

The ST-ECF Newsletter

The ST-ECF issues a Newsletter approximately twice a year covering the latest developments of HST and NGST. The Newsletter is free of charge, and institutes and individuals are invited to subscribe using the slip below. See also www.stecf.org/newsletter



- News about the condition of operating HST instruments
- Status of future instruments
- New developments within instrument science and calibration
- Details of the Servicing Missions
- New science and images
- News about ST-ECF work
- ... and much more

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Connecting

Ground- and

Space-based

Astronomy

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Mission



The Space Telescope-European Coordinating Facility (ST-ECF) was established in 1984 jointly by the European Space Agency (ESA) and the European Southern Observatory (ESO). The main goal is to function as a link between ground- and space-based astronomy in Europe. This is realised through the daily work, which is concentrated on the two ESA Missions, the Hubble Space Telescope (HST, a collaboration with NASA) and the Next Generation Space Telescope (NGST, a collaboration with NASA and CSA, the Canadian Space Agency) and by sharing several aspects of science operation with ESO.

The group has many facets some of which are highlighted in these pages. Apart from these activities the group is participating in various collaborations supported by the European Commission, such as:

- ASTROVIRTEL
- The "Elite" European Fellowship Programme
- The development of the Virtual Observatory concept

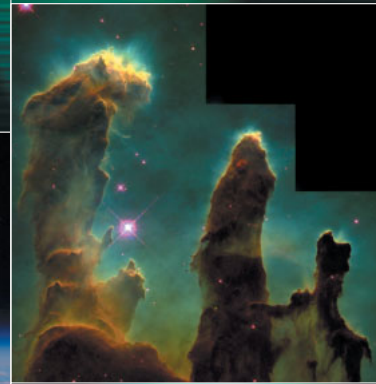


User Support

The ESA commitment to HST has ensured a minimum share of 15% of the observing time for the European users through its planned 20 year lifetime (1990-2010). The group assists the European users in utilising HST's capabilities in the best way:

- Assisting users in designing observing programmes:
 - How to write a successful proposal
 - Determining the most efficient instrument mode
 - Optimising the observing plan
- Assisting users in reducing data
- Developing sophisticated software for data analysis to be used by the community at large
- Fostering large multi-wavelength scientific collaborations

Contact: stdesk@eso.org



Archive

The ESO/ST-ECF Science Archive Facility has over twelve years of experience in the management and development of astronomical archives and databases. Through an effective collaboration with STScI (Space Telescope Science Institute) and CADC (Canadian Astronomy Data Centre) the Archive has implemented a number of innovative features. These have been adopted by other archive sites:

- Preview of images and spectra
- Web interface to query the database
- On-the-fly re-calibration of HST and ESO exposures
- Association of exposures
- Data Mining
- Processing of parallel observations

The archive receives 3 Terabytes of HST and ESO data yearly (2001), and delivers 2 Terabyte of data to the users.

Contact: catalog@eso.org

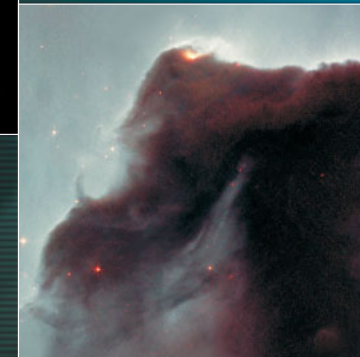


Instrument Science

The group actively pursues the concept of 'predictive calibration' for scientific instruments. This is based on the implementation and use of sophisticated 'first principles' software modelling. The group has applied this concept to:

- Post-operational Archive for HST's FOS (Faint Object Spectrograph)
- Calibration plans and pipeline for HST's NICMOS (Near Infrared Camera and Multi-Object Spectrograph)
- Pre-launch activities for HST's ACS (Advanced Camera for Surveys)
- Ensuring that NGST instruments (especially the instrument developed by ESA) will meet scientific requirements by using knowledge and methodology from the HST project

Contact: stdesk@eso.org



Outreach & Education

The outreach and education group for HST and NGST at ST-ECF operates as a dedicated contact point for the general public, the media and scientists. The unit works in close collaboration with the ESA Science communication group and scientists at ST-ECF and ESO. Among the products produced by *The Hubble European Space Agency Information Centre* are:

- Information about HST
- News and images describing HST science
- Educational material
- Brochures
- Video material etc.

See: hubble.esa.int

Contact: hubble@eso.org