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Dr. Denis Mourard
Observatoire de la Côte d'Azur
Department GEMINI
Avenue Copernic
06130 Grasse
France

Dear Dr. Mourard :

I am delighted to provide you with this letter of endorsement for your proposal to the ANR entitled "VEGA/CHARA: Astrophysique des surfaces, des atmosphères et des environnements stellaires à très haute résolution spatiale et spectrale." As you describe in the proposal, the installation of the VEGA instrumentation at the CHARA Array on Mount Wilson, California will enable remarkable and unique new scientific programs to be undertaken due to the unrivaled combination of the CHARA Array's very long baselines and moderate telescope apertures with the powerful ability of VEGA to obtain spatial and spectral information at visible wavelengths.

I and my CHARA colleagues are very enthusiastic over your proposal, and we wish to do all that we can to assist you in a successful implementation of VEGA. Towards that goal, we will commit the following resources:

- (1) CHARA will purchase and install the optical tables required for the VEGA equipment in CHARA's beam combination laboratory on Mount Wilson.
- (2) Working with your group on the design of periscopic optics required to feed light into the VEGA instrumentation, CHARA will fabricate/purchase and install the necessary relay optics and their mounts and actuators to feed light into the VEGA system. This includes the development of software to control these devices.
- (3) CHARA and OCA will work together on general implementation and co-alignment procedure.
- (4) CHARA staff will participate in the general integration and technical testing of VEGA.
- (5) CHARA will participate in the various software aspects including control of VEGA, communication with our central control system, data archiving, data reduction, and preparation of observations.
- (6) CHARA will fabricate the four interface optical components (incorporating a cat's eye and flat mirror) in its machine shops in Atlanta following the design by your group. We will ship these components to Mt. Wilson and participate in their integration on site.

In coming weeks, I look forward to the writing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to formalize our collaboration. This MoU will reiterate the commitments I am making in this letter and will provide for additional provisions for this collaboration including the amount of observing time to be regularly allocated to you and your core research team. I anticipate that we can have this MoU endorsed by our respective institutional authorities and in place by the end of April 2006.

I wish you much success with this excellent proposal. Its funding will provide a world-class capability for high angular resolution astronomy and enable a broad variety of frontier science programs long dreamt of by astronomers.

Please let me know of any ways that I can assist you in furthering the goals of your proposal.

Sincerely,



Harold A. McAlister