



Herschel Users' Group - Terms of Reference (ToR)

Herschel/HSC/DOC/1437
Göran Pilbratt, 25 June 2009

1. Introduction and Scope

The present document, the Herschel Users' Group (HerschelUG) Terms of Reference (TOR) describes the background to, the task, membership, meetings, output, and reporting of the HerschelUG.

The TOR has been approved for release as v1.0 by the Herschel Science Team (HerschelST) after incorporating changes as a result of discussions in and after its mtg#37 held on 16-17 Apr 2009.

The custodian of this document is the Herschel Project Scientist Göran Pilbratt.

2. Task

It has been decided it is in the best interests of the Herschel mission that a new independent advisory group be formed, the HerschelUG. The key characteristics and roles of this group, representing the Herschel user community, are described below.

It is foreseen that this group provides a forum for (potential) general users of Herschel to provide input to the operations of the observatory as an astronomical facility on various matters affecting its scientific productivity and user friendliness by interfacing with the Herschel Project Scientist.

Specifically the tasks of the HerschelUG include:

- Provide advice to the Project Scientist on all matters relevant to maximising the scientific return and user friendliness of Herschel within existing boundary conditions.
- Act as a liaison between all (potential) Herschel users and the scientific operations of Herschel as an observatory facility.
- Advise the Project Scientist on how to ensure that Herschel maintains the principal characteristics of an observatory satisfying the objectives of the scientific community at large.
- Advise on the maintenance and possible further enhancement of the science ground segment with particular reference to the user interaction and observatory products.
- Identify common issues and exchange useful information and ideas amongst themselves.
- Be informed by the Herschel Science Centre about key aspects of observatory operation.

3. Membership

The group is foreseen to be comprised of 8-12 members chosen with the objective to ensure a wide mix in seniority, nationality, and that a wide variety of scientific and data-processing interests are represented.

Specifically for the composition of the HerschelUG:

- The Chair of the group would be selected by the Project Scientist in consultation with the HerschelST.
- The initial composition will by necessity be dominated by PIs and co-Is of the Key Programmes,



both Open and Guaranteed Time ones. They form the initial HerschelUG.

- PIs and co-Is of ‘regular’ observing programmes should be accommodated later when such programmes have been selected. By adding such members the HerschelUG will achieve its full complement.
- All members of the HerschelUG should be active users of Herschel and its ground segment.
- All members will initially be appointed for a period of 2 years.

4. Meetings

It is expected that the HerschelUG is ‘self-maintaining’, it decides on meeting frequency, dates, and location, and organises its meetings itself as it finds best. However, it is foreseen that the group meets approximately twice a year.

Specifically for the meetings of the HerschelUG:

- Meetings are organised and chaired by the HerschelUG Chair, or somebody appointed by him/her, and the agenda is drawn up in consultation with the Project Scientist.
- The Herschel Project Scientist, Mission Manager, and Science Operations Manager are always invited to the HerschelUG meetings, at least the Project Scientist must attend.
- It is the responsibility of the Project Scientist that reporting with respect to current status, future plans, and issues of interest to the HerschelUG, on behalf of all them is provided.
- On request the Project Scientist will be happy to organise a venue on ESA premises for the meetings of the HerschelUG.
- Travel expenses for attending the meetings will be paid for by ESA.
- Written minutes of meetings must be produced within a reasonable time of the meetings.

It is noted that a similar group exists to advise the NASA Herschel Science Center, communication between the two User Groups could be useful and is encouraged.

5. Output and Reporting

Written outputs of the HerschelUG are:

- Written minutes of meetings, including advice to the Project Scientist, to be made public by posting in the HerschelUG section on the Herschel Science Centre website.
- Other written material as appropriate.

In addition, the Chair of the HerschelUG, or someone else from the group that he/she appoints, should provide adequate reporting to the HerschelST.