

Towards the SKA and CTA era: discovery, localisation, and physics of transient sources

SKA-CTA joint project

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Abstract

(at the end)

1. General science context, national and international

“Transient” sources are astrophysical objects that explode or flare up in violent and unpredictable way. They can be of galactic or extragalactic origin, can emit coherent or incoherent radiation and even non electromagnetic signals, and can be the result of thermal runaways, explosions, and particle acceleration. Variability time scales, released energy, wavelength of the emitted radiation can vary widely depending on the nature of the progenitor and of the physical process. In general, they are associated with catastrophic events involving compact objects, such as WD, NS, and BH, and as such they offer the possibility to study the most extreme physical conditions in the Universe. Furthermore, their peculiar characteristics (eg FRB impulsive nature, GRB extreme luminosity) make them invaluable cosmic probes.

The study of transient astrophysical sources is now entering a golden age. Among the most cited astrophysics papers in the last year, we find the discovery of a $>5.1\sigma$ transient GW signal by aLIGO [1], with a plethora of follow-up interpretative and MWL observational papers; the debate about the first possible extragalactic localisation of a FRB [2, 3], as well as the discovery and identification of the first repeating FRB [4, 5]; the appearance of new theory- and observation-based population studies of TDE rates [6, 7]. In more developed fields, some truly remarkable events have also been reported, such as a giant flare of the XRB Cyg X-3. Each of these results has far-reaching implications both for the study of the physical processes at the origin of the transients themselves (the mass of the merging BHs in the GW event, the FRB luminosity and possible progenitor type, the temperature and density of TDE events) and for more general topics that can be probed through these discoveries (e.g., the rate of binary BH mergers and their formation from massive stars in low-metallicity environments, the average cosmic density of ionised baryons in the intergalactic medium, the supermassive BH mass function).

Radio waves and gamma rays are both crucial, in a complementary fashion, to the study of transient phenomena. Radio waves have the key advantages of measuring kinetic feedback in relativistically moving ejecta, of probing the properties of the intervening ionised media, and of a precise localisation across wide FOV [8]. Gamma rays on the other hand directly trace the highest energy particles, their acceleration and emission processes, and are probes of EBL and LIV. As progress is being made towards the construction of SKA and CTA, as well as the operation of their pathfinders, precursors, and prototypes, it is becoming increasingly clear how their characteristics will be of fundamental importance for the discovery, localisation, and understanding of transient sources. By comparison to the present day facilities at the same wavelength, both instruments will have orders of magnitude improvements in FOV, sensitivity, and capability of promptly react to triggers. These are all key features to dramatically increase the number of detected transients and the level of details in which they could be studied. Indeed, “transients” are one of CTA’s key science projects and the prime subject of science WG both in CTA and SKA. Other wavelengths and MM observations will also contribute to the advance of this field. It is thus mandatory to start preparing the national community with a coordinated program based on the preparatory radio and gamma-ray facilities, on complementary EM and GW facilities, and on the theoretical, modelling, and numerical side.

Within the present proposal, we intend to develop a common framework to deal with the large variety of transient phenomena: depending on the type of progenitor, the energy band and type of radiation through which they were discovered, and the relative time and

List of acronyms - aLIGO Advanced Laser Interferometers GW Observatory; Adv Advanced Virgo; BH black hole; CTA Cherenkov Telescope Array; DM dispersion measure; EBL extragalactic background light; EM electromagnetic; FOV field of view; FRB fast radio burst; GRB gamma ray burst; GW gravitational waves; LIV Lorentz invariance violation; MWL multi-wavelength; MM multi-messenger; NS neutron star; SKA Square Kilometre Array; SN supernova; TDE tidal disruption event; (V)HE (very) high energy; VLBI Very Long Baseline Interferometry; WD white dwarf; WG working group; WHIM warm hot intergalactic medium; WP work package; XRB X-ray binary

space frequency, our present understanding of the different types of transients varies broadly (having discovered $>10^3$ GRB, we know a greater deal about them in comparison to the dozen or so FRB, for which it is still debated whether they are of galactic or extragalactic origin). There are however strong observational and interpretative connections between the various areas: a better understanding of already well studied transients, like binaries and GRBs, can help localising and discovering the EM counterparts of GW events. Analogously, our understanding of orphan GRBs necessarily passes through a better modelling of known on-axis GRBs. Moreover, many strategies of localisation are common to both FRBs and GWs. Finally, the majority of the, intrinsically different, astrophysical transients emits over a broad range of wavelengths. Several scientists in our team are active in more than one of these fields and the composition of the team is balanced between people already involved in the science/technology development of SKA and CTA (as the PI) and those willing to contribute to and support the scientific exploitation of their data. The most efficient approach is thus to gather the community in a single comprehensive, coordinated proposal. In the following, we outline the state of the art for the main classes of transients (1.1), the role of SKA (1.2), and CTA (1.3). In section 2, we will define the actual WPs and actions for our project, highlighting the synergies among groups and topics.

1.1 Targets of interest

September 14, 2015, marked the official start of the gravitational astronomy era, with the first detection of **GW** achieved by the aLIGO and AdV collaboration [9]. Realistic detection rate by 2020 is of dozens up to hundreds of GW sources per year in the high frequency range accessible to ground-based GW interferometers (10-1000 Hz), with sky localisations of the order of 10deg^2 [10]. EM counterparts of GW sources will increase sky localisation accuracy and provide a wealth of additional/complementary information on the source nature. Primary candidate GW+EM sources in the era of ground-based laser interferometers as aLIGO and AdV are coalescing binary systems of compact objects as stellar-mass BH and NS. These systems are also the best candidate progenitors of EM events as short GRBs [11]. Other sources, as core-collapsing SNe and instability phenomena from NS, may also be detected in the high frequency GW spectrum, although expected signals and detection rates are highly uncertain. Sources of unknown nature might be identified too.

GRBs, the most luminous transients detected up to extremely high redshifts, are characterised by a prompt highly variable emission at high energies, followed by a smoothly decaying afterglow observed down to radio wavelengths [12]. Increasing observational evidence corroborates the general picture of GRBs being the EM signatures of relativistic jets launched by BHs or massive, highly magnetised, NS. Observations from >10 GeV to the radio band have covered the prompt and the afterglow timescales; in particular, optical photometry and spectroscopy have demonstrated that long GRBs are tied to the death of massive stars and to a small fraction of very luminous core-collapse SNe. However, compelling questions remain on the physical mechanisms at work in GRBs and on their origin. The search for and the study of **SNe** explosions themselves in general have focused on the observation and analysis of the spectral energy distribution in the optical range for decades; as observations at other wavelengths are becoming available, they contribute to the knowledge of the SN explosion mechanisms and the characterisation of the SN precursors, which in turn are critical for our understanding of the final evolution of SNe progenitors, of their recent history of mass loss, and of long GRBs. However, radio detections of both GRBs and SNe are rare ($<30\%$), and neither class has been secured a detection above 100 GeV so far.

Similar to SNe, also **TDEs** are at present mainly discovered in the optical and X-rays, but future radio and VHE observations hold great potential for their study. TDEs are unique laboratories to study stellar dynamics and the physics of accretion onto supermassive BH at the center of galaxies while in action. Transient emission mainly in the optical to X-rays is produced when a star or gas cloud is gravitationally disrupted and swallowed by BHs through the formation of an accretion disk [13]. About

10% of TDE should also have a jet and share properties of other relativistic jetted sources. HE and VHE emission is expected for jetted and non-jetted TDEs [14] but such prediction is still to be tested. Open questions in this field are overwhelmingly more compelling due to the lack of MWL observations and the present small statistics of events.

As for GWs, the issue of localisation is crucial also in the case of **FRBs**, unpredictable GHz frequencies bursts characterised by millisecond duration and high DM. A large number of models have been proposed, both galactic and extragalactic, with the large DM favouring the latter scenario. As the events are short and unpredictable, they are generally detected with a large positional uncertainty and the debate about an accurate localisation has been one of the hottest threads over the last year [2, 3, 15]. The discovery of one repeating event has permitted to follow it up interferometrically, and at least in that particular case the event seems to be extragalactic and associated with a dwarf galaxy at $z \sim 0.2$ [5]. This has tremendous implications for the progenitor and for probing the cosmic density of ionised baryons. Many open questions remain however, such as the nature of the progenitors, whether repeating and non-repeating FRBs have the same origin or form two different classes, the presence of high energy emission. Given the high number of events (up to $10^4/\text{sky/day}$), there is huge space for discovery in this field.

Within our own Galaxy, transient emission is detected from many binary systems, both composed of two compact objects (millisecond pulsar binaries) or of one compact and one stellar object (novae, micro-quasars). Many of these sources have shown surprises: symbiotic and classical novae have been revealed as a new class of gamma-ray emitters by *Fermi* [16, 17], indicating that they are sites of particle acceleration, and interferometric radio observations have demonstrated the possibility to study the spatial and spectral evolution of the emitting region [18, 19]. Millisecond pulsar binaries accreting at very low-rates have been recently found to surprisingly emit at radio and GeV energies and to transit from disk to disk-free states on months-yrs timescales [20, 21]; analogously, the unique WD binary AE Aqr has shown bright radio flares and a puzzling high energy behaviour, with both detections and upper limits [22]. Such systems in which accretion disks exist but are only partially feeding the accreting fast spinning compact object, as well as micro-quasars in which transient radio and gamma-ray emission is detected, are crucial in understanding the accretion/ejection coupling on much shorter timescales than those permitted by blazars. This includes the outstanding cases of Cyg X-1, Cyg X-3, V404 Cyg [23, 24], as well as the high mass X-ray binaries detected in the MeV-TeV energy band [25], which prove that an efficient, yet far from being understood, particle acceleration mechanism is in place. Current radiative models involve both leptonic scenarios (gamma-ray production from inverse Compton scattering between the jet electrons and stellar/synchrotron photons) and hadronic scenarios (from $p-p$ interactions between relativistic jet hadrons and cold stellar wind protons or nuclei).

1.2 Transients & radio emission

All the above described classes of sources are radio emitters, so the impact of SKA1 and its precursors (MWA, MeerKAT, ASKAP) will be huge in all areas. The key elements will be the sensitivity, the wide FOV and frequency range, the highly advanced signal processing and data management techniques required to detect transients on very short time scales and with large DM, and the possibility to operate in VLBI mode for ultra-high angular resolution imaging capabilities.

SKA1-mid observations will systematically probe the GRB emission and the jet dynamical evolution until the latest epochs (years) post trigger, presently probed only for few events. Complemented by MWL follow up campaigns, the radio observations will constrain the physics of external shocks (particle energy distribution, build up magnetic field), the density profile of the external medium, and even cosmological parameters [26]. SKA&MWL will also help to differentiate GRB and SNe progenitors and potentially can track the elusive pop-III population at very high redshifts. Radio deep wide-field surveys can access the, yet undetected, population of off-axis ‘orphan’ afterglows and the emission of the dynamically ejected material during a NS-BH or NS-NS merger: these are among the most promising EM counterpart of 10-1000 Hz GW sources. In parallel, SKA1-mid will enable

indirect detections of very low frequencies (nano-Hz) GW, like those emitted by the merger of supermassive BH, by precisely measuring how the distances to pulsars in our Galaxy change.

With their wide FOV, beam-forming capabilities, and survey commensality, SKA1-low and -mid, and their precursors, are the ideal instruments to detect a big number of new FRBs [27] and to localise them precisely. This will allow us to perform MWL follow-ups to pinpoint FRB's hosts which, in turn, will enable us to exploit FRBs as cosmological probes. In particular, since early 2018, the approved *Trapum* project at the MeerKAT SKA1 precursor and *UTMOST* at the upgraded Molonglo interferometer will become world-leaders in the detection of FRBs. The direct involvement of some members of this proposal in *Trapum* and existing contact with *UTMOST* will make easy the establishment of suitable agreements for FRB follow-ups with our facilities.

1.3 Transients & (very) high energy emission

The design of CTA offers several important characteristics that will greatly benefit the study of transients: great sensitivity over a broad energy range thanks to the three telescope sizes, capability of fast repointing, and a large area survey mode provided by divergent pointing observations. Moreover, the nature of the gamma-ray sky itself, with a paucity of sources with respect e.g. to optical sky, could play a crucial role in detecting the EM counterpart of a GW event: CTA could quickly (<1 ks) cover large regions of the sky by operating in survey mode with good sensitivity without being contaminated by thousands of false positives as in the optical [28]. CTA detection of the EM counterpart would enhance source localisation accuracy thus enabling further monitoring with telescopes at longer wavelengths. CTA detection of a short GRB associated with a GW signal from compact binary systems will directly confirm the progenitor nature of this class of astrophysical sources. At the same time, detection of unidentified VHE transient sources can be searched off-line on archival GW data by exploiting the known sky location and event time. This strategy is for example actually carried on by aLIGO/AdV teams to understand the nature of FRB.

High sensitivity and high temporal/spectral resolution studies by CTA will contribute to understand the emission mechanisms for many other transients which are anticipated to be detected above few tens of GeV: binaries, TDEs, GRBs. For GRBs in particular, the results by *Fermi* [29] indicate that CTA will be crucial to reveal the prompt emission radiation mechanism (leptonic vs hadronic), the energy dissipation site (internal/external), the jet composition (magnetic/baryons) and its acceleration and collimation mechanism (magnetic or stellar envelope), the total energy involved, the transition from the prompt to the afterglow phase. CTA will probe the role of GRBs as sources of UHECRs and neutrinos and will use GRBs to constrain the EBL at intermediate and high redshifts and to study LIV through the expected energy dependence of photon arrival times [30]. Some of these open issues are directly related to the nature of the progenitors and central engine of both long and short GRBs.

Bibliography [1] Abbott, et al., PhRevL, 2016, 116 [2] Keane, et al., Nature, 2016, 530 [3] Williams & Berger, ApJL, 2016, 821 [4] Spitler, et al., Nature, 2016, 531 [5] Chatterjee, et al. Nature, 2017. 1701. [6] Holoiien, et al., MNRAS, 2016, 455 [7] Stone & Metzger, MNRAS, 2016, 455 [8] Fender, et al., AASKA14, 2015 [9] Abbott, et al., PhRevX, 2016, 6 [10] Abbott, et al., Living Reviews in Relativity, 2016, 19 [11] Berger, ARAA, 2014, 52 [12] Kumar & Zhang, Physics Reports, 2015, 561 [13] Komossa, JHEA, 2015, 7 [14] Chen, et al., MNRAS, 2016, 458 [15] Giroletti, et al., A&A, 2016, 593 [16] Abdo, et al., Science, 2010, 329 [17] Ackermann, et al., Science, 2014, 345 [18] Giroletti, et al., EVN12, id.47. 2012. [19] Chomiuk, et al., Nature, 2014, 514 [20] Papitto, et al., Nature, 2013, 501 [21] Stappers, et al., ApJ, 2014, 790 [22] Aleksić, et al., A&A, 2014, 568 [23] Tavani, et al., Nature, 2009, 462 [24] Loh, et al., MNRAS, 2016, 462 [25] Paredes, et al., APh, 2013, 43 [26] Amati, et al., AASKA14, 2015 [27] Macquart, et al., AASKA14, 2015 [28] Dubus, et al., APh, 2013, 43 [29] Ackermann, et al., ApJS, 2013, 209 [30] Inoue, et al., APh, 2013, 43

2. Goals

The long term goal of this project is to maximise the science return from the participation of INAF to SKA and CTA consortia in the following areas: understanding the physics of known transients, discovering and recognising new classes of transients, and exploiting transients as probes of the Universe both locally and at high redshift. This can be achieved through the creation of a well coordinated science network, the development of excellence science activities in the theoretical and observational fields, and solid contributions to the technological challenges (data acquisition, analysis, and management). Communicating to the general public is also a fundamental step to improve the return for INAF.

Many different classes of transients present similar challenges (discovery and localisation), share common physical mechanisms (particle acceleration, compact objects), and display emission in many bands of the EM spectrum, and beyond. For this reason, this project is inherently multi-class, MWL&MM, multi-location, and multi-approach. For each approach (T: theory, O: observations, D: data analysis and technology; P: public outreach), we highlight in the following the main goals, actions, structures involved, and deliverables. In details, we define 12 WP as follows (the participation of individual members to the WPs is given in the personnel table on pg 9):

T1) Radiation processes. Goals (G): constrain emission mechanisms, activity regions, acceleration processes in outstanding transients. **Actions (A):** Focusing on selected recent/future ‘VIP’ events, compare observations to hadronic/leptonic models; set constraints from variability time scales and spectra. Develop and test FRB progenitor models. **Structures (S):** S1, S4-5, S8-9

T2) A comprehensive model of GRBs. G: obtain a physically complete and consistent model for GRBs, both of the short and long type, on prompt and afterglow timescales, on- and off-axis. This will be relevant for studies of GW progenitors and for the final evolution of core-collapse SNe and super-luminous SNe. **A:** implementation of synchrotron self-absorption emission component and of inverse Compton in the Klein-Nishina regime in the GRB code available at the OABr group. Inclusion of off-axis effects and transition to the non-relativistic phase. **S:** S1-3, S5.

T3) Population models and simulations of radio and TeV emission. G: provide a list of SKA and CTA requirements (reaction time, localisation, energy/frequency range, configuration) for the final design of the detectors, possible strategies for the surveys, and use case revisions. **A:** Based on existing data, improve current population models or develop new ones as needed. Determine detection rates under different assumptions at various frequencies, energies, also to explore synergies with other facilities (e.g. Athena, LSST). Test on precursor data. Complementary to T2, this WP is based on more simplistic models but addresses many more classes (TDEs, SNe, FRBs, binaries of all types). **S:** S1/3/5

T4) Transients as probes. G: Exploit transient sources to constrain parameters of cosmological and fundamental physics importance. **A:** From observed DMs of impulsive radio transients of known distance, determine line of sight electron column density; separate the intrinsic/Galactic contributions through HI and metal absorption to constrain the cosmological mass density of intervening WHIM, which is predicted to host the majority of the, yet to be detected, baryons in the $z \sim 2$ Universe. From gamma-ray spectral properties of GRBs with known redshift, constrain the EBL at intermediate and high redshift. Use high redshift GRBs to probe star formation up to $z \sim 9-10$. From time of arrivals of gamma-ray photons of different energies, study LIV of the speed of light. **S:** S4-6, S9

O1) MWL searches for counterpart localisation. G: Identify the EM counterpart of GW events, determine distance/host galaxy of FRBs, associate new transients. **A:** maintain a channel of information exchange with aLIGO, AdV, and SKA/CTA precursors for GW/neutrino/other transients follow-up. Design MWL strategies and procedures for search and follow-up of counterparts: study the MWL light curves and spectra of current GW candidate counterparts, based on the available models of compact stellar mergers and of other explosive potential GW emitters (magnetars, SNe, SGRs); activation of various GW/FRB follow-up approved programs at national and international optical and

radio telescopes; real-time detection of GRB contemporary to GW alert with INTEGRAL, and immediate repointing for identification with $<1'$ error box. **S:** S1-2, S5, S7-9

O2) MWL studies exploiting sensitivity. G: improve knowledge of several transient classes through deeper observations. For many transient sources, the present facilities already provide the possibility to solve many puzzles, as the frequency of the relativistic SNe, the SNe rate in starburst galaxies (often hidden behind dust), physics of accretion on supermassive BH after TDE, the quenched activity states in binary, etc. **A:** selection of new, well localised MWL transients as SNe (also to search for orphan GRBs), TDE, GRBs, novae for follow up with sensitive radio arrays (JVLA, MeerKAT, ASKAP). Monitoring of binaries in different states, with single dish and interferometers. **S:** S2, S5, S6

O3) Imaging at very high angular resolution. G: Obtain direct imaging of ejecta in various classes of sources, constrain structural and positional evolution. **A:** Data analysis, interpretation, and publication of already available VLBI datasets on the first gamma-ray nova V407 Cyg, the XRB Cyg X-3 during 2016 giant flare, and two selected GRBs. Derive implications for circumstellar medium, energy density, GRB viewing angles. Promptly react to new transients exploiting real time correlation on flexible arrays based on Italian radio telescopes. **S:** S4-6

O4) Gamma-ray observations. G: the number of transient sources observed at (V)HE gamma rays is relatively low. This WP aims at a characterisation of a few outstanding objects detected in these bands with the present facilities. **A:** observations of binaries, novae, GRBs, jetted TDEs, with MAGIC, *Fermi*, AGILE, and, for outstanding outbursts, ASTRI prototype and (starting in 2018) mini array. Study of temporal evolution and spectral shape; connect to hard X-rays (INTEGRAL/Swift). **S:** S2

D1) Test capabilities of national facilities for transient discovery towards SKA. G: develop expertise in impulsive radio transient detections, discover new objects. **A:** develop analysis tools (software, firmware, backends) for possible exploitation of national instruments as radio transient detectors: Sardinia Radio Telescope, upgraded Northern Cross sections, Sardinia Array Demonstrator. Initial tests on known pulsars with suitable characteristics and repeating FRBs. Blind searches in transit mode. Possible spin-off for discovery and characterisation of near earth asteroids. **S:** S4, S6, S10

D2) Real-time analysis techniques & decision trees. G: Contribute to set strategies for CTA/SKA reaction to transients and target prioritisation. **A:** Development of analysis techniques for the serendipitous discovery and/or identification during MWL/MM campaigns of gamma-ray transients at different timescales (minutes to days) for the Real-Time Analysis of CTA, in particular with a focus on GW EM counterpart. Definition of decision trees for the management of science alerts based on figure of merit algorithms. Test by means of both the CTA and SKA precursors. Develop visualisation techniques of data analysed in real-time in the FOV of CTA with different sub-arrays. **S:** S1-2, S5

D3) “Small big data”: databases, archives, MWL. G: Develop new methods to extract and handle information from huge time series and data sets. **A:** implementation of procedures of automated screening and classification of new transients and their MWL counterparts. Production of simple interfaces to disseminate the data and the results to the scientific community at large. Implementation of existing and new algorithms to optimise MWL follow up strategies to transient alerts. **S:** S1-2, S9

P) Public outreach. G: Present CTA/SKA projects and transient phenomena to the general public, pointing out Italy’s role and creating emotional involvement. **A:** set up one exhibit about SKA/CTA and Italy’s role; one documentary about the people involved in the SKA/CTA; three educational hands-on activities (for details, see cost breakdown section). Collaboration with SKA/CTA outreach and education offices and INAF communication office. Local activities. **S:** S2,4,5,10

Deliverables for the T/O-WPs are science papers in peer-reviewed international journals (at least 2/WP/yr, >32 in total) and contributions to international conferences. The D-WPs have technology and data oriented focus, aimed at preparing sw/hw resources to be exploited in the mid-long term: deliverables are pipelines, sw, observational tests, tech reports and communications to international conferences in the technological/instrumental field. The P-WP will deliver outreach media as outlined in the cost breakdown section.

3. Personnel commitment

This project involves a large community across and beyond INAF structures, with a broad distribution in expertise, age, and background. There is a significant participation of personnel already involved in the SKA and CTA consortia activities and in the transient WGs in particular (the PI is a member of both the SKA and CTA transient science WG, and several other members participate to either one) - as well as a large fraction, actually the majority, of people who are getting involved in the two facilities through the present project. In this sense, this project largely fulfils the indication of the PRIN call of enhancing the involvement at large of the community.

In total, we are devoting 54 full time equivalents (FTE) to the project over the two years. As indicated by the call, over 50% of these FTEs (actually, 84% in our case) come from INAF personnel. As such, the budget request is largely justified (based on the guideline of 2FTE:100k€).

Of the 54 FTE, 33 come from permanent staff researchers, which also fulfils the threshold for the number of new positions requested. In Section 4, we detail our request for a total of 13 FTE, whereas we could in principle ask for as many as 22, based on the 1.5:1 FTE ratio indicated in the call.

In Table 1, we list the involved personnel from (or associated with) each INAF structure. For each participant, we indicate the qualification, the role in the project through the activity in one or more WPs, and the FTE per year. A numeric flag indicates whether the participant is (1) INAF permanent staff, (2) INAF temporary staff, (3) associate permanent staff, or (4) associate temporary staff.

Table 1 - List of personnel

Name	Affiliation	Position	Type	WP	FTE/yr
Marcello Giroletti	IRA	Ric.	1	O3, O4, D1	0.5, 0.5
Matteo Stagni	IRA	Tecn.	2	O3, D1	0.3, 0.3
Monica Orienti	IRA	Ric.	1	O3, O4	0.2, 0.2
Carlo Stanghellini	IRA	P. Ric.	1	O3	0.2, 0.2
Andrea Maccaferri	IRA	Tecn.	1	D1	0.2, 0.2
Gabriele Giovannini	IRA	Assoc. Staff	3	O3	0.2, 0.2
Rocco Lico	IRA	Post-doc	4	O3, O4	0.2, 0.2
Filippo D'Ammando	IRA	Post-doc	4	O4, T1	0.3, 0.3
Tiziana Venturi	IRA	P. Ric.	1	O3, D1	0.2, 0.2
Stefania Varano	IRA	Tecnol.	1	P	0.3, 0.3
Elena Pian	IASF-Bo	P. Ric.	1	O1, O2, O4	0.3, 0.3
Lorenzo Amati	IASF-Bo	P. Ric.	1	T4, O2	0.2, 0.2
Luciano Nicastro	IASF-Bo	P. Ric.	1	O1, D3	0.3, 0.3
Elia Palazzi	IASF-Bo	P. Ric.	1	O1, O2, D3	0.4, 0.4
Nicola Masetti	IASF-Bo	Ric.	1	O1, O2	0.3, 0.3
Giovanni De Cesare	IASF-Bo	Tecn.	1	O1, D2	0.2, 0.2
Andrea Bulgarelli	IASF-Bo	Tecnol.	1	O1, D2, D3	0.3, 0.3
Mauro Dadina	IASF-Bo	Ric.	1	O1	0.2, 0.2
Daniela Vergani	IASF-Bo	Ric.	1	O1	0.2, 0.2

Name	Affiliation	Position	Type	WP	FTE/yr
Mauro Orlandini	IASF-Bo	P. Ric.	1		0.3, 0.3
Vito Sguera	IASF-Bo	Ric.	1	O1, O4	0.2, 0.2
Elisabetta Maiorano	IASF-Bo	Post-doc	2	O1, O2	0.2, 0.2
Filippo Frontera	IASF-Bo	Assoc. Em.	4		0.2, 0.2
Giulia Stratta	IASF-Bo	Post-doc	4	O1,O4,D2	0.4, 0.4
Gaetano Valentini	OATe	Tecnol.	1		0.1, 0.1
Di Cecco Alessandra	OATe	Post-doc	2		0.2, 0.2
De Luise Fiore	OATe	Ric. TD	2		0.2, 0.2
Andrea Pastorello	OAPd	Ric.	1	O2	0.2, 0.2
massimo turatto	OAPd	Astr. Ord.	1	O2	0.2, 0.2
Stefano Benetti	OAPd	P. Ric.	1	O2	0.2, 0.2
Sheng Yang	OAPd	PhD Stud.	2	O1	1, 1
Paolo Ochner	OAPd	Tecn. TD	4	P, O2	0.4, 0.4
Lina Tomasella	OAPd	Ric.	1	O1, O2	0.6, 0.6
Riccardo Ciolfi	OAPd	Ric.	1	T1, T2	0.2, 0.2
Marina Orio	OAPd	Ric. Astr.	1		0.3, 0.3
Ulisse Munari	OAPd	Astr. Ass.	1	O1, O2	0.3, 0.3
Andrea Possenti	OACg	P. Ric.	1	O1	0.2, 0.2
Marta Burgay	OACg	Ric. Astr.	1	O1, D1, D2	0.2, 0.2
Elise Egron	OACg	Ric. TD	2	O3, D1,O1	0.3, 0.3
Alberto Pellizzoni	OACg	Ric.	1	O3, O1, D1, O4	0.3, 0.3
Sara Loru	OACg	PhD Stud.	4	O3, D1, O1	0.3, 0.3
Ruben Salvaterra	IASF-Mi	Ric.	1	T3,T4	0.2, 0.2
Sergio Campana	OABr	D. Ric.	1	O1, O2	0.2, 0.2
Stefano Covino	OABr	Ric.	1	O1,O4	0.2, 0.2
Giancarlo Ghirlanda	OABr	Ric.	1	T2,T3	0.2, 0.2
Stefano Vercellone	OABr	Ric.	1	O4,D2	0.2, 0.2
Gabriele Ghisellini	OABr	D. Ric.	1	T1, T2, T4	0.2, 0.2
Gianpiero Tagliaferri	OABr	D. Ric.	1	O1, O2	0.2, 0.2
Tavecchio Fabrizio	OABr	Ric.	1	T1, T4	0.2, 0.2
Paolo D'Avanzo	OABr	Ric.	1	O1, O2	0.2, 0.2
Andrea Melandri	OABr	Post-doc	2	O1, O2	0.2, 0.2
Patizia Romano	OABr	Ric.	1	O4,D2	0.2, 0.2
Ilaria Arosio	OABr	Post-doc	2	P	0.2, 0.2
Lara Nava	OABr	Post-doc	4	T1, T2	0.2, 0.2

Name	Affiliation	Position	Type	WP	FTE/yr
Tomaso Belloni	OABr	P. Ric.	1	O2, O3	0.2, 0.2
Stefano Sandrelli	OABr	Tecnol.	1	P	0.2, 0.2
Om S. Salafia	OABr	PhD Stud.	4		0.3, 0.3
Alessio Pescalli	OABr	PhD Stud.	4	T1, T2	0.3, 0.3
Deborah Mainetti	OABr	PhD Stud.	4	O2	0.3, 0.3
Federico Vincentelli	OARm/ OABr	PhD Stud.	4	O2	0.2, 0.2
Enzo Brocato	OARm	Astr. Ass.	1	O1,D3,T4	0.3, 0.3
Piergiorgio Casella	OARm	Ric.	1	T1, O2, D3	0.3, 0.3
Andrea Rossi	OARm	Post-doc	1	O1, O2	0.2, 0.2
Gianluca Israel	OARm	P. Ric.	1	O1, D3	0.3, 0.3
Guillermo Rodriguez	OARm	Post-doc	2	O1, D2, D3	0.3, 0.3
Stefano Ascenzi	OARm	PhD Stud.	4	O1,T3,T4	0.2, 0.2
Silvia Piranomonte	OARm	Ric.	1	O1, D3	0.2, 0.2
Marica Branchesi	OARm	Ric. TD	4	O1,D2,T4	0.2, 0.2
Vincenzo Testa	OARm	Ric.	1	O1,D2,D3	0.2, 0.2
Luigi Pulone	OARm	Ric.	1	O1,D2,D3	0.2, 0.2
Luigi Stella	OARm	Astr. Ord.	1	O1,T4	0.2, 0.2
Angelo Antonelli	OARm	P. Ric.	1	O4,D2	0.2, 0.2
Valerio D'Elia	OARm	Tecnol.	2	O2,O4	0.2, 0.2
Saverio Lombardi	OARm	Post-doc	2	O4,D2	0.2, 0.2
Fabrizio Lucarelli	OARm	Tecnol.	2	O4,D2	0.2, 0.2
Matteo Perri	OARm	Tecnol.	1	O4,D2	0.2, 0.2
Giuseppe Altavilla	OARm	Tecnol.	2	O1,D2	0.2, 0.2
Fabrizio Nicastro	OARm	P. Ric.	1	T4	0.2, 0.2
Enrico Bozzo	OARm	Ric. TD	4	O4	0.2, 0.2
Francesca Panessa	IAPS	Ric.	1	O1,O2	0.3, 0.3
Bazzano Angela	IAPS	P. Ric.	1	O1,O2,O4,T1	0.3, 0.3
Ubertini Pietro	IAPS	Assoc. Em.	2	O1,T1	0.3, 0.3
Luigi Piro	IAPS	D. Ric.	1	O2, T4	0.2, 0.2
Mariateresa Fiocchi	IAPS	Ric.	1	O1,O4	0.2, 0.2
Lorenzo Natalucci	IAPS	Ric.	1	O2,O3	0.2, 0.2
Simone Lotti	IAPS	Ric. TD	2	O2	0.2, 0.2
Ugo Zannoni	IAPS	Tecn. TD	2	D3	0.3, 0.3
Bruno Luigi Martino	IAPS	Assoc. Staff	3	D2,D3	0.2, 0.2
Bando ADR INTEGRAL	IAPS	Post-doc	2	O2,O3	0.2, 0.2

Name	Affiliation	Position	Type	WP	FTE/yr
Imma Donnarumma	IAPS	Ric. TD	2	O2,O4,D2	0.3, 0.3
Capitanio Fiamma	IAPS	Ric.	1	O2,O4,D2	0.3, 0.3
Cardillo Martina	IAPS	Post-doc	2	T3,O4,D2	0.3, 0.3
Costa Enrico	IAPS	Assoc. Em.	2	O2,D2	0.2, 0.2
Del Monte Ettore	IAPS	Tecnol.	1	O2,D2	0.2, 0.2
De Rosa Alessandra	IAPS	Ric.	1	T1,O2	0.2, 0.2
Evangelista Yuri	IAPS	Ric. TD	2	O2,D2	0.2, 0.2
Fabiani Sergio	IAPS	Post-doc	2	O2,D2	0.3, 0.3
Feroci Marco	IAPS	D. Ric.	1	O2,D2	0.2, 0.2
Muleri Fabio	IAPS	Ric. TD	2	O2,D2	0.2, 0.2
Pacciani Luigi	IAPS	Ric.	1	T3,O4	0.2, 0.2
Piano Giovanni	IAPS	Post-doc	2	O2,O4,D2	0.3, 0.3
Soffitta Paolo	IAPS	P. Ric.	1	O2,D2	0.2, 0.2
Vittorini Valerio	IAPS	Ric. TD	2	T3,O4	0.3, 0.3
Maria Teresa Botticella	OACn	Ric.	1		0.2, 0.2
Domitilla de Martino	OACn	Astr. Ass.	1	O2,O4	0.2, 0.2
Massimo della Valle	OACn	D. Ric.	1		0.2, 0.2
Massimo Dall'Ora	OACn	Ric.	1		0.2, 0.2
Aniello Grado	OACn	Ric. Astr.	1		0.2, 0.2
Chiara Badia	OACn	Tecnol.	1	P	0.2, 0.2

4. Project cost breakdown

In Table 2, we report the share of costs. The largest fraction of requested funds is for the acquisition of new personnel. This is driven by two main reasons: on one hand, it is vital to train and support junior researchers from the early stages of their career in the field of SKA and CTA studies, as they will eventually be the prime users of these facilities. Moreover, although our group is large and diversified, many goals require the commitment that only a person devoting 100% of their time to the corresponding action can warrant.

Table 2: Cost breakdown

Reason	Requested funds (k€)
Overhead	120
Outreach	40
Hired personnel	490
Travel	150
Total	800

In Table 3, we provide a list of topics for the positions to be filled, accompanied by the type and duration of the contract, the host structure, the corresponding WP of activity, and any other structure whose activities will be coordinated with those of the post-doc. Indeed, as fostering the link among various location is one of our goals, we will also divide the resources for travel so that the structures which do not acquire new personnel will have the possibility to have more mobility - to encourage interaction and maximise the return of the work.

In one case, we will offer a senior position (RTD, 52.5 k€/yr) to acquire at least one unit of personnel with an advanced formation; in all the other cases, we will offer standard INAF salaries (ADR, 35 k€/yr), which should still attract brilliant junior researchers, in particular for the longer positions (three 2-yr and two 1.5-yr contracts, one of which to be extended to 2-yr through external funds already granted). Comparatively shorter positions (1-yr) will be offered for two more focused projects on development of analysis techniques in gamma rays and radio, which might be then followed-up with local funds.

We do not allocate funds for publications and computing. While these are important activities, the formation of personnel and their mobility have higher priority in a context with limited resources. We expect that a sufficient share of the overhead funds will be available for these needs.

We are also committed to carry out an extensive program of outreach activities, for a total of 40 k€ (5% of the total budget). In details, we estimate the following costs and activities:

- an exhibition presenting SKA and CTA, with panels (Italian and English) showing: what SKA and CTA are, their position and configuration; what radio and high energy waves are, what they can reveal about the objects emitting them; how the two instruments can be jointly used in order to answer to some astrophysical big questions; how radio and gamma images are produced from the collected data; what the role of Italy has been, is and will be. Each panel will have a digital frame showing videos about the subjects. The exhibition will be completed by the accompaniment of a music, the “sonification” of radio waves and gamma rays obtained by actual observations of transient phenomena, arranged in order to produce a symphony. An exhibit at the end of the exhibition path will show how that sounds were produced and explain that, since the observed information are not visible, any “translation” into sensible inputs can work. The use of digital frames in the exhibition’s panels will allow a great feasibility in order to include brand new discoveries or other currently unexpected contents related to this PRIN project. Costs: panels: 10k€, musical accompaniment: 5 k€, final exhibit: 5 K€
- 1 documentary in the style of “*Quelli che la Fisica*” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y0L8rfYz0WI>) about the people involved in SKA and CTA, their work and expectations and about the social aspects related to the Italian role in the CTA and SKA projects. Cost 10 k€
- 3 educational hands-on activities for different targets (involving students from all school grade levels) i) showing the global coverage of the SKA and CTA observing facilities scaled to accessible dimensions, made up of simple materials, easy to build and to reproduce; ii) using music and sounds in order to explain what a transient phenomenon is in term of duration related to the typical

Table 3: Personnel to be hired

Topic	Type	Duration (months)	Cost (k€)	Reference structure	WP	Other structs.
MWL search and characterisation of unidentified high energy transients and GW counterparts	RTD	24	105	IASF-BO	O1	S9
New physical insights on GRBs and TDEs in the SKA and CTA era	ADR	24	70	OABr	T2, T3	S1
The unexplored extremes of the electromagnetic emission from SNe: from gamma rays to radio	ADR	24	70	OAPd	O2	S7
MWL analysis and data mining of transient events toward the CTA and SKA era	ADR	24	70	OARm	O1, D3	
Accretion- and ejection-powered Galactic transients and development of target prioritisation strategies	ADR	18	52.5	IAPS	T1, O4	S2, S6-9
Transient events follow ups and SKA/CTA-Athena synergy	ADR	18	52.5	IAPS	O1, D3	
Studying transients through real time imaging at the highest angular resolution with VLBI	ADR	12	35	IRA	O3, D1	S5, S6
Development of analysis techniques for high-energy transients identification and follow-up in the MM and MWL context	ADR	12	35	IASF-BO	D2	

Notes: RTD = Ricercatore a Tempo Determinato; ADR = Assegno di Ricerca

timescales of the Universe, using music and sounds and engaging in the research of possible explanations of the nature of these fascinating events. [approx. cost 6 k€ for the design and production of the 2 prototypes and their low cost reproducible version; 4 k€ for the production of roughly educational kits to be used in the involved structures].

All products will be designed in order to easily adapt to additional modular contents and to be easily adjustable within other contexts. All product will be available to be used within INAF Outreach and Educational activities at national and international level.

5. Resources from INAF research structures

5.1 Financial resources

IAPS 6 months co-funding for “Transient events follow ups and SKA/CTA-Athena synergy” position.

5.2 Instrumental resources

5.2.1 Radio

The **Northern Cross**, owned by the university of Bologna and operated by IRA, is one of the biggest radio telescopes in the world, with a total collecting area of about 30,000 m². At present, a 1400 m² part of the N-S arm (equivalent to a 42m parabolic dish), named BEST-2 (Basic Element for SKA Training), operates with 32 receivers able to generate 24 independent “electronic” beams within the antenna FoV. From 09/2017, the upgrade to BEST-4 will provide 2800m² collecting area (60m dish equivalent) with 64 receivers able to generate 48 independent beams inside the same BEST-2 FoV, combining high sensitivity and wide FoV at the same time. To exploit the characteristics of BEST-4 for survey observations (pulsar, FRB or transients) a dedicated back end is needed (WP D1).

The **Medicina**, **Noto**, and (as soon as the extraordinary maintenance is completed) **Sardinia** radio telescopes, operated by IRA and OACg are available to follow up transients both as single dish instruments and as a **VLBI array**, within an ad hoc small and flexible networks that IRA coordinates through the **DiFX correlator** installed and run in Bologna. Data obtained from this resources during the 2016 Cyg X3 giant flare are the subject of WP O3, and will continue to be collected for future triggers.

5.2.2 Gamma rays

Many structures within our group (S1-3, S5, S7-9) have greatly contributed to the design, development, and installation of the ASTRI dual-mirror small size telescope end-to-end prototype (**ASTRI SST-2M**). ASTRI SST-2M is installed at the Serra La Nave INAF observing station and it is currently performing commissioning and engineering tests. From Spring 2017, it will start acquiring scientific data on the Crab nebula and on a few variable sources, such as Mrk 421 and Mrk 501. The ASTRI SST-2M prototype is an important observing facility for INAF, the VHE community and our research group. Thanks to the end-to-end approach, it will allow scientists and technicians in our team to become acquainted with one of the CTA telescopes, its data collection and analysis. It will also be followed up by a nine-unit **mini array** which will start to be deployed in 2018 at the CTA southern site.

OABr and OARm are also involved in **MAGIC**, the only experiment, among the present generation of Cherenkov instruments, able to respond to external triggers in real time. The fast reaction and the low energy (50 MeV) threshold make MAGIC a good performer in fast follow-up observations of extragalactic and galactic transients. As part of this project we are going to exploit the capabilities of MAGIC in observing non-thermal transient sources; moreover, activities carried on over the next two years will be aimed in testing the theoretical and observational background for CTA and its precursors, such as ASTRI SST-2M and mini-array.

IAPS, IASFBO, IRA, and OACg personnel are members in the **Fermi-LAT** and **AGILE** collaborations, which provides our team the possibility of prompt reaction to gamma-ray transients and to follow up with dedicated analysis tools and high-level expertise any transient reported at other wavelength.

5.2.3 MWL

Our group (through OABr) is deeply involved from the design to the in-orbit operations in the **Swift** mission, actively participating to the scientific management of the mission. In the 11 years since

launch, Swift's scientific program has expanded significantly beyond the realm of GRBs. Swift has become an unequaled Target of Opportunity (ToO) machine for the astronomical community. The rate of approved targets is now 4 per day, far exceeding any other mission. Thanks to its prompt reaction time, Swift provides the best suite of instruments, from optical/UV to hard X-rays, to follow-up and study newly discovered sources at other wavelengths.

IAPS, IASF-Mi, and IASF-Bo have a significant participation in **INTEGRAL**, the wide field satellite observing the sky in hard X-rays/soft gamma rays since 2002. In 2017 and 2018, our group is leading (PI A. Bazzano) an INTEGRAL program to scan the galactic plane, for 2 Msec every year, and a ToO proposal for TDEs (PI F. Panessa).

This project includes a large fraction of the Italian community (including the Italian PI) involved in the Imaging X-ray Polarimetry Explorer (**IXPE**) mission recently approved by NASA for a launch in 2020. Among the key science goals of the mission, there is the study of the boundary conditions of the jet launching mechanisms, including transients such as binaries and TDEs.

Our team is also leading (at the level of PIship) many programs for space and ground-based follow-up of GRB, FRB and GW. A list is given in 5.4. We note here that in particular the INAF/OAPd optical telescopes in Asiago (Copernico 1.82m and Schmidt) are available through a guaranteed large program.

5.3 Computing resources

IAPS has a BLADE architecture (UV 2000 SGI) for the processing of INTEGRAL data, based on high speed storage and parallelisation of the data processing. The architecture uses both temporary RAMdisks and NVMe. At present, the BLADE AVES2 consists of 160 CPUs, 1TB available RAM, Numalink 6 connectivity and 2 x 48 TB Qsan F600Q-D316 SSD data storage units. The facility will be available for use within this project, if approved.

IRA hosts and operates the software correlator for VLBI observations based on the Italian stations. It is currently composed of 4 "tanks" providing real-time acquisition capabilities for up to 5 stations transferring data at 1 Gbps rate, with a storage of 150 TB, and 24 cores. Flexbuff storage is being installed at the Mc and Nt stations, providing capability to simultaneously record and transmit voltage data.

OACg has received 20 k€ funding from Sardinia government (*Bando capitale umano ad alta qualificazione annualità 2015*) to purchase by the start of this project a GPU cluster (two MB Supermicro super X9DRI-F and two VGA NVIDIA GTX980 TI, or similar), to be installed at SRT with software for real time FRB searches.

5.4 Guaranteed time/collaborations/approved proposals

OAPd and OACn are members of **ePESSTO** (the continuation of PESSTO, Public ESO Spectroscopic Survey of Transient Objects; in particular S. Benetti is in the PESSTO Science Board), using the ESO New Technology Telescope and the EFOSC2 (optical) and SOFI (NIR) spectrographs. It is one of two currently running public spectroscopic surveys at ESO. OAPd personnel is also involved in **NUTS** (the NOT Unbiased Transient Survey). The membership in these two international collaborations offers the possibility of a priority access state of the art facilities of great relevance for many topics in our research project, such as SNe, TDEs, GRBs, and binaries.

Approved proposals with PI from our team for space and ground-based follow-up of GRB, FRB and GW:

GRB follow-up

- XMM-Newton (PI: D'Avanzo): 70 ks/year
- REM (PI: Melandri), 100 hours/semester
- TNG (PI: D'Elia), 10 hours/semester
- LBT (PI: D'Avanzo and Rossi): 6+16 hours/year

- ESO-VLT (PI: D'Avanzo): 12 hours/semester
- ESO-VLT (PI: Pian): 6 hours/semester (GRB-SN)
- EVN (PI: Ghirlanda): 4x4hours/year

FRB follow-up

- REM (PI: Campana): 45 hours/semester

GW follow-up

- REM (PI: Campana): 10 hours/semester
- NOT (PI: Pian): 10 hours/semester
- ESO-VST (PI: Cappellaro, Grado): 30+30 hours/semester
- ESO-VLT (PI: Pian): 12 hours/semester
- ESO-VLT (PI: Covino): 6 hours/semester
- TNG (PI: Piranomonte): 40 hours/semester
- LBT (PI: Palazzi): 16 hours/year
- Campo Imperatore Schmidt (wide field) +AZT24 (NIR)(PI: Brocato): INAF/OAR-telescope priority for GW-ToO
- Asiago Schmidt + 1.82m (PI.: Tomasella, Pastorello, OAPd): INAF/OAPd telescope high priority for GW-ToO
- SRT (PI: Possenti, OACg): 75 hours/semester (year 2)
- ATCA (PI: Possenti): 120 hours/semester

Many members of our team are also involved in the ESO-VLT X-shooter program devoted to measure GRB redshifts (PI: J. Fynbo, DK) and in the NOT, TNG and ESO-VLT programs for the follow-up of FRB (PI; D. Malesani, DK). Many of the above programs have a long term status or are likely to be extended for the entire duration of the present research project.

6. Statements

This project has been received and approved by the Directors of all the participating INAF structures: IAPS, IASF-Bo, IASF-Mi, IRA, OABr, OACg, OACn, OAPd, OARm, OATe. All the relevant statements are annexed.

Io sottoscritto Marcello Giroletti, nato a Milano il 19/7/1975, residente a Bologna in via Ruggi 6, dipendente INAF presso la struttura Istituto di Radioastronomia, esprimo il mio assenso alla diffusione via Internet delle informazioni relative ai progetti finanziati e alla diffusione presso gli eventuali valutatori esterni, all'esclusivo scopo della valutazione stessa, delle informazioni riguardanti i progetti presentati; dichiaro inoltre ai sensi del D. Lgs. n. 196/2003 il mio consenso al trattamento dei dati sensibili e non.

Bologna, 12/1/2017,

