

Gemini Observatory

UK statement to Gemini Board

Under the terms of the Gemini Telescope Agreement, the UK, in common with its international partners, has been required to provide the Gemini Board with an opinion on whether it wishes to continue the Gemini partnership after 2012.

The UK has therefore advised the Gemini Board that it is "almost certain not to wish to remain in Gemini post-2012". The UK has stressed that this is an indicative position only, and does not pre-judge the outcome of the STFC programme prioritisation exercise now underway. The programme prioritisation includes advice from the relevant Advisory Panels, Committees and Science Board, and the Ground-Based Astronomy Review. The UK opinion is based on preliminary advice from this process. STFC Council will consider final recommendations at its meeting of 15 December 2009, with further discussions and implementation decisions expected in the New Year.

The Gemini Board agreed to extend its Agreement for a further period of at least three years beyond the end of 2012, but unanimously accepted the UK's position that it is almost certain to not wish to continue beyond the current expiry date. The UK will make its final position clear by the Board's next Assessment Point agreed to be late March 2010.

The UK continues to be a full partner in the facility and continues to pursue its current policy (adopted in 2008) of seeking to sell up to 50% of its total share of telescope time