



**ALMA BOARD MEETING**  
**April 22, 2020**

**PUBLIC SUMMARY**

The ALMA Board convened via Zoom on April 22<sup>nd</sup>, with the following attendees:

Chair	Karin Öberg (NA)
Vice-Chair	Toshikazu Onishi (EA)
Board Members	Ralph Gaume (NA)
	Xavier Barcons (EU)
	Saku Tsuneta (EA)
	Willy Benz (EU)
	James Di Francesco (NA)
	Daniel Weselka (EU)
	Tony Beasley (NA)
	Linda Tacconi (EU)
	You-Hua Chu (EA)
	Luis Chavarría (CL)
Board Assessors	Joseph Pesce (NA)
	Andreas Kaufer (EU)
	Satoru Iguchi (EA)
JAO	Sean Dougherty (ALMA Director)
	Stuartt Corder (ALMA Deputy Director)
	John Carpenter (Observatory Scientist)
	Elizabeth Humphreys (Head of Science Operations)
	Frank Ruseler (Head of Administration)
	Norikazu Mizuno (Head of Engineering)
	Ivan Lopez (Safety Manager)
	Jorge Ibsen (Head of Computing)
	Valeria Foncea (EPO Manager)
	Rafael Mena (HR Manager)
Executives	Paulina Bocaz (AUI Legal representative in Chile)
	Shin'ichiro Asayama (NAOJ Legal Representative in Chile)
	Leonardo Testi (ESO ALMA Programme Manager)
	Phil Jewell (NRAO ALMA Program Manager)
	Álvaro González (NAOJ ALMA Program Manager)
	Nikolaj Gube (ESO Legal Service)
ASAC	Stephen White (ASAC Chair)
Board's Secretary	Alejandra Voigt (ALMA Executive Officer)

## **PUBLIC SUMMARY**

Under the prevailing extraordinary global circumstances related to the coronavirus, the ALMA Board held its April 2020 meeting via Zoom.

The Board's Chair welcomed all Board members and assessors, and thanked the JAO for reorganizing the meeting in a timely fashion to be conducted via Zoom.

Dr. Öberg also welcomed Leonardo Testi, Phil Jewell and Alvaro Gonzalez (ALMA Program Managers), Paulina Bocaz and Shin'ichiro Asayama, the AUI/NRAO and NAOJ legal representatives respectively, Nikolaj Gube ESO Legal Service, and Stephen White, the ASAC Chair. She welcomed as well all members of the JAO Core Management Team.

In addition to other matters, during the meeting the Board:

1. Decided to postpone the beginning of Cycle 8 to October 1<sup>st</sup> 2021
2. Approved the Revised Principles of the ALMA Proposal Review
3. Approved the Revised Principles of the ALMA Development Program
4. Approved the ALMA Observing Tool Redesign Development Project
5. Approved the proposed responses to the ALMA International Visiting Committee's Recommendations

### **ALMA Overview**

The Board noted the presentation given by the ALMA Director which briefly reviewed the achievements and challenges for ALMA since last November, focused mainly on the COVID-19 contingency planning. His summary highlighted the following points:

- Successful anticipated Collective Bargaining process with both Unions
- Changes in the HR Team
- Observatory Status before Coronavirus, including observing program status.
- Current operations status and the Caretaker Team efforts looking after the site and ALMA's critical equipment.
- The high level of engagement of the staff in working remotely at home and the main challenges related to this work mode.
- The current situation management and leadership, in coordination with the CMT, and all managers and supervisors.
- The ongoing analysis and definition of criteria and protocols for a safe return to Operations.

### **Cycles 7 and 8 COVID Planning**

The Board noted the presentation given by the Deputy Director, regarding the contingency planning for the remaining Cycle 7 and upcoming Cycle 8, once the Observatory is able to resume operations. His presentation included:

- The unrealistic start of Cycle 8 with planned capabilities on the original date. Among

other considerations, the array recovery requires ~6 weeks, and ~4.5 months is needed to validate the software for Cycle 8 with a fully operating telescope.

- The interrupted Cycle 7, impacted by:
  - Civil unrest in October leading to a period of reduced and minimal operations
  - First total shutdown of ALMA operations as a result of Covid-19 outbreak in Chile
- Scientific considerations regarding Cycle 7 include:
  - Significant investment in Cycle 7 proposals by both users and ALMA staff
  - Uneven impact on the community, depending on country and other factors, for writing Cycle 8 proposals.
  - Scheduled long-baseline science not yet accomplished in Cycle 7.

In agreement with the proposal from the ALMA Operations staff at the JAO and the Executives, the Board consensus was to postpone Cycle 8 for one full year, to October 2021. To fill the observing time available from the restart of observations until September 2021, the JAO will develop a plan, in collaboration with the Executives, to be agreed by the ALMA Board in the next coming weeks.

### **New Principles for the ALMA Proposal Review Process**

The Observatory Scientist summarized the main changes included in the new version of the Principles of the ALMA Proposal Review Process, which was developed in collaboration with the Board's Science Committee, the ALMA Program Scientists and the ASAC. The revised Principles allow:

- A new distributed peer review mechanism to rank ALMA proposals
- More flexible use of DDT, as recommended by the International Visiting Committee (IVC)
- A mechanism for more medium and large proposals, in line with the recommendations from the IVC
- More flexibility for the Observatory to respond to observing gaps, such as supplemental calls or the use of filler projects.

The new Principles of the Proposal Review Process approved unanimously by the Board.

### **Financial Matters**

The ALMA Board noted the report of the ALMA Budget Committee on the 2019 budget execution and financial results and 2020 projections, which included a review of the budget based on exchange rate and the total shutdown.

The Board also discussed the risks, challenges and potential costs associated with the restart of operations, whenever that is feasible, ensuring the safety of the staff remains the first priority.

### **Responses to the ALMA International Visiting Committee Recommendations**

The Board approved the proposed responses to the ALMA International Visiting Committee Recommendations put forward by the IVC following their assessment of the observatory in

2019. The Board requested the Secretary to convey these responses to the Committee, and for the ALMA Director and the AMT to complete the actions identified in the responses.

### **ALMA Development Program**

The ALMA Board noted the progress on the implementation of the Development Roadmap, as explained by the ALMA Deputy Director on behalf of the AMT.

The Board approved the ALMA Observing Tool Redesign Development Project, a new generation of the Observatory's main user interface for proposal and observation preparation. The project duration is three years starting in July 2020 and it will be led and executed by ESO in collaboration with United Kingdom Astronomy Technology Centre (UKATC).

Finally, in order to incorporate a procedure for the cancellation of already approved development projects, the Board approved a revision of the Principles of the ALMA Development Program.