

Introduction to ESO

The European Southern Observatory (ESO) is a scientific research organisation for astronomy.

What?

ESO commissions and operates some of the largest telescopes in the world. It provides state-of-the-art facilities for astronomers and astrophysicists within its Member countries.



VLT: The Very Large Telescope is the flagship facility for European ground-based astronomy and the world's most advanced visible and near-infrared observatory.



VISTA & VST: The Visible and Infrared Survey Telescope for Astronomy (VISTA) and the VLT Survey Telescope (VST) are dedicated to mapping the skies in the finest detail.



ELT: The Extremely Large Telescope (ELT) is a revolutionary 39-metre diameter telescope, currently under construction, with first light scheduled for 2027. It will be the biggest optical telescope ever built and will explore the Universe in unprecedented depth and detail.



ALMA: ESO owns and operates the Atacama Large Millimeter Array (ALMA) together with the USA and Japan. ALMA is composed of 66 radio antennae. It detects light from the vast cold clouds in interstellar space and from some of the most distant galaxies.

Alongside these, ESO also operates and hosts a suite of other smaller telescopes at its sites in Chile.

Where?

ESO's telescopes are in northern Chile and its headquarters are in Garching, Germany.

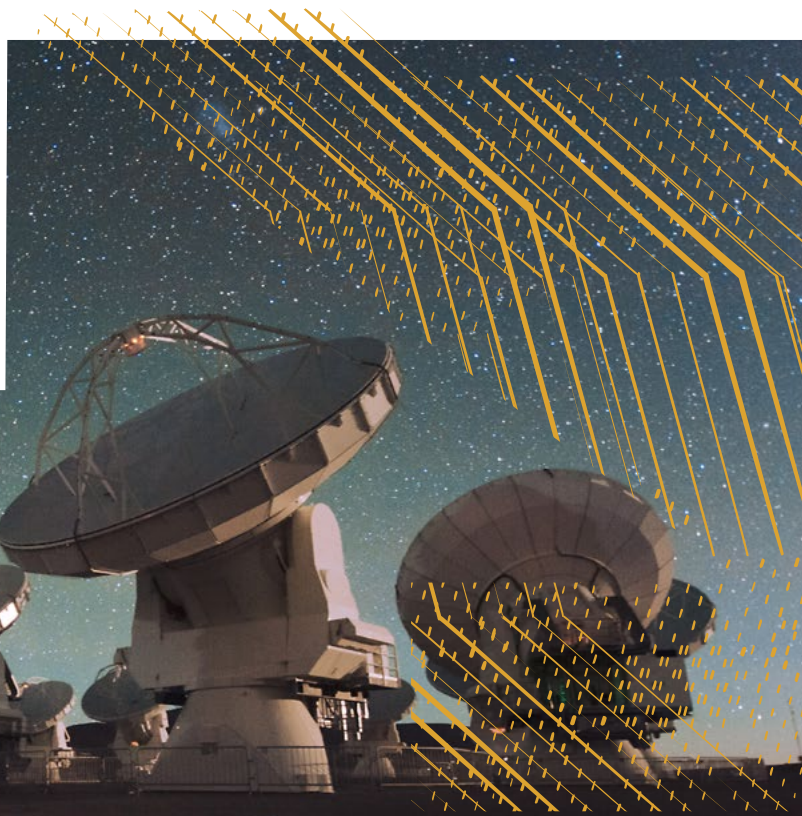
Who?

ESO is supported by the UK and 15 other Member States, together with the host state Chile and Australia as a strategic partner.

The UK contributes ~17% of ESO's annual budget, plus a 2% year-on-year add-on for the construction of the ELT. The Science & Technology Facilities Council (STFC) manages the UK's subscription to ESO.

Why?

By designing, building, and operating world-leading observatories, and utilising cutting-edge technologies and systems, ESO allows astronomers to make discoveries that increase our knowledge of the cosmos and the origins of the Universe.



Working with ESO

Procurement Budget

ESO annual procurement budget: ~£85M

Procurement Process

ESO follows its own procurement rules as agreed by its Member States and detailed in its [General Conditions](#).

For matters not specifically covered within the General Conditions, ESO is governed by German law.

All tenders greater than €150,000 are publicised on the [ESO website](#). Tenders between €50,000 and €150,000 are not publicly advertised. ESO procures via a competitive process, awarding contracts on a fully compliant and best value for money basis.

The STFC Business Opportunities team acts as the Industrial Liaison Office (ILO) for the UK; providing a free service to support UK companies interested in working with ESO and promoting relevant tenders to them. As ILO, the STFC Business Opportunities team receives advance notification of all ESO tenders valued over €50,000 and is invited to put forward up to five UK companies per tender who would like to participate.

ESO and UK Industry

ESO works closely with the UK as one of its Member States to achieve a fair return on its investment, including providing UK companies with opportunities to bid for contracts.

There are many areas in which UK companies can supply products and services to ESO.

KEY SECTORS



Optics



Cryogenics
& Vacuum



Detectors



ICT & Electronics



Civil Engineering
& Construction



Radio Frequency
& Microwave

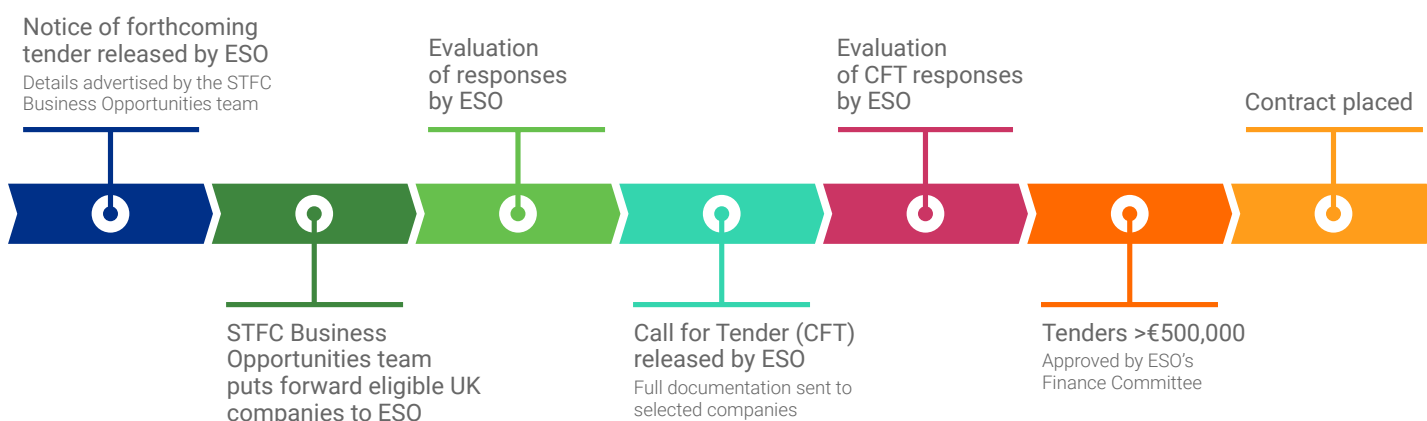


Mechanical
Engineering



Insurance

ESO Procurement Process for >€50,000



Get in Touch

The STFC Business Opportunities team provides free assistance to UK companies to help them hear about and win contracts at ESO.

To receive advance notice of forthcoming tenders, advice on ESO's procurement processes, and invites to targeted events register at stfc.ukri.org/tender

Or get in touch direct at tenderopportunities@stfc.ukri.org
Science & Technology Facilities Council
Polaris House, North Star Avenue,
Swindon, SN2 1SZ, UK