

The RadioAstron AO-3 open science program starts in July 2015

We are happy to report that RadioAstron operations are extended by Roscosmos until the end of 2016.

The second year of the RadioAstron open science program AO-2 is coming to its end in June 2015. Astro Space Center and its Russian and international partners have successfully performed science experiments within approved AO-2 projects (see the list of projects in the RadioAstron Newsletter No. 24).

Starting from July 2015, the RadioAstron mission will move into the third year of its open program, AO-3 observations will continue until June 2016. The third RadioAstron Announcement of Opportunity has invited proposals of the following two types: the “Key Science Program” (KSP) and “General Observing Time” (GOT). See for details the full set of announcement documents in <http://www.asc.rssi.ru/radioastron/ao-3/ao3.html>.

All proposal were evaluated by the RadioAstron Program Evaluation Committee (RPEC) which was appointed by the RadioAstron International Science Council (RISC). Results of the evaluation were approved by the RadioAstron project director Nikolai Kardashev. RPEC members for AO-3 are Jason Hessels (U. Amsterdam, the Netherlands), David Jauncey (CSIRO, Australia), Matthew Lister (Purdue U., USA), Mikhail Popov (ASC Lebedev, Russia), Richard Porcas (chair, MPIfR, Germany), Wouter Vlemmings (Chalmers U., Sweden). Below we list 9 accepted projects which have requested observations with RadioAstron during the AO-3 period in their submission order:

- GOT: “Tracing micro-structures of H₂O masers with ultimate angular resolution”, PIs: Hiroshi Imai (Kagoshima U., Japan), Alexey Alakoz (ASC Lebedev, Russia);
- GOT: “Second-epoch Space VLBI visit into core-jet laboratories in the distant Universe”, PI: Leonid Gurvits (JIVE and TU Delft, the Netherlands);
- KSP: “Space VLBI Survey of AGN at the Highest Angular Resolutions”, PI: Yuri Kovalev (ASC Lebedev, Russia);
- KSP: “Probing the innermost regions of AGN jets and their magnetic fields”, PI: Jose-Luis Gomez (IAA, Spain);
- KSP: “Gravitational redshift experiment with RadioAstron”, PI: Valentin Rudenko (SAI MSU, Russia);
- GOT: “Resolving the milli-parsec jet in the nearby spiral galaxy M81”, PI: Michael Bietenholz (HartRAO, South Africa; York U., Canada);
- GOT: “Substructure in Pulsar Scattering Disks”, PI: Carl Gwinn (UCSB, USA);
- GOT: “Core shifts with no blending”, PI: Mikhail Lisakov (ASC Lebedev, Russia);
- GOT: “H₂O megamasers at high resolution”, PI: Willem Baan (ASTRON, the Netherlands; ShAO, China);

Among the approved projects, four got rank 'A' (the highest priority), two — rank 'B', and three — rank 'C'. A total of about 160 co-investigators represent 20 countries. The largest number of co-Is are from Russia, other countries with a high number of co-investigators are the USA, Germany, Spain, the Netherlands, Australia, Italy, UK, etc.

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The RadioAstron project is led by the Astro Space Center of the Lebedev Physical Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences and the Lavochkin Scientific and Production Association under a contract with the Russian Federal Space Agency, in collaboration with partner organizations in Russia and other countries.

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