



Venus Exploration Analysis Group (VEXAG)

Sanjay Limaye (1) and Sue Smrekar (2)

(1) University of Wisconsin-Madison, Space Science and Engineering Center, Madison, United States (sanjayl@ssec.wisc.edu, +1608 262 5974), (2) Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Pasadena, California, USA (Ssmrekar@jpl.nasa.gov)

The Venus Exploration Analysis Group (VEXAG) was established by NASA in July 2005 to identify scientific priorities and strategy for exploration of Venus. This community-based forum is designed to provide scientific input and technology development plans for planning and prioritizing the exploration of Venus over the next several decades. VEXAG is currently composed of two co- chairs and several groups. The focus groups actively solicit input from the scientific community and meet during VEXAG meetings, held at least once a year. VEXAG reports its findings and provides input to NASA, but does not make recommendations. VEXAG holds meetings open to the global scientific community with interest in understanding Venus and receives input from the scientists and engineers around the world on the current open issues regarding understanding Venus as a planet.

VEXAG regularly evaluates Venus exploration goals, scientific objectives, investigations and critical measurement requirements, including especially recommendations in the National Academy of Sciences Decadal Survey and the Solar System Exploration Strategic Roadmap. VEXAG is coordinating the preparation of several White papers on different topics, including science, technology, and the recent flagship study, relevant to Venus exploration for the current Decadal Survey can be found on the VEXAG website (<http://www.lpi.usra.edu/vexag>).

VEXAG provides a forum for learning about international efforts in exploring Venus and facilitates collaboration in combined observation programs from space and earth based observatories. At present, Venus Express mission launched by European Space Agency in November 2005 is the only active mission collecting data from orbit around Venus since April 2006. It will soon be joined in December 2010 by Japan's Venus Climate Orbiter which is under development for a launch in May 2010. Other missions to Venus are being considered by NASA (Venus Flagship mission), Russia (Venera D) and in the European community (European Venus Explorer). In addition, it is anticipated that several mission concepts will be proposed to NASA's Discovery (Announcement of Opportunity anticipated winter 2010). The three New Frontiers proposals selected by NASA in December 2009 include a proposal for a mission to Venus - Surface and Atmosphere and Geochemical Explorer.

The Venus community recognizes that science return can be maximized by coordinating observations as much as feasible. VEXAG is one forum where the discussions can take place and the community is invited to actively participate in the VEXAG meetings and activities. The next VEXAG meeting and a workshop on the Venus atmosphere and its interaction with the surface will be held in Madison, Wisconsin, during 30 August – 2 September 2010. VEXAG's past activities, current efforts and future plans will be presented. The scientific community interested in Venus is invited to participate in VEXAG and support the exploration of Venus by the interested space agencies.