

Presentation of the IAU National Outreach Contact

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Abstract

The International Astronomical Union (IAU) has created the Office of for Astronomy Outreach (IAU-OAO). Its mission is to promote and coordinate the activities of astronomy outreach worldwide. For this purpose, the IAU-OAO has established a network of partners based on what was established to celebrate the International Year of Astronomy (IYA2009). The nodes of this new network (IAU National Outreach Contacts, IAU-NOC) act as National Contact Points (NCPs) statewide and their mission is to contribute to the implementation of the objectives of the IAU-OAO. The commitment of the NOC is a three-year renewal charge. The replacement or the renewal will occur during the celebration of the relevant General Assembly of the IAU.

In the case of Spain, the Comisión Nacional de Astronomía (CNA) decided to appoint a Vice-NOC and NOC and the relay will occur during the next IAU General Assembly to be held in Honolulu in August 2015.

1 IAU for the public

The IAU Office for Astronomy Outreach (OAO) is the IAU hub for coordinating its public outreach activities around the world. The aim is to build networks to support and disseminate information to the amateur astronomy and public outreach communities, and to ultimately make it easier for the public to access information about our Universe. OAO is responsible for IAU's interaction with the general public – through the public email address iaupublic@iap.fr, and partly through IAU's Frequently Asked Questions and the popular Themes pages discussing various aspects of IAU's activities.

The current coordinator is Dr Sze-leung Cheung from the National Astronomical Observatory of Japan where the OAO is located.

To support projects at a national level, OAO is creating a network of IAU National Outreach Contacts (NOC): volunteers with extensive experience in public outreach, acting as a single point of contact for a country.

2 Role of NOC

2.1 Eligibility

- The NOC should demonstrate rich knowledge and experience in astronomy outreach activities.
- The NOC should demonstrate good connection with relevant stakeholders, like the professional astronomers, astronomy educators, planetariums, science centers and amateur astronomer communities in the nation.
- The NOC should demonstrate full access of resources, on his/her own or through his/her delegates, to coordinate, direct and support the work described below.
- Ideally, the NOC should demonstrate good connection with the government policy makers.

2.2 Nomination

The NOC is nominated by the IAU International Outreach Coordinator (IOC), with the approval of the IAU General Secretary. In the case of Spain, the Comisión Nacional de Astronomía appointed in 2014 Dr Juan Antonio Belmonte (IAC) as NOC, and Dr Benjamín Montesinos (CAB) as Deputy NOC.

2.3 Term

The term of the NOC will be for a maximum of three years, starting at the end of an IAU General Assembly or any later date, and end at the next IAU General Assembly. This term can be renewed at the time of the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the IAU IOC with the approval of the IAU General Secretary.

2.4 Tasks

In this section we describe the tasks assigned to the NOC:

- To act as a communication hub between the IAU (through the IAU Office for Astronomy Outreach, OAO) and the relevant stakeholders in the respective country, for astronomy outreach related affairs.
- To communicate and coordinate with the IAU National Membership body, if the country is an IAU national member, for any joining efforts.



Figure 1: Web page devoted to the IAU-NOC activities and additional information created in the Sociedad Española de Astronomía (SEA) web site. The web page includes a link to a form which has been designed to inform the IAU-NOC on outreach activities that have or wish to have an international coverage. The IAU-NOC evaluates this information and contacts the IAU-OAO, analyzing the eligibility of the information to be published in the monthly IAU Astronomy Outreach Newsletter.

- To disseminate the IAU outreach news and initiatives to the local outreach communities, and coordinate, direct or advice for any necessary actions.
- To keep a database of people and organizations involved in astronomy outreach within their country.
- To support the implementation of global astronomy outreach projects at national level.
- The NOC does not necessarily lead the national implementation of global projects, but he/she should mobilize the communities to participate in the global projects.
- The contact details of the NOC will be available online, he/she shall respond to the public requests for different purposes.
- To inform the IAU Office for Astronomy Outreach any major national or multinational events.

3 How to contact the Spanish IAU-NOC

The NOC and Deputy-NOC, together with the President of the Sociedad Española de Astronomía (SEA), decided to open a stable, institution-independent web page under the “umbrella” of SEA, in its own site.

The SEA was founded in 1992, it has more than 700 members, professional astronomers, including about 500 doctors and 200 PhD students. Its main aim is to promote the development of Astronomy and Astrophysics in Spain and, in particular, provide an independent forum for discussion of issues of common interest to the Spanish astronomical community.

You can click [here](#) to access all the information related to the Spanish IAU-NOC, contact addresses and useful links. This form, included in the web page, has been designed to inform the IAU-NOC of any outreach activity. If it is the case that the activity is of general interest and it deserves international coverage, the IAU-NOC will send the information to the OAO and there is a chance that it will be announced in the monthly IAU Astronomy Outreach Newsletter.

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