

EUROPEAN SPACE AGENCY

ASTRONOMY WORKING GROUP

Recommendation on the extension of the INTEGRAL mission

At its 123rd meeting held on 22-23 September 2005 at ESA Headquarters, Paris, the Astronomy Working Group (AWG) was briefed on the first three years of science operations of the Integral Observatory. The AWG was asked to express a view on the current and projected scientific performance of the mission, and on the Executive's proposed mission extension to 2010, with a further review in 2 years time for the period 2009-2012. Furthermore, the AWG was invited to endorse the proposed change to the science management plan.

The AWG expressed its satisfaction with the current status of the Integral Observatory and its science returns. Integral provides a powerful capability to explore extreme phenomena and the AWG was pleased to see clear signs of a maturing mission.

Exploitation of Integral's unique capabilities through key projects should be encouraged and every effort made to increase involvement of the broader community by making data more easily available, and publicising the mission's achievements and capabilities.

Therefore, the AWG recommends approval of the 4-year rolling extension and expects to review the science case for the last two years, as part of any further extension.

In addition, the AWG endorses the proposed change to the Science Management Plan which states that 20% of observing time in 2008 be dedicated to the core programme.