

Report ESO UC Poll 2021 for Spain

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1 Feedback from the Spanish community

A total of 21 scientists in Spanish institutions answered the ESO UC Poll 2021, less than half who did last year during the pandemic. The sample is divided into 9 Professor/Research staff, 5 non-permanent researchers, 5 post-docs, 1 PhD student, and 1 classified as "Other". They represent 5% of the 419 answers received for the Poll 2021 (vs 7.8% of 630 in 2020). The number of research staff who answered the Poll triplicates the number of post-docs. It is quite disappointing to see that only one PhD student answered the poll, same as last year. **Overall, the decrease in the interest from the Spanish community to the ESO UC poll is worrying.** Spanish researchers use MacOS and Linux operating systems, none works with Unix or Windows nowadays apparently.

2 Special topic 2021: VLTI

Among the 21 responses, only 2 are VLTI users. **The VLTI aficionados in the Spanish community is low.** 56% of the Spanish astronomers are not familiar with VLTI capabilities. **An effort is clearly needed to spread VLTI information to the Spanish community** because more than 65% of them are interested in receiving information or news and do not apply because of lack of expertise. A broad range of help would be requested to VLTI centres if needed: development of the science cases, phase 1, data retrieval, model fitting, and image reconstruction are the most popular demands. Both users who filled in the poll applied for VLTI time, submitted proposals, and used ESO tools (e.g. JMMC) but neither information nor specific comment has been given on the quality of those tools. No other specific feedback or suggestion has been provided by these users for improvement unfortunately.

3 Proposal submission

The main outcome of the poll on proposal submission indicates that:

- 17 were PI or active PI who submitted proposals, 2 did not.
- Only 3 out of 17 (18%) considered the referees' feedback useful. Most of the feedback are neutral (76%) and the remaining not useful (5%). One user highlights once again the lack of expertise of some referees and reports that just summarise the goals of the proposals, hence not helpful.
- 11 users got observing time, equivalent to 65%.
- 8 users worked on the new Phase I, 3 did not. Only one user is very satisfied, most of them are satisfied or ok (62%) but two are dissatisfied (25%) because it looks "overly complicated and essentially means preparing the phase 2 in phase 1. This is particularly bad for visitor mode runs (e.g. in La Silla) where the strategy is not set in stone." (quoting directly the comment).
- 6 users worked on the Phase 2 while 5 did not. One user is very satisfied (16.67%) while the others are either satisfied (50%) or ok (33.33%).
- Users are usually very satisfied (16%), satisfied (37%), or ok (37%) with the communication of the progress of the service mode programmes.
- None of the 11 users that answer the question about Eavedrop used it.

4 Data reduction

13 out of 19 users (68%) reduced ESO data. Most of them are either satisfied or ok with the ESO pipelines but one is not satisfied (8%) and 2 did not answer. Among them, 12 used either Gasgano,

Reflex or Esorex while the other 9 used a homemade pipeline, mainly IRAF but not only. The main comments related to the use of ESO pipelines include: (1) Gasgano is deprecated in MacOS systems, (2) pipelines are excellent but blackboxes, (3) videos for the installation steps, (4) make molecfit a stand-alone package, mentioned twice and also in the final additional comments. 4 out of 13 users (31%) suggest to add the following to the current pipelines: (1) tilt for UVES, (2) telluric correction and absolute flux calibration, and (3) molecfit as a stand-alone package. All users who faced issues and contacted the ESO help-desk are satisfied.

5 ALMA

One-third of the participants are ALMA users (6/19; 32%). Two-thirds got observing time (4/6). None is dissatisfied with the comments of the referees but there is again a note from a user where “from time to time, lack of expertise on mm-astronomy of the reviewers”. All are happy with the data products but all used CASA to improve the data reduction and one user had to do the self-calibration himself/herself. One user requested ALMA calibrated measurement set data and was satisfied. Only 1 of 6 users traveled to an ARC node and was very satisfied of the experience.

6 ESO archive

15 out of 19 users (79%) downloaded data from the ESO Science archive, about half for their own projects and the other half from other projects. 12 out of 19 used the Phase 3 facility to download reduced data. None is dissatisfied with the service and no suggestion for improvement was provided by the community. The only suggestion provided is for the Phase 3: “Use different channels for the pipeline according to the astronomical object of the observations.”

7 Miscellaneous

- **Suspension of P107 call: 4 out of 16 participants (21%) disagree with the cancellation of the call.** Two major and strong comments were given, pasted here in their totality:
 1. I can not understand how ESO, the largest ground astronomical facility in the world, was not able to start operations during months, when all the rest of the observatories in the world were in operation, including observatories in the most affected countries such as Spain, Italy or United States.
 2. I believe that a new call should have been announced and a new selection of programs done because some of the science might not be relevant 1 year later. The pandemic cannot be the excuse for everything as it is right now.
- 10% of the participants never read the **ESO press release** whereas 20% always read them. The rest reads them sometimes.
- 5% of the participants never read the **ESO Science Newsletters** whereas 42% always read them. The rest reads them sometimes.
- 31% of the participants never read the **ESO Messenger** whereas 21% always read them. The rest reads them sometimes.
- 63% of the participants never read the **European ARC Newsletter** whereas 10% always read them. The rest reads them sometimes.
- **ESO press release:** only 1 of 19 users published an ESO press release and another one got rejected. **Most people did not send anything due to the lack of major results with ESO telescopes, which is somewhat surprising.**