

How we built ALMA

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The Atacama Large Millimeter/submillimeter Array (ALMA), an international partnership of the European Organisation for Astronomical Research in the Southern Hemisphere (ESO), the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) and the National Institutes of Natural Sciences (NINS) of Japan in cooperation with the Republic of Chile, is the largest astronomical project in existence. ALMA is a single telescope of revolutionary design, composed initially of 66 high precision antennas located on the Chajnantor plateau, 5000 meters altitude in northern Chile. The National Astronomical Observatory of Japan (NAOJ), a branch of NINS, is taking the role of the Executive for the 25% contribution from East Asia to the project. ALMA is now in its full operation and producing exciting scientific data, such as the astonishing image of the grooved protoplanetary disk surrounding HL Tau.

In this paper, I will introduce the lights and shadows of this worldwide collaboration that built ALMA, based on my 7-year experience in Chile working for the project.

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