The European Extremely Large Telescope
— The Site

An extraordinary telescope calls for an exceptional site. To fully exploit the power of the European Extremely Large Telescope (E-ELT) it needs a location that has very dry and stable air, has many clear nights per year and is free from light pollution. An exhaustive search for a suitable location assessed multiple locations in both the northern and southern hemispheres. Many excellent sites were identified.

Cerro Armazones is a 3060-metre peak in the central part of Chile's Atacama Desert, some 130 kilometres south of the town of Antofagasta and about 20 kilometres from Cerro Paranal, home of ESO's Very Large Telescope. This site excels in all aspects of astronomical sky quality.

In April 2010, the ESO Council selected Cerro Armazones as the baseline site for the planned European Extremely Large Telescope. The telescope will be operated as an integral part of the Paranal Observatory.



Night at ESO's astronomical site monitor on Cerro Armazones.



Aerial view of the Chilean Atacama Desert around the ESO Paranal Observatory. Cerro Armazones, the selected home for the future European Extremely Large Telescope, is at the upper left and the Paranal Observatory can be seen at the lower right. Credit: ESO/M. Tarenghi.

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Background image: Cerro Armazones night-time panorama. Credit: ESO/L. Calçada