

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 2 000 proposals are made each year for the use of the ESO telescopes.

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Front Cover Picture: VLT HAWK-I near-infrared image of part of the Serpens star-forming region, showing a wealth of evidence for emergence of young stars from their parental cloud. This colour composite image was formed from three 1-min exposures in *J*, *H* and *K* filters taken during instrument commissioning. (See ESO PR Photo 36c/07.)