



# European Southern Observatory

## Reaching New Heights in Astronomy

Created in 1962, ESO is the foremost intergovernmental organisation in the field of ground-based astronomy and is the most productive observatory in the world. ESO operates three unique world-class observing sites in the Atacama Desert region of Chile, giving astronomers access to some of the clearest skies in the Southern Hemisphere.

The original site is at La Silla, where several state-of-the-art medium-sized telescopes are in operation. At Paranal, the world's best optical/infrared astronomical facility, is the Very Large Telescope array (VLT), joined by the world's largest survey telescope, VISTA, at infrared wavelengths, and the VST survey telescope at visible wavelengths. In addition, ESO operates the APEX 12-metre submillimetre telescope at the 5000-metre-high Llano de Chajnantor.

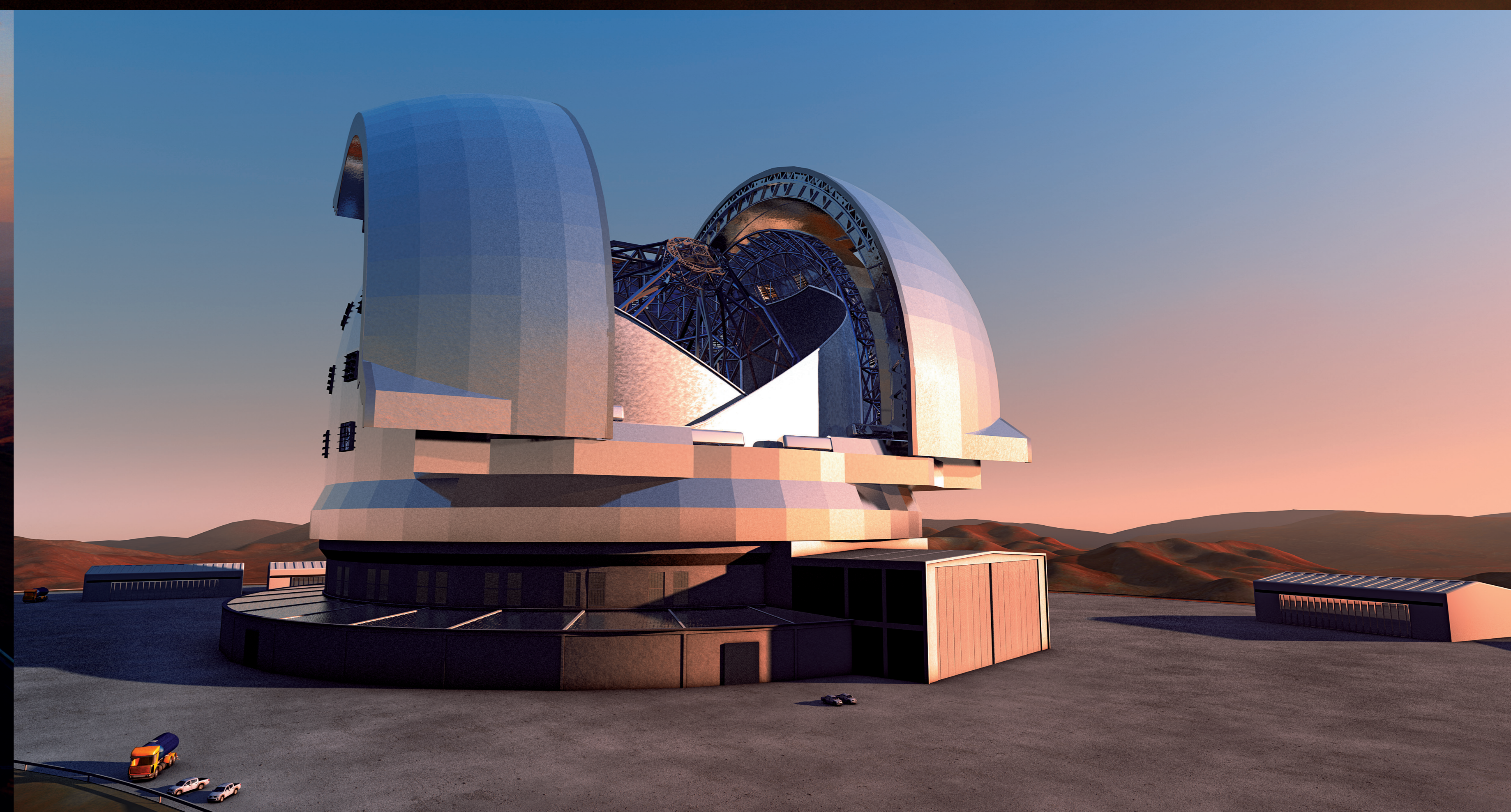
As well as being a leader in astronomical research, ESO is also at the forefront of developing the technology and instruments needed for the research of the future.

Together with its international partners, ESO is constructing the Atacama Large Millimeter/submillimeter Array (ALMA), a revolutionary astronomical telescope comprising an array of 66 giant 12-metre and 7-metre diameter antennas, observing at millimetre and submillimetre wavelengths. ESO is currently planning for the next generation of large telescopes, with the 40-metre-class European Extremely Large Telescope (E-ELT), which will be the largest optical/near-infrared telescope in the world.

Approximately 730 people work in the offices in Chile and at the Headquarters in Garching, near Munich (Germany). ESO is supported by 15 member states: Austria, Belgium, Brazil, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.



La Silla Observatory.  
*El Observatorio La Silla.*



Artist's impression of the European Extremely Large Telescope (E-ELT).  
*Impresión artística del European Extremely Large Telescope (E-ELT).*

