



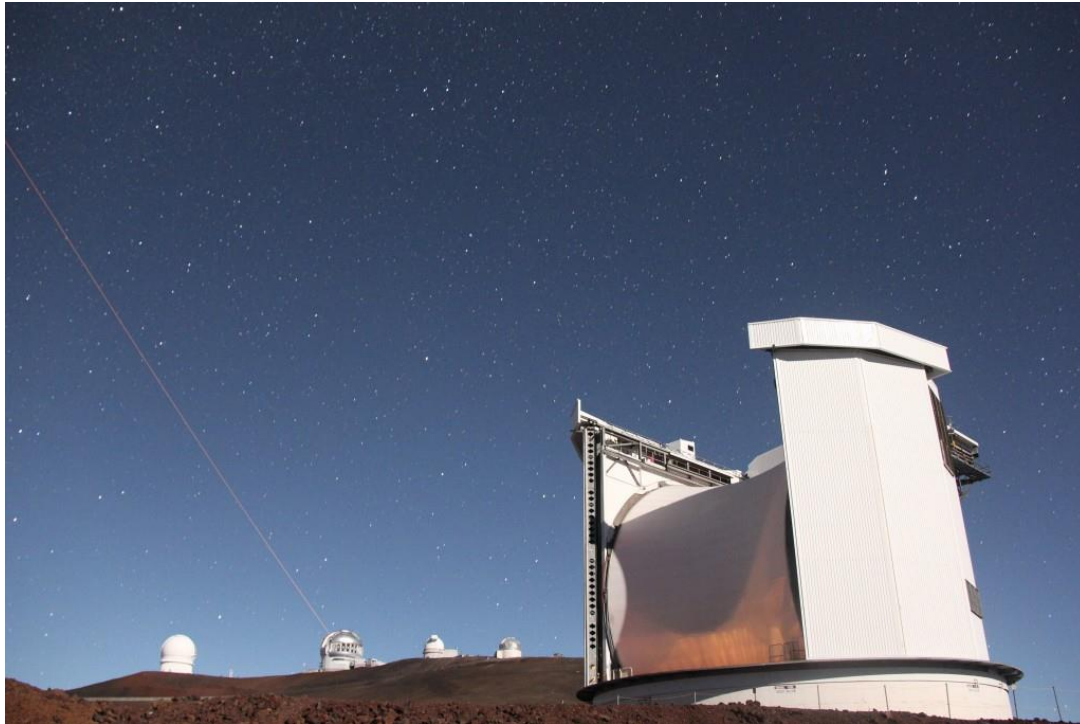
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Press Release

For Immediate Release

## **HKU becomes an associate partner of East Asian Observatory strategically enhancing its research in astrophysics, space and planetary to a higher level**

November 10, 2020



The James Clerk Maxwell Telescope is located on the summit of Hawaii's Maunakea.

Photo credit: William Montgomerie

The University of Hong Kong (HKU) under the auspices of the Laboratory for Space Research (LSR), Faculty of Science, has just signed an MoU with the East Asian Observatory (EAO). HKU thereby becomes an associate partner of this international organization for 3 years in the first instance, and proudly becomes a member of another elite club that has aspirations to grow into the Asian equivalent of the European Southern Observatory. EAO currently consists of Japan, South Korea, Mainland China and Taiwan as full members, while Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam as observer, and with India currently working on joining fully.

The EAO currently operates the James Clerk Maxwell Telescope (JCMT). This 15-meter telescope is located on the summit of Hawaii's Maunakea and is the largest single-dish telescope in the world, designed to operate at submillimeter wavelengths. Our associate partnership gives us 2.5 nights guaranteed time on this facility each year (but with the opportunity to get much more) together with technical and administrative support and much else besides. This includes unique pathways and opportunities for international collaborations. As an associate partner of the EAO, LSR members can access all the facilities that the EAO operates, as well as other facilities to which EAO will have access to in the future. The EAO also acknowledges HKU as one of the university partners of the National Astronomical Observatory of China (NAOC) under the Chinese Academy of Sciences (See note 1).

The University of Hong Kong strives to play an important role in strategically positioning astrophysics, space and planetary research of both HKU and Hong Kong SAR to a higher level. This EAO associate



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partnership puts HKU in a special position as all other full members are the top bodies from Mainland China, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan. Thailand and Indonesia are represented by their National Observatories while Malaysia and Vietnam by their top universities. We were invited to join the EAO partly because of a successful LSR's initiative to propose the EAO through NAOC to set up its international headquarters in Dongguan, at a shared site with the proposed HKU-LSR "INSPIRE" lab (INSPIRE: International Space and Planetary Institute for Research Excellence).

LSR director Professor Quentin Parker says, "By joining the EAO, we demonstrate our clear international vision for the bright future of international Asian focused astrophysics research and infrastructure. Although HKU has taken this new step, to go with our earlier MoU with the NAOC, we hope our sister universities and colleagues across HKSAR and indeed Macau SAR will join us in a united front, where our scientists can play key roles in moving Asian astrophysics research forward in a true spirit of trust and collaboration."

### **About LSR**

The LSR is well situated in a dynamic region of Asia to foster links with the astrophysics, space and planetary sciences community in China and globally. The LSR's interdisciplinary research launches various bids to exploit and access the emerging Mainland funding and research environment. We have developed multilateral and strategic partnerships with world-leading universities, space science institutes and participate in large, international, high-impact space missions. We see this as an effective means to better position the LSR, the Departments of Physics and Earth Sciences, the newly established Research Divisions of the Faculty of Science and so HKU, as a serious node of knowledge, expertise and capacity in astrophysics and space and planetary sciences. Website: [www.lsr.hku.hk](http://www.lsr.hku.hk)

**About East Asian Observatory:** <https://www.eaobservatory.org>

Note 1: [https://www.hku.hk/press/news\\_detail\\_19233.html](https://www.hku.hk/press/news_detail_19233.html)

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