

VISTA fact sheet (09/09/2009)

Time line for the early science operation phase

(Science Verification and Dry Runs):

2008-06-21	Start of commissioning with the camera (VIRCAM) led by the VISTA Project Office
2009-07-01	Start of the ESO verification period
2009-09-24	Call for Observation Blocks for VISTA Science Verification (SV)
2009-10-01	Call for Observation Blocks for VISTA Dry Runs
2009-10-14	Handover of VISTA telescope to ESO
2009-10-15	Submission deadline for additional SV OBs from Public Survey PIs (with justification)
2009-10-16	Start of the VISTA SV run
2009-10-20	Submission deadline for Dry Runs OBs
2009-10-30	Start of early science operations: Paranalization and Dry Runs

Tentative timeline for the start of normal science operation

December/January 2010	Call for Phase 2
February 2010	Start of regular Public Survey operations

Performance:

pixel scale:	0.34"/pxl, average
best image quality achieved:	0.6" including seeing, optics and sampling
image distortion	<15% of PSF in the corners of the field
estimated image quality	Paranal seeing convolved by the instrument
PSF of 0.51"	
photometric calibration:	+/-2% RMS in respect to 2MASS in J, H, Ks
photometric calibration:	+/-2% RMS internally

sky concentration/ illumination: <5% absolute, it can be characterized and corrected down to 2% RMS

filter set: Z, Y, J, H, Ks, NB118 - all filters are installed

detector: Raytheon VIRGO HgCdTe arrays, sensitive over 0.84-2.5 micron wavelength region, high quantum efficiency, large number of hot pixels, some dead areas on detector 1

The system characterization and optimization of the calibration strategy will be continued during the science verification and until the end of Paranalization and Dry Runs phase.

Observation overheads:

preset	approx. 120s	
preset	20s + (target distance) / slew-speed,	where the slew speed is 1deg/s
readout	2s per DIT	
write data to disk	4s per exposure	
filter change	21s to 40s	(depending on relative filter location)
jitter offset	approx. 3s	(same guide star)
pawprint change	10s	(changed guide star)

Detailed information about VISTA and VIRCAM can be found at:

<http://www.eso.org/sci/observing/policies/PublicSurveys/>

<http://www.eso.org/sci/facilities/paranal/instruments/vista/>

<http://www.eso.org/sci/observing/phase2/SMGuidelines.html?instrument=VIRCAM>

<http://www.vista.ac.uk/index.html>

Phase 2 tools (SADT and p2pp) can be downloaded from:

<http://www.eso.org/sci/observing/phase2/P2PP/P2PPSurveys.html>

<http://www.eso.org/sci/observing/phase2/VIRCAM/SADT.html>

For further information contact usd-help@eso.org