the potential of ALMA and to guarantee variety and diversity of science subjects and approaches. We fear that the single PRC structure has a higher risk of suppressing these essential varieties.

2) **Charging Time for International Programs**

ALMA is a joint enterprise financially operated by three executives and its status is exposed to taxpayers who belong to relevant countries or regions, because of the large scales of the project and its cost. Stable and continuous support from both funding agencies (or governments) and taxpayers is indispensable to assure long-term operations. A simple justification to the governments and taxpayers would be showing the number of papers written by Japanese/regional PIs (Principal Investigators). Large proposals by researchers in multiple regions could be better handled by a single PRC than by multiple PRC and the single PRC can also be run with less cost. But, an important issue is how to charge the observing time to each executive/partner. If we apply the uniform weight of observing time share over co-investigators, we might not be able to guarantee an appropriate fraction of

programs by Japanese/regional PIs even if the total fraction of the observing time is fixed (for instance, a situation in which there are many Japanese co-investigators for EU/NA PI programs and just a few Japanese PIs). I think a higher weight on the PI will certainly have to be implemented.

3) **Discussion Timeline within Japan/Taiwan**

Because this is an issue that impacts our science community, I need to consult more with the science communities in Japan and Taiwan. I take the following opportunities to explain our plan to the community and listen to them, before we reach the Board decision.

- ALMA-J Advisory Committee meeting (early September)
- Nobeyama Radio Observatory users meeting (September 11 – 13)
- Annual meeting of the Astronomical Society of Japan (September 19 – 21)
- Bi-weekly Japan/Taiwan management telecons
- East Asian SAC meeting (early October)

I hope to have a chance to discuss the above issues in the coming ALMA Board teleconferences.