

ESO is the European Organisation for Astronomical Research in the Southern Hemisphere. Whilst the Headquarters (comprising the scientific, technical and administrative centre of the organisation) are located in Garching near Munich, Germany, ESO operates three observational sites in the Chilean Atacama desert. The Very Large Telescope (VLT), is located on Paranal, a 2 600 m high mountain south of Antofagasta. At La Silla, 600 km north of Santiago de Chile at 2 400 m altitude, ESO operates several medium-sized optical telescopes. The third site is the 5 000 m high Llano de Chajnantor, near San Pedro de Atacama. Here a new submillimetre telescope (APEX) is in operation, and a giant array of 12-m submillimetre antennas (ALMA) is under development. Over 1600 proposals are made each year for the use of the ESO telescopes.

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Front Cover Picture: The three types of ALMA antenna at the ALMA Test Facility at Socorro, New Mexico are shown, from left to right: US (Vertex RSI); European (AEC Consortium); Japanese (Mitsubishi). Since this photograph, the Japanese antenna has been removed and the US and European antennas have been linked interferometrically (see ESO PR 10/07). Photograph by Hans Hermann Heyer (ESO).