

Fortaleza Station 2014 Annual Report

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Abstract This is a brief report about the activities carried out at the Fortaleza geodetic VLBI station (ROEN: Rádio Observatório Espacial do Nordeste), located in Eusébio, CE, Brazil, during the period from January until December 2014. The total observed experiments consisted of 118 VLBI sessions and continuous GPS monitoring recordings. About 90% of VLBI recorded data was transmitted through the high speed network.

1 General Information

The Rádio Observatório Espacial do Nordeste, ROEN, located at INPE facilities in Eusébio, nearly 30 km east of Fortaleza, Ceará State, Brazil, began operations in 1993. Geodetic VLBI and GPS observations are carried out regularly, as contributions to international programs and networks. ROEN is part of the Brazilian space geodesy program, which was initially conducted by CRAAE (a consortium of the Brazilian institutions Mackenzie, INPE, USP, and UNICAMP) in the early 1990s. The program began with antenna and instrumental facilities erected, with activities sponsored by the U.S. agency NOAA and the Brazilian Ministry of Science and Technology's FINEP agency.

ROEN is currently coordinated by CRAAM, Center of Radio Astronomy and Astrophysics, Engineering School, Mackenzie Presbyterian University, São Paulo, in agreement with the Brazilian National Space

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Research Institute, INPE. The activities are currently carried out under an Agreement of Cooperation which was signed between NASA—representing research interests of NOAA and USNO—and the Brazilian Space Agency, AEB and which was extended until 2021. Under the auspices of the NASA-AEB Agreement, a contract was signed between NASA and CRAAM, Mackenzie Presbyterian Institute and University to partially support the activities at ROEN. In 2014, the contract was renewed for four more years.

The counterpart of the operational costs, staff, and support of infrastructure are provided by INPE and by Mackenzie.

2 Main Instruments

The largest instrument at ROEN is the 14.2-m radio telescope on an alt-azimuth positioner. It is operated at S- and X-bands, using cryogenic radiometers. The system is controlled by the Field System, Version 9.11.6. Observations are recorded with a Mark 5A system and transmitted through a high speed network either to the U.S. (WACO and Haystack correlators) or to the Bonn correlator in Germany at rates about 220 Mbps. The 1 Gbps link was accomplished in 2007. It integrates and is sponsored by the Brazilian Research Network — RNP. One Sigma-Tau hydrogen maser clock standard is operated at ROEN. GPS monitoring is performed within a cooperative program with NOAA (USA). There is a Leica System 1200 installed at the station that operates continuously. The collected data are provided to the NOAA/IGS center and to the Brazilian IBGE center. ROEN has all basic infrastruc-



Fig. 1 14.2-m radio telescope.

tures for mechanical, electrical, and electronic maintenance of the facilities.

3 Staff

The Brazilian space geodesy program is coordinated by one of the authors (Pierre Kaufmann), who is Brazil's AEB representative in the NASA-AEB Agreement. The coordination receives support from the São Paulo office at CRAAM/Instituto and Universidade Presbiteriana Mackenzie, with administrative support from Valdomiro M. S. Pereira and Lucíola Melissa Russi. The Fortaleza Station facilities and geodetic VLBI and GPS operations are managed on site by Dr. Antonio Macilio Pereira de Lucena (INPE), assisted by Eng. Adeildo Sombra da Silva (Mackenzie), and the technicians Avicena Filho (INPE) and Francisco Renato Holanda de Abreu (Mackenzie).

4 Current Status and Activities

4.1 VLBI Observations

In addition to the regular experiments, Fortaleza participated in the CONT14 campaign during 2014. It consisted of 15 days of continuous observations whose main goal was to acquire state-of-the-art VLBI data over a time period of about two weeks to demonstrate the highest accuracy of which the current VLBI system is capable. All sessions of geodetic VLBI are described in Table 1.

Table 1 2014 session participation.

Experiment	Number of Sessions
IVS-R1	37
IVS-R4	50
IVS-T2	03
R&D	04
CONT14	15
CRF	03
OHIG	06

4.2 Operational and Maintenance Activities

The summary of activities performed in the period is listed below:

1. Repair and maintenance of the following equipment: cryogenic system, Mark IV video converters, Mark 5A recorder, antenna control electronic system, angle encoder system.
2. Adjustment in cavity control system of SigmaTau maser.
3. Field system updating.
4. Mark 5A recorder operational system and software restoration.
5. Installation of a new UPS system.
6. Operation and maintenance of geodetic GPS (NOAA within the scope of NASA contract).
7. Operation and maintenance of power supply equipment at the observatory (main and diesel driven standby).

8. Transferring of recorded data through high speed network part of and sponsored by the Brazilian Research Network — RNP.

4.3 GPS Operations

The IGS network GPS receiver operated regularly at all times during 2014. Data were collected and uploaded to an IGS/NOAA computer.