

Astronomy for a Better World!

Dr Charles Takalana & Dr Joyful Mdhluli
IAU-Office of Astronomy for Development
HEASA 2026 (29 Sep - 02 Oct 2026)



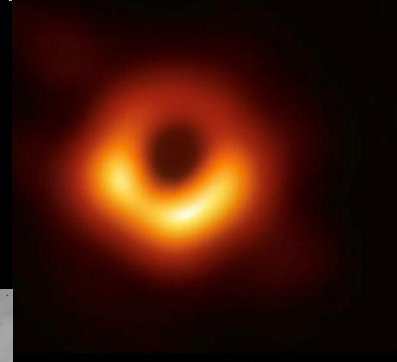
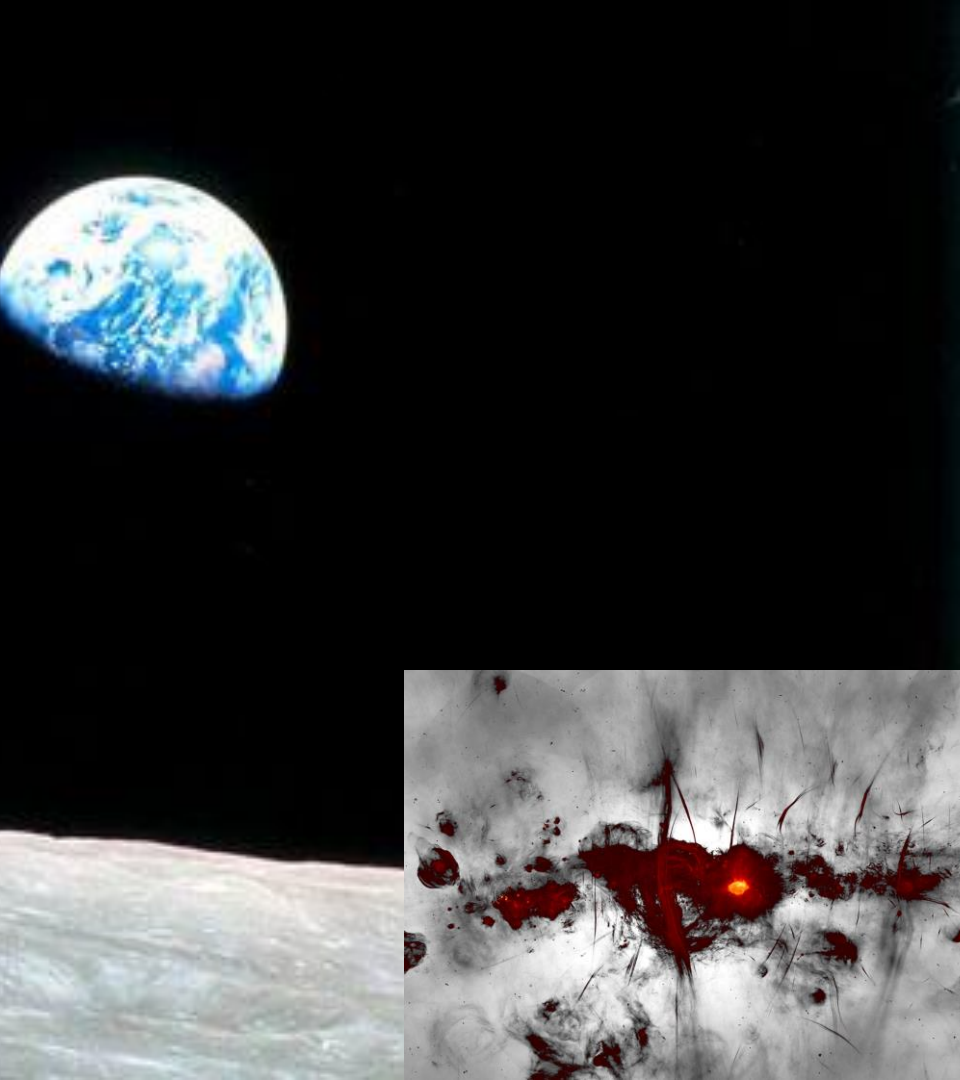
**science, technology
& innovation**
Department:
Science, Technology and Innovation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



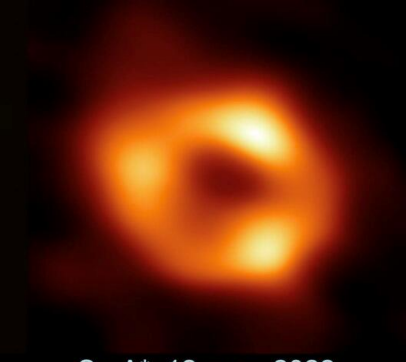
SAAO
South African
Astronomical Observatory



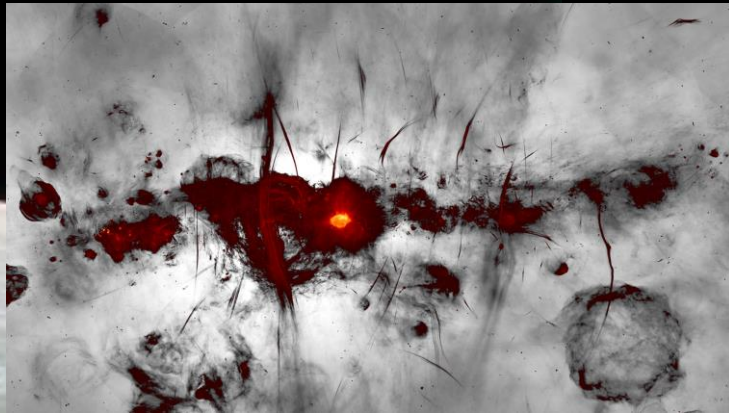
Credit: ESO/José Francisco Salgado



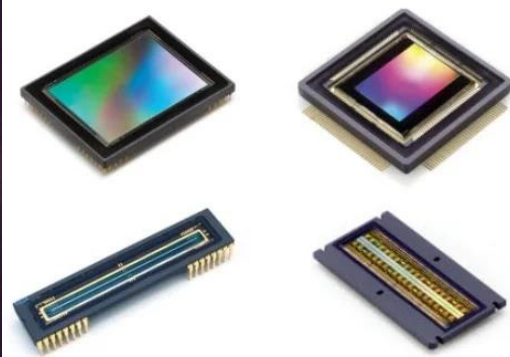
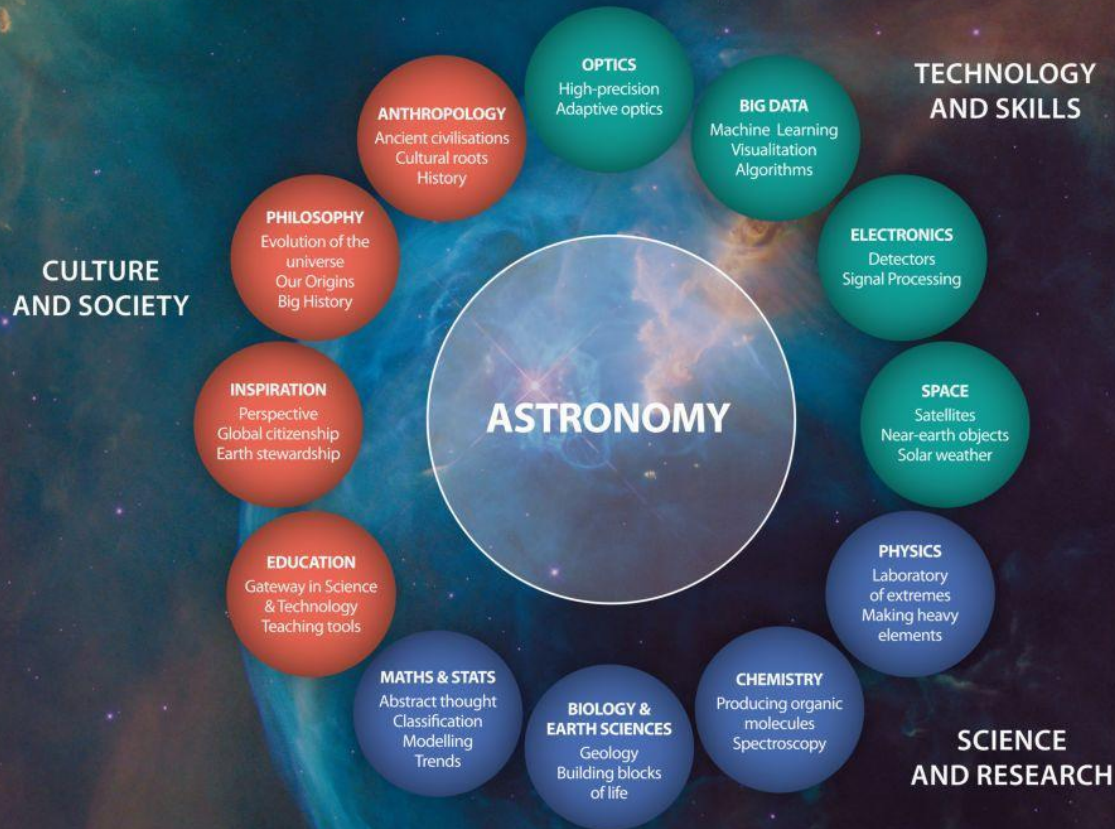
M87*: 10 april 2019



SgrA*: 12 may 2022



ASTRONOMY FOR A BETTER WORLD!



Over 100 years of scientific excellence

IAU

International
Astronomical Union

To promote and safeguard the science
of astronomy in all its aspects
including research, communication,
education and development through
international cooperation

IAU Strategic Plan 2020-2030

GOAL 1 The IAU leads the worldwide **coordination of astronomy and the fostering of communication and dissemination** of astronomical knowledge among professional astronomers

GOAL 2 The IAU promotes the **inclusive advancement** of the field of astronomy in every country

GOAL 3 The IAU promotes the use of **astronomy as a tool for development** in every country

GOAL 4 The IAU **engages the public** in astronomy through access to astronomical information and communication of the science of astronomy

GOAL 5 The IAU stimulates the use of **astronomy for teaching** and education at school level





IAU

International Astronomical
Union

Paris · est. 1919



OYA

Office for Young
Astronomers

Oslo · est. 2015



OAE

Office of Astronomy
for Education

Heidelberg · est. 2019



OAO

Office for Astronomy
Outreach

Tokyo · est. 2012



CPS

Centre for the Protection of the
Dark and Quiet Sky from Satellite
Constellation Interferences

Paris · est. 2022



OAD

Office of Astronomy for Development
Cape Town · est. 2011

Office of Astronomy for Development

VISION

Astronomy for a better world!

MISSION

To help further the use of astronomy as a tool for development by mobilizing the human and financial resources necessary in order to realise the field's scientific, technological and cultural benefits to society.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



OAD

Office of Astronomy for Development
Cape Town · est. 2011

OAD regional offices



A GLOBAL NETWORK. A REGIONAL FOCUS.

Regional Nodes and Language Expertise Centres share the OAD's objectives and work with the OAD to implement the IAU Strategic Plan, across geographical and cultural regions.

Meet the team



**Kevin
Govender**

Director



**Dr Charles
Takalana**

Deputy Director



**Nuhaah
Solomon**

Office Manager



**Ramasamy
Venugopal**

Operations Manager



**Dr Joyful
Mdhluli**

Flagships
Coordinator



**Dominic
Vertue**

Astronomy for
Mental Health
Project Leader



Azasiwe Mancwatela

Monitoring and
Evaluation



Zodwa Tiki

Hack4Dev
Operations Coordinator

BRICS Astronomy Team



Duduzile Kubheka

BITDN Project
Coordinator



Moleboge Lekoloane

Stakeholder Engagement
Officer



Daniele Naidoo

Education, Outreach and
Multimedia Officer

Partnerships & collaboration



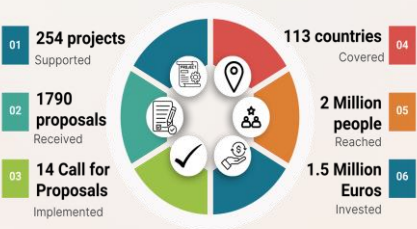
IAU-OAD Focus

Annual Call for Proposals

Theme 1: Socio-economic Development through Astronomy

Theme 2: Science Diplomacy through Astronomy

Theme 3: Astronomy Skills for Development



Astrotourism



Astronomy for Mental Health

“
The first day
or so we all
pointed to
our countries.
The third or
fourth day we were
pointing to
our continents.
By the fifth day we were
only aware of earth.”



SULTAN BIN SAUDMAN AL SAUD

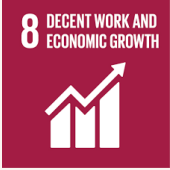
Astroskills for Development





Examples of Funded Projects

- **Education and Training**
Addressing literacy, school drop outs, science training, skills development
- **Access, Gender Equity, Inclusion**
Expanding access to science, removing barriers, using cultural connections
- **Economic Development**
Astrotourism training, telescope making



Astronomy and Society

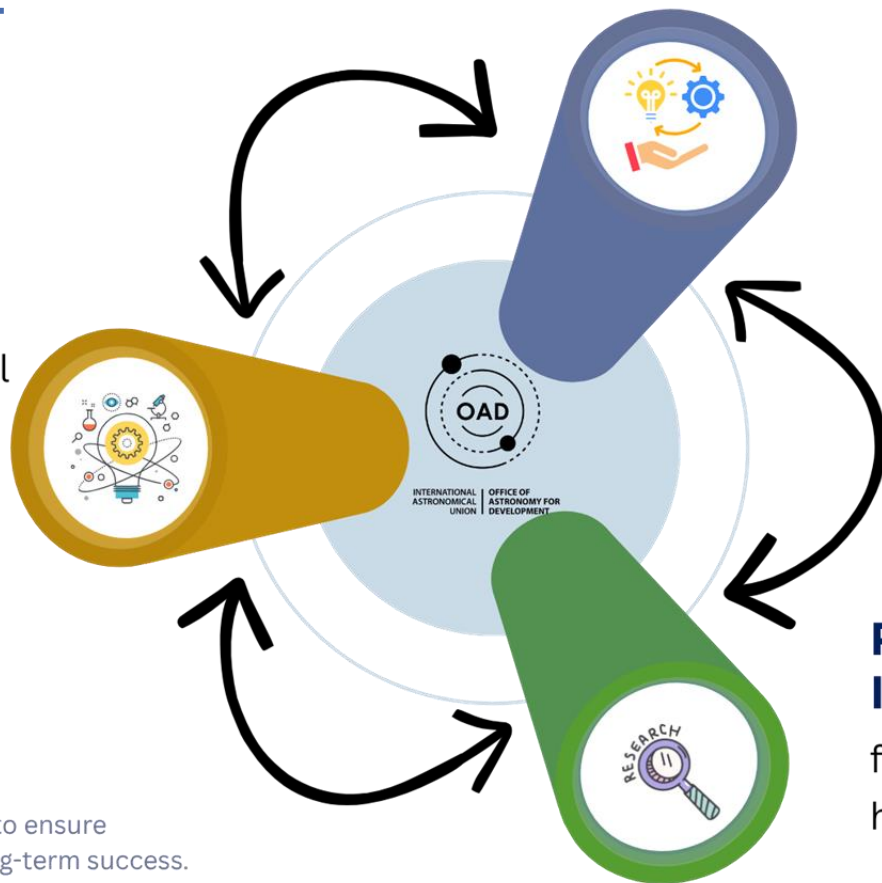
Through our Annual Call for Proposals and Flagship projects, we have used astronomy to contribute to **13** of the **17** UN Sustainable Development Goals.



New Growth Directions

Innovation Hub

to support small business and innovation.



Implementation Centre

to support community projects through proposal development, seed grants, training and mentorship.

Research Institute

for interdisciplinary, high-impact research.

Aligning core elements to ensure project stability and long-term success.

Still in concept-development phase

OAD@15
“*Astronomy for a Better
World*”
Symposium

15–17 February 2027
Cape Town and Online



Everyone is welcome!
(Registration Open)

Thank you