



Resolutions of the 6th Meeting of the BRICS Astronomy Working Group

25 September 2020

The BRICS Astronomy Working Group (BAWG) from Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, as well as astronomers from these countries who attended the workshop and the working group meeting on the BRICS Astronomy Flagship Proposal titled: “the 2020 BRICS astronomy workshop on the BRICS Intelligent Telescope and Data Network (BITDN)”. The meeting was hosted online on Zoom by the Boris N. Yeltsin Ural Federal University with the support of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation, and the delegates deliberated on strategic and operational matters and resolved as follows:

1. The Working Group has agreed that the Flagship project proposal that has been endorsed by the lead investigator and the Co-Principal investigators from each country, can be submitted for consideration by the respective Focal Points and Ministries.
2. The Secretariat will sign the resolutions of this meeting on behalf of the Working Group and is mandated to submit the Flagship project proposal to the BRICS Senior Officials meeting.
3. The Working Group noted the discussion on the idea of the establishment of the BRICS Astronomy Association and that this will be further discussed at the next meeting as further consultations still need to happen at the country level.
4. At the 2017 annual meeting of the BAWG in India, the development of the BRICS flagship program was initiated and a subsequent call for proposals for project ideas was issued initiated. Eighteen proposals for flagship projects were received and presented at the 2018 BAWG meeting in South Africa, where a task team was constituted and selected three thematic areas to be taken to the next stage of proposals. At the BAWG meeting of October 2019 in Brazil, the three fully developed proposals were presented, discussed, and assessed, resulting in a merger of transient astronomy and big data proposals. The combined projects were formed into a Flagship proposal that is entitled the “BRICS

Intelligent Telescope and Data Network (BITDN)” and will involve astrophysical transients, survey science, and time-domain astronomy.

5. Taking into consideration the above-mentioned importance of the Flagship project for all BRICS countries, the implementation of this project it is envisaged to begin in 2021 in terms of creating a prototype of a distributed network of wide-angle telescopes using the existing facilities, data centres, and instrumentation. This will serve as the initial phase of the implementation of the project to form scientific and institutional collaborations as well as to develop the necessary human capital.
6. The BAWG gratefully accepted the offer from India to host the 2021 meeting in line with the BRICS Presidency to be assumed by India next year. The Secretariat will work with the Indian colleagues on the hosting of the next meeting. China has also offered to host the following meeting in 2022.

Signed by the Secretariat on behalf of the BRICS Astronomy Working Group



Takalani Nemaungani

Acting Chief Director, Department of Science and Innovation, South Africa