

Observing support to partners' observers

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Att: [SciOp + LBTO Management + Partner coordinators and STC members](#)

This document is a second pass at defining a new regime of observing support we will test in 13B for partner science nights on facility instruments (LBTI not concerned by this for now). Four main actions are taken to make this evolution possible. This draft is communicated to partner coordinators and STC members for comments at the May 2013 STC teleconference.

13B observing support

- At the beginning of each partner run on the mountain, the support astronomer (SA) will spend the first night with the observers. For the rest of the run, the SA will be on call.
- The OSA will provide the observers with a support related to the basic issues encountered with instrument science operation. It is anticipated that only a few issues will be left needing the intervention of the SA.
- The OSA will call the SA when issues arise which (s)he cannot solve. The underlying philosophy is that the OSA should not hesitate to call the SA... It is expected that the number of calls will decrease as OSA gain experience (and instruments get better!)
- No real time support will be given to script issues. It is expected that observers will make good use of improved guidelines made available by SciOp on the web. They will be able to ask for help if something is not clear when they prepare their observations before their run, a process which should help making the documentation better.
- Partner members whose observations will be carried out by their observers will be offered the possibility to eavesdrop and ultimately use the instrument remotely to improve the efficiency of the observations.

Four actions to be taken

1. [Updated/improved basic information on observing \(SAs\)](#)

This step will be taken as part of the general effort currently undertaken for the creation of a new SciOp website. A simple "How To" site will be created using the newly developed templates, but limited to basic and up-to-date information on (1) scripting and (2) using the instrument (for the observers) as well as (3) solving basic problems (for the OSAs). Time frame for completion: end of May.

2. OSA training (SAs and OSAs)

OSAs will be trained over the coming science runs by the SA who will involve them in the problem solving. It will help improving the compilation of typical issues arising when observing on the observers' side, which is part of the aforementioned documentation. Time frame for first step completion: end of 13A. Beyond: a continuing effort during the first runs of 13B.

3. Eavesdropping/remote access (IT and SAs)

Offering these modes to the partners while their observations are ongoing on the telescope will help mitigate the fears of the decreased amount of support provided by LBTO staff. It will improve the efficiency of the observers when they are faced with choices to be made, which are ultimately based on the science of the various programs they are executing. It will allow a well-trained observer to help the observer on the mountain when the latter has little experience with a given instrument. Test phase and tweaking (in house first and with volunteers outside of LBTO): from now on. Completion: by the end of the 2013 shutdown.

4. Communicating with the observers (SciOp)

Last but not least, making clear to the observers what they are expected to do prior to their run and what they can expect from LBTO during their run will be key to the success of this new approach. A clear (and short!) document presenting the new model and linking to relevant information will be prepared and communicated to the users. It will be done through preliminary announcements at the partner coordinator level and a general memo sent to all users and made highly visible on the "How To" web page.