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Award Abstract #1241529

Planning a Partnership Model for a Giant Segmented Mirror Telescope

NSF Org: [Division Of Astronomical Sciences](#)

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For Mathematical & Physical Scien

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ABSTRACT

The Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT) Project is designing and planning to construct and operate a 30-

meter diameter optical/infrared telescope with fully integrated adaptive optics to lead the next generation

of telescopes with observation at the diffraction limit of its large aperture. TMT science goals address the

recommendations of the last two US decadal surveys of astronomy and astrophysics that gave

high priority to the science that can be accomplished by a giant segmented mirror telescope. Sited on Mauna Kea, Hawaii, TMT will be the only such telescope in the northern hemisphere. TMT is a collaboration of California Institute of Technology, University of California, the Association of Canadian Universities for Research in

Astronomy, the National Astronomical Observatory of Japan, a consortium of Chinese institutions led by

the National Astronomical Observatories of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, and institutions in India

supported by the Department of Science and Technology of India.

The five-year planning activity supported by this award will lead to a US astronomy community science plan, an integrated science and education plan, proposals for US groups to collaborate in TMT science instruments, a US operations plan, and a US TMT data management plan. Activities under this award will include a series of joint TMT US-international Forums and annual workshops and Town Halls at the annual meeting of the American Astronomical Society. Three representatives of the NSF-supported astronomy community will become members of the TMT Collaborative Board, assuring a US role in shaping the project and its implementation. A US TMT Science Advisory Group will engage the US community in developing the science plan, and three members of the Group will join the TMT Science Advisory Committee, assuring input by the US community in guiding the TMT science program and interaction with other TMT astronomy communities. A TMT Education and Public Outreach Advisory Board will focus the broad expertise and interest in stakeholder communities in developing an integrated plan to leverage TMT science in education, work force development and other broader impacts of TMT in society.

TMT will engage the US astronomy community in their formulation of plans to exploit TMT scientific

opportunities and to integrate TMT into the US optical/infrared observing system. By joining with TMT,

the US astronomy community will be able to build on the substantial scientific synergy of national and

international observatories already located on Mauna Kea and enjoy new opportunities to collaborate with

the international astronomers participating in TMT. TMT will also benefit from the expertise of the US

astronomy community in defining TMT technical systems and future science instrumentation.

As a leading national science resource, TMT will contribute excitement to its host community in

Hawaii, as well as national significance in catalyzing public interest in astronomy, science and

technology. Building upon the project's existing plans in Hawaii, TMT will engage the US community

and education stakeholders in planning a broader US education and work force development program

under the guidance of an Education and Public Outreach Advisory Board. Sited in the center of the Pacific Ocean, TMT's unprecedented observational power will serve as a catalyst for collaboration among scientists in the Pacific Rim astronomy communities.

In response to solicitation NSF 12-526, NSF will engage with the TMT Project to plan a partnership model for the TMT Observatory which, depending on circumstances, the NSF may join at some later date.

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