

Figure 9: The ALMA Operator Master Console.

ALMA European Project Scientist Appointed

Tom Wilson (ESO)

The new ALMA European Project Scientist is Dr. Leonardo Testi. He took up the appointment in May 2007. Leonardo Testi received his Ph.D. from the University of Florence in 1997. Subsequently he was a postdoctoral fellow at the Owens Valley Radio Observatory of Caltech. In 1998 he joined staff of the Arcetri Astrophysical Observatory, and later on of INAF, for which he also served on the Science Council. Leonardo has been chair of the European ALMA Science Advisory committee and a member of the ALMA Science Advisory committee, so he well knows the details of the project as well as the science that can be carried out with ALMA.

Leonardo's main scientific interest is the study of circumstellar discs around newly formed stars. It is believed that many of these discs of dust and gas will develop into planetary systems, so such studies are complementary to the optical searches for extrasolar planets being carried out, for example, with HARPS and the ESO 3.6-m telescope. The major drawbacks to present-day studies of circumstellar discs are sensitivity and angular resolution. With ALMA, the sensitivity will be more than 40 times better, and the angular resolution more than 5 times better, than current instruments. Thus ALMA will allow breakthroughs in this area, as well as for studies of star formation, galaxy evolution and dynamics, Solar System science and cosmology.

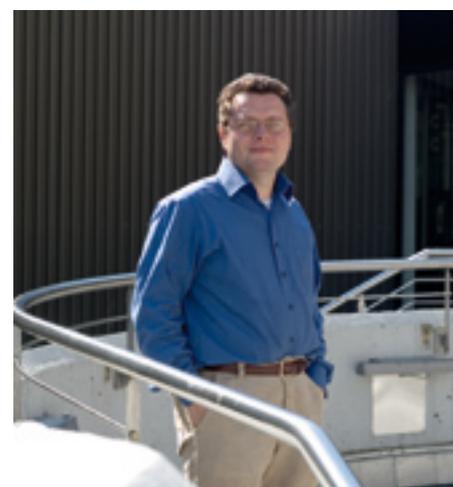


Photo: H. Hoyer, ESO

Dr. Leonardo Testi



FORS1 colour composite image of the H_{II} region NGC 2081 in the Large Magellanic Cloud taken with the new blue CCD. Three filter images isolating emission lines of [O II], [O III] and H-alpha were combined.