

CARMENES - Lessons Learned from a 5-Year EPRV Survey

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The CARMENES instrument was constructed specifically for a 5-year RV survey of M dwarfs, which was conducted in 750 observing nights from 2016 to 2020. I will examine some lessons learned during the whole life cycle of the project from the formation of the CARMENES Consortium to the public release of all data. The presentation is intended to stimulate further discussions as many of the salient points should be applicable (or not?) to other EPRV projects. Topics to be covered will include: the importance of building mutual trust in a multi-institutional consortium; dealing with the threat of premature cancellation of the whole project; navigation in the cost - risk - schedule triangle; transitioning from instrument construction to scientific exploitation; doing astronomy while the instrument is still being debugged; optimizing observing schedule and scientific productivity; exploiting synergies and forging mutually beneficial external collaborations. Looking back, I will attempt to identify the critical technical and scientific decisions that set us up for success or (near-)failure.