



EVN Users' Meeting 2026

17th EVN Symposium and Users' meeting - Manchester, UK

Outline



Time	Topic	Speaker(s)
16:00-16:15	Welcome & introduction to EVN proposals & support	J. Radcliffe
16:15-16:25	Scheduler introduction & changes to EVN observing	J. Oh
16:25-16:30	ACME Joint Centres of Expertise	Z. Paragi
16:30-16:40	e-MERLIN funding update & how to support us	S. Garrington, D. Williams-Baldwin
16:40-17:00	Results from the EVN User survey	M. Nyamai, Z. Paragi
17:00-17:30	Open discussion & feedback session	

Progress since the last EVN Users meeting



- The EVN Scheduler position is now at JIVE, and we have reorganised the sessions based on user feedback (see Junghwan Oh's presentation).
- With this, we hope to better address telescope availability (maintenance, national priorities) and make scheduling experiments more flexible.
- **EVN pipeline development**
 - The pipeline has not changed yet, partly because we still must support a significant ALPS user base, and partly because of the transition with two support scientists leaving JIVE.
 - The two new support scientists (Florian Eppel and Miriam Nyamai) have expertise that is invaluable for JIVE in developing the new pipeline, building on advanced calibration and imaging algorithms/tools, and providing MeerKAT/SKA-VLBI support.
 - JIVE will convene collaborations between VLBI pipeline developers in the near future (e.g., AVICA, VIPCALs, rPICARD, VPIPE, etc.).
 - For wide-FoV support in the pipeline, we are collaborating with Pretoria, Groningen, Curtin & Manchester (via commensal VLBI surveys — SWEEPS & CASSOWARIES) to implement it.
- We are also developing a **data processing platform**, which we will offer initially to a few volunteers who are eager to test (please VOLUNTEER NOW; contact Zsolt Paragi/Marjolein Verkouter; paragi@jive.eu / verkouter@jive.eu)
- We will launch the **Polaris proposal tool** immediately after the 1 October deadline. We are looking for a few testers representing different science fields (e.g. continuum, spectral lines, transients) - (please VOLUNTEER NOW; contact Zsolt Paragi — paragi@jive.eu)

EVN proposals & user support

EVN Users' Meeting 2026

Jack Radcliffe (EVN programme committee chair; U. Manchester/Curtin/CSIRO)

The EVN programme committee



From EVN institutes:

- Pikky Atri (ASTRON; **deputy chair**)
- Marcin Gawroński (Toruń/NCU)
- Michael Lindqvist (OSO)
- Andrei Lobanov (MPIfR)
- Tom Muxlow (JBO/Manchester)
- Jack Radcliffe (JBO/Manchester; **chair**)
- Cristiana Spingola (INAF-IRA)
- Zsolt Paragi (JIV-ERIC)

Non-EVN institutes / at-large:

- Sara Motta (INAF-OAB)
- Olga Bayandina (SKAO)
- Juan Bautista Climent Oliver (U. Valencia)
- Wojciech Lewandowski (U. Zielona Gora)

Representatives:

- Junghwan Oh (JIV-ERIC; EVN scheduler)
- Robert M. Campbell (JIV-ERIC; EVN correlator at JIVE)

NRAO/GBO contacts:

- Robert Minchin (NRAO)
- Toney Minter (GBO)

e-MERLIN contact:

- Julie Wardlow (Lancaster; e-MERLIN TAG chair)

EVN proposals



Regular (disk / e-VLBI / trigger)

Submitted through NorthStar

- Consider short spacings (but justify them!) — e-MERLIN
- Consider applying for GMRT (21 cm) or MeerKAT (18/21 cm) for extra sensitivity — remember to justify
- Consider global baselines — VLBA, LBA
- Trigger opportunities: e-VLBI sessions can be extended by an extra day for trigger/ToO proposals; EVN-lite subarray also offers trigger slots outside regular sessions

Short (observation) requests

Submitted via email (to evn-pc-chair@jiscmail.ac.uk) ← **new email**

- For checking calibrator sources or testing a phase-referencing strategy ahead of a future EVN project — NO SCIENCE

Target of Opportunity

Submitted via email (to evn-pc-chair@jiscmail.ac.uk)

- For time-critical projects, e.g. transient phenomena

Correlator-only proposals

Submitted through NorthStar

- For JIVE correlator time without requesting any EVN antenna observing time

EVN support



JIVE provides support (from proposal planning to analysing data)

Travel opportunities to visit JIVE are available through the ACME programme — for eligibility requirements and more information, see: <https://www.evlbi.org/travel-support>

You should also be proactive in contacting JIVE before planning observations:

- We can help tailor your ideas to EVN capabilities!
- This avoids approaches impractical with the EVN



EVN contact details

- User support (general contact): usersupport@jive.eu
- Correlator (particular projects/correlation parameters): jops@jive.eu
- Questions on proposals; requests: evn-pc-chair@jiscmail.ac.uk (← **new email**)

Reminder: Oct 2026 call for proposals



The European VLBI Network (EVN) has opened its latest call for observing proposals.

The deadline is **1 October 2026, 16:00 UTC**.

What is new in this call:

- Proposals must now include a declaration on the use of AI in their preparation. The call sets out what is acceptable; proposals without a declaration may be rejected.
- Contrary to earlier announcements, Urumqi, Tianma and Kunming may be available, following a delay in satellite-tracking commitments.
- e-MERLIN remains operational and continues to participate in EVN observations, despite the publicised funding cuts.
- MeerKAT (18/21 cm) and the GMRT (21 cm) remain available on a best-effort basis, adding extra sensitivity for targets.

Changes to the EVN



- The largest changes for a generation are coming to the European VLBI Network in the next 12 months.
- These include changes to the observing cadence (see J. Oh's talk), supporting tools (see B. Marcote's talk), and how we review and propose EVN time (this talk).
- These changes will help us modernise the EVN to provide a more resilient, flexible and fairer instrument for all astronomers to use.

The following slides outline the changes associated with your proposed EVN and how we will assess your proposals.

AI declarations



Given the rise in AI-assisted proposals and the number of proposals per round (~20→~30 per proposal round), the EVN PC has adopted an **AI policy** for preparing EVN proposals.

The following points outline our policy on the use of AI:

- **AI may be used to refine and polish proposal text**, e.g., improving language, shortening text to meet length limits, translating, formatting, or providing LaTeX assistance.
- **AI must not be used to generate the scientific content of a proposal.** The science case, justification, and observing strategy must originate from and be understood by the proposer(s).
- **The use of AI tools must be declared;** please add a declaration as the last line of your LaTeX justification.

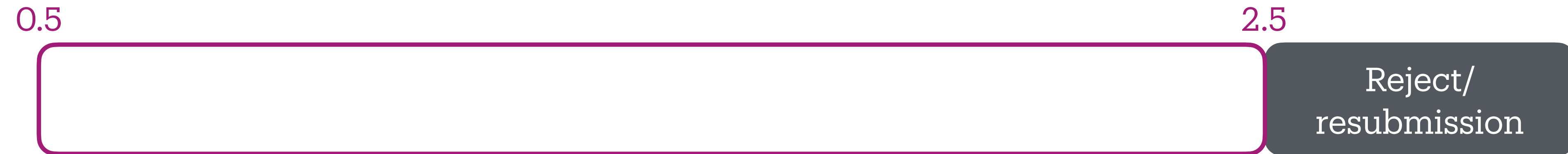
Proposers remain fully responsible for the originality, accuracy, and scientific coherence of their proposal, whether or not AI was used. The Programme Committee reserves the right to reject or downgrade any proposal where AI use is undeclared, or where content appears to be AI-generated rather than refined, including cases of implausible, generic, or fabricated content (e.g. hallucinated references).

Starting in the **October 2026** call for proposals

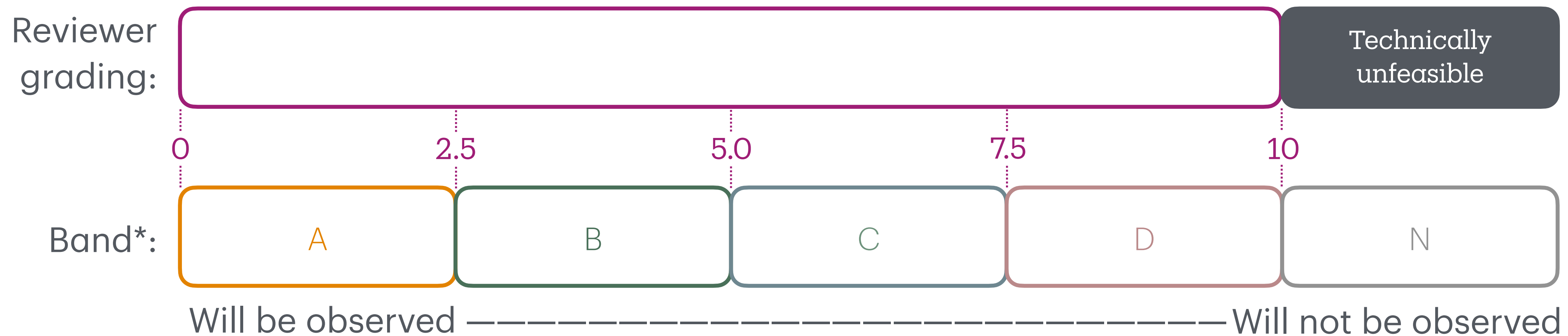
New proposal assessment scheme



Previous EVN assessment scheme:



New EVN assessment scheme:



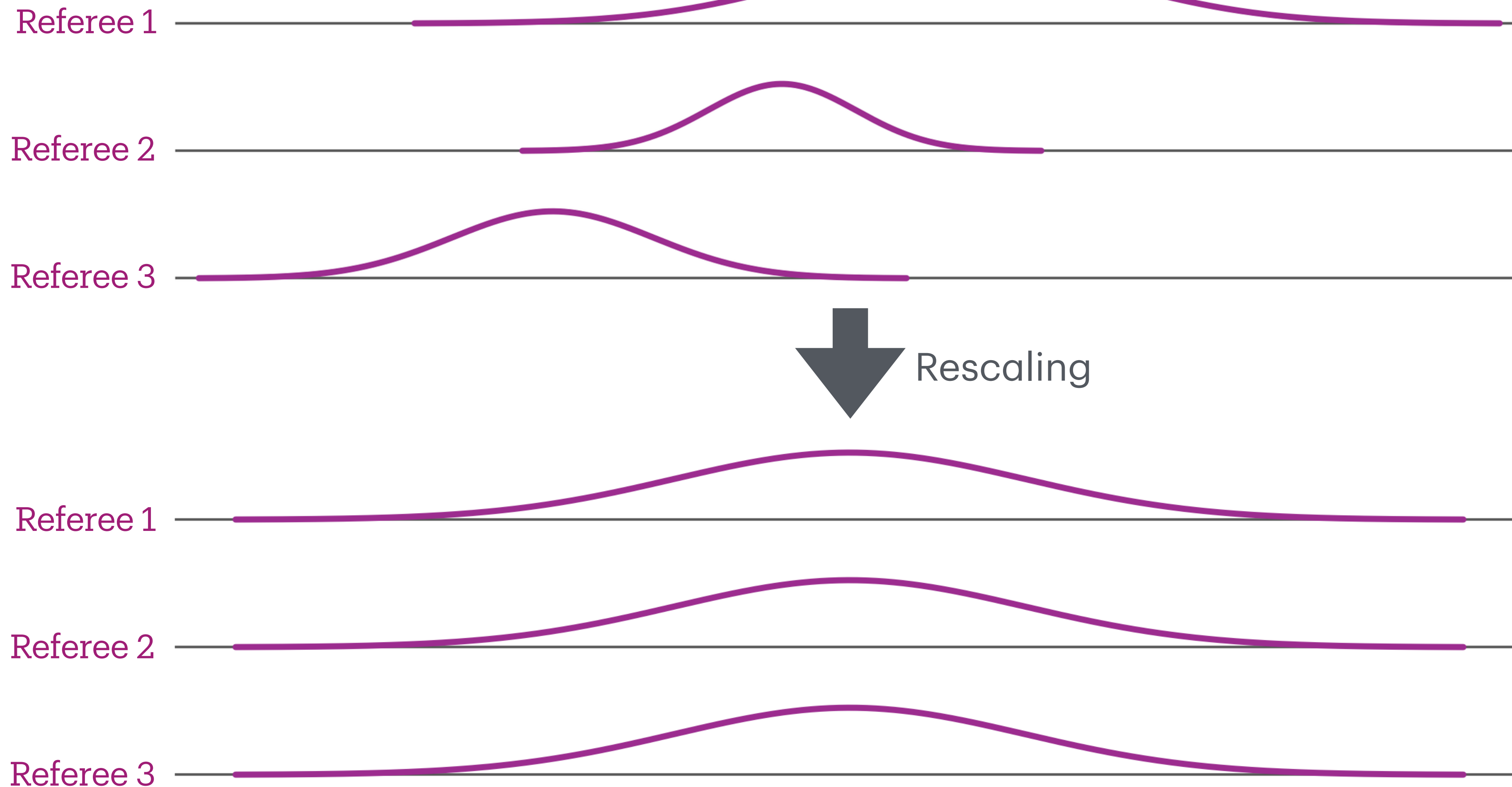
Starting in the **October 2026** call for proposals

*proposers will only get a band returned not a grade

New proposal assessment scheme



Individual referee scores scaled to fix bias



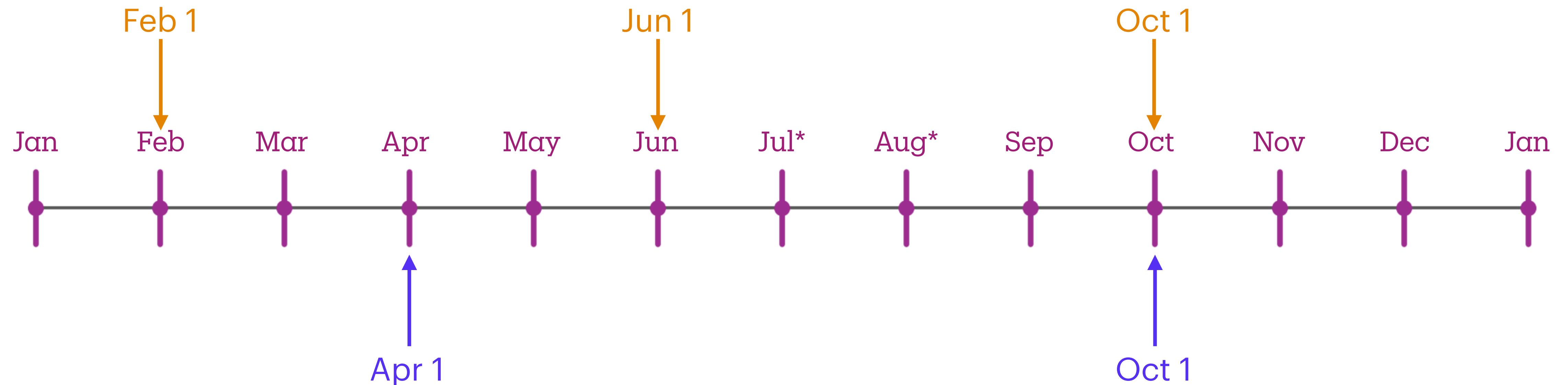
Starting in the **October 2026** call for proposals

New call for proposals cadence



- Call for proposals will be changing from three per year to **two per year starting in 2027**.

Previous CfP deadlines:



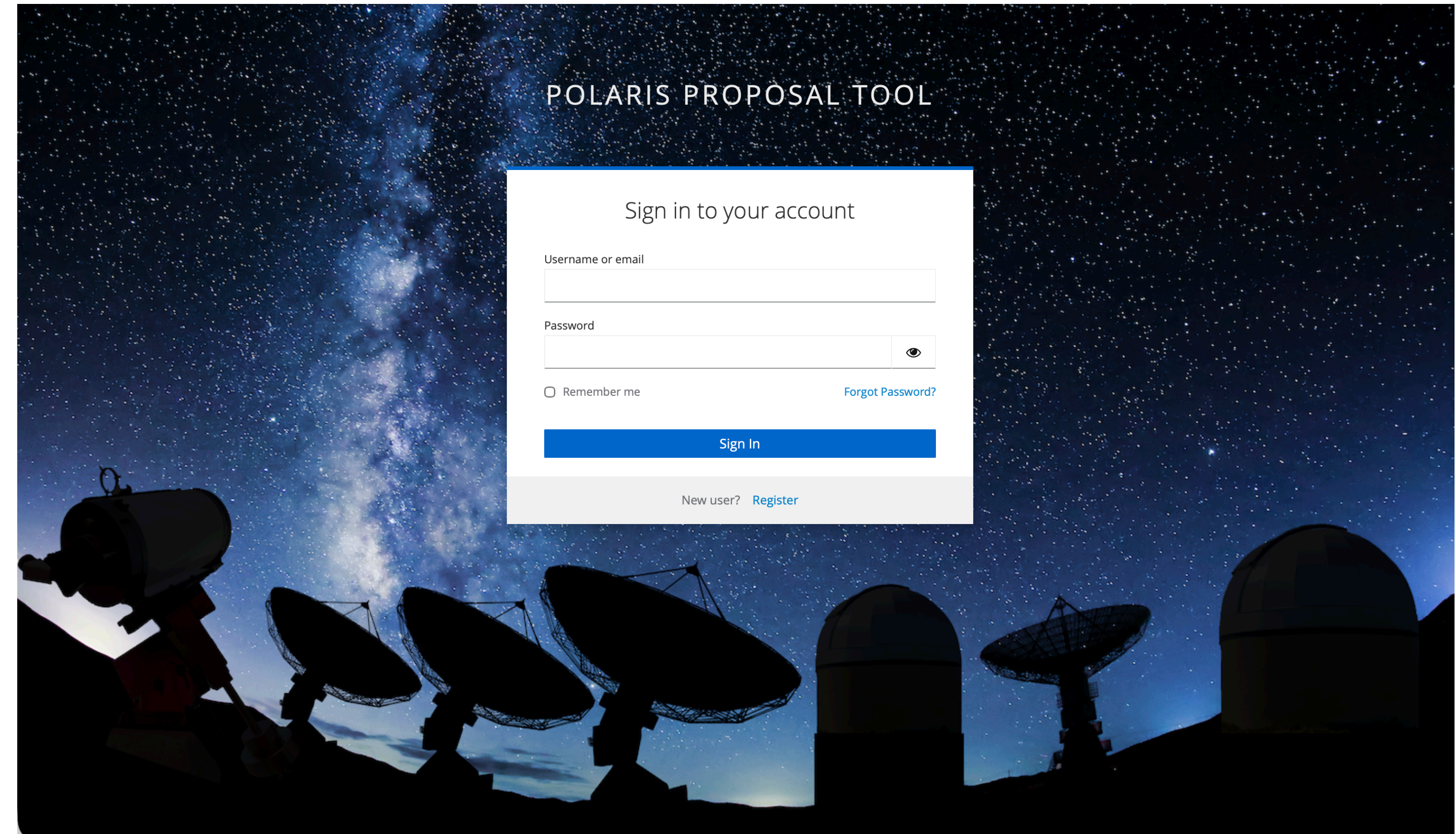
New CfP deadlines:

Starting from **2027**

*no EVN observing (see J. Oh's presentation)

Polaris proposal tool

- Oct '26 CfP will be the **last time** Northstar will be used.
- Some fun facts about Northstar:
 - Used at the start of 2007; 20 years of service w/ 60 regular deadlines.
 - 1269 total proposals (1,087 e-VLBI+EVN; 182 globals)
- In April 2027, we will transition to the new **Polaris proposal tool** (already used in e-MERLIN)
- JIVE will provide training/webinar on its use before the next CfP — volunteers are requested to test the system (contact Z. Paragi; paragi@jive.eu)



Starting in the **April 2027** call for proposals

Thanks, B. Campbell, for the stats!
 B. Marcote & B. Eldering for the images

Polaris proposal tool





TAC Management 

Bob Eldering's Home Page 



Filter existing proposals by:

Title

Investigator name

Create new proposal 

 a

 a (clone)

 b

 gfd

 gfd (clone)

 new

 t

 Test 1

 title

 with kc

HOME PAGEBOB ELDERING

Available Proposal Cycles

Observatory	Name	Deadline
Jodrell Bank	immediate test	

YOUR PROPOSALS

"a"Standard

"a (clone)"Standard

"b"Standard

"gfd"Standard

"gfd (clone)"Standard

"new"Standard

"t"Standard

"Test 1"Standard

"title"Standard

"with kc"Standard

Polaris proposal tool



TAC Management

Bob Eldering's Home Page

Filter existing proposals by:

Title

Investigator name

Create new proposal

gfd (clone)

new

t

Test 1

Overview

Title and Summary

Investigators

Justifications

Sources

Technical Goals

Observations

Documents

Submit

title

TEST 1

EDIT OBSERVATION

Observation, Target, & Technical Goal

Time Constraints (optional)

Monitoring (optional)

Observation type

Target observation

Calibration observation

Target

Selected

Name	Reference system	RA	Dec	Epoch
DUMMY	ICRS	00 00 00.000	+00 00 00.000	J2000
LS I +61 303	ICRS	02 40 31.664	+61 13 45.594	J2000
PSR J0633+1746	ICRS	06 33 54.153	+17 46 12.910	J2000

Phase reference source(s)

Multiple selections allowed

Name	Reference system	RA	Dec	Epoch
DUMMY	ICRS	00 00 00.000	+00 00 00.000	J2000
LS I +61 303	ICRS	02 40 31.664	+61 13 45.594	J2000
PSR J0633+1746	ICRS	06 33 54.153	+17 46 12.910	J2000

Check source(s)

Multiple selections allowed

Name	Reference system	RA	Dec	Epoch
DUMMY	ICRS	00 00 00.000	+00 00 00.000	J2000
LS I +61 303	ICRS	02 40 31.664	+61 13 45.594	J2000

Double-anonymous review



Reviewers don't know the PI/team's identity; PIs don't know who's reviewing

- Reduces bias from name, institution, seniority, gender, nationality
- Now standard at e-MERLIN, HST, NOIRLab/Gemini, ESO and other major facilities
- EVN PC currently does not use this — proposals are graded knowing the full team

Why adopt it — the HST evidence

- 2001–2012: female PIs' success rate averaged 19% vs. 23% for male PIs — a systemic gap, present every year
- Root cause: bias emerged specifically during in-person panel discussion, not initial remote grading — reviewers focused on track record/personnel rather than the science
- Cycle 26 (2018), first cycle under dual-anonymous review: women PIs outperformed men for the first time in 18 years of records (8.7% vs. 8.0% success rate), and panel discussion shifted noticeably toward scientific content
- Motivates the same fix for any panel-based process — including ours

Double-anonymous review



What it means in practice :

- No names, affiliations, headers/footers, acknowledgements, or funding sources anywhere in the proposal
- Prior work in third person: "EVN program #XXXXX observed..." not "our previous programme..."
- No description of team expertise/track record — this stays hidden during science ranking
- Sensitive/unpublished results can still be cited, framed as "from private communication"
- Polaris will support double-anonymous review by default.

Implementation timeline:

- Comes with the Polaris rollout in the April 2027 call for proposals.

Summary



- The European VLBI Network will undergo significant changes over the next twelve months (see J. Oh's presentation). Regarding proposals and proposal assessment, these include:
 - A new AI usage policy (from Oct 2026)
 - A new review process and grade scaling (from Oct 2026), plus double anonymous reviews (from April 2027)
 - A new cadence for the call for proposals (2 per year from 2027)
 - A new proposal tool (Polaris; from April 2027).
- Feedback on these new tools and processes is more than welcome and can be directed to evn-pc-chair@jiscmail.ac.uk or usersupport@jive.eu.