



Science and
Technology
Facilities Council

Director of Isaac Newton Group of Telescopes La Palma, Canary Islands





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About the Isaac Newton Group of Telescopes

Situated within the Roque de los Muchachos Observatory (ORM) on La Palma, Spain, the [Isaac Newton Group of Telescopes \(ING\)](#) is home to two prominent instruments: the 4.2-meter William Herschel Telescope (WHT) and the 2.5-meter Isaac Newton Telescope (INT). Both telescopes are undergoing enhancements with the integration of new instruments.

At the forefront is WEAVE, a cutting-edge multi-object spectrograph designed for the WHT. Boasting 1000 individual fibers, small integral field units (mIFU), and a large-area IFU (LIFU), WEAVE has commenced science operations with the LIFU since autumn 2023. The MOS and mIFU are presently undergoing commissioning and science verification, with survey operations scheduled to commence in 2024. WEAVE is poised to become the primary instrument on the WHT, driving both WEAVE surveys and open time programs. [Learn more about the history and the science behind WEAVE.](#)

Simultaneously, the 2.5-meter INT is gearing up for advancements with the construction of HARPS3, a high-stability echelle spectrograph. Anticipated to achieve first light in 2025, HARPS3 will spearhead the Terra Hunting Experiment and will be accessible for open time programs. Furthermore, there is an opportunity to develop an additional instrument for the INT alongside HARPS3.

The operational framework of the ING is orchestrated under a tripartite agreement on behalf of the [UK Science and Technology Facilities Council \(STFC\)](#), the [Nederlandse Organisatie voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek \(NWO\)](#), and the [Instituto de Astrofísica de Canarias \(IAC\)](#). Collaborative agreements among these entities ensure the shared operation and allocation of observing time on the ING telescopes. Overseeing these operations is the ING Board, a body composed of scientists and representatives from the funding agencies of the three partner countries.

The core function of ING is:

- To deliver an effective telescope operation and a coherent development programme
- To facilitate the execution of world-class astronomical research by ING users.
- To establish the ING telescopes as the best of their class in the world and maintain their international competitiveness
- To pursue the execution of top-quality astronomical research and high-level training in observational astronomy at the observatory.



About STFC

Under the tripartite agreement described above, [STFC](#) is the Managing Agency of the ING and is therefore considered as the employer of ING staff. STFC is one of Europe's largest research organisations, trusted to support, enable and undertake cutting-edge projects in a range of diverse fields.

As one of the nine bodies of UKRI, STFC's research seeks to understand the Universe from the largest astronomical scales to the tiniest constituents of matter, yet creates impact on a very tangible, human scale.

Our mission is to discover the secrets of the Universe, to develop advanced technologies, and to innovate to solve real-world challenges.

STFC's immediate goals are set out in our [Strategic Delivery Plan 2022 – 2025](#). This covers new initiatives in our fundamental science programme, new investments in facilities in our National Laboratories, and our ambitions to grow our links to business and industry at our Research and Innovation campuses. The Plan reflects the exciting opportunities for STFC to contribute towards delivering UKRI's Strategy and the scale of our investment that will provide the UK with a series of world leading capabilities through to 2050 and beyond.

About UK Research and Innovation

[UK Research and Innovation \(UKRI\)](#) is the UK's largest public funder of research and innovation. We invest more than £8 billion annually to advance our understanding of society and the world around us to deliver benefits for society, the economy and the environment.



Our organisation comprises nine councils – the UK's innovation agency, Innovate UK, the seven disciplinary Research Councils and Research England, which is responsible for supporting research and knowledge exchange at higher education institutions in England. As a UK-wide organisation, we work across the four UK nations and with the devolved funding bodies and governments to understand and support different priorities that span research and innovation in different parts of the UK.

Through our Councils and the critical national capabilities provided by our centres, units and institutes, we deliver, support and champion the creativity and vibrancy of research and innovation in the UK, for the benefit of society.

UKRI is a non-departmental public body sponsored by the Department for Science, Innovation & Technology (DSIT),



Find out more in our new 5-year strategy, [Transforming Tomorrow Together](#)

About the Role

The Director of Isaac Newton Group of Telescopes Director will:

1. manage the staff and the operations of ING within budget to maximise its readiness and effectiveness for scientific research
2. develop a long-term vision that will maintain the scientific impact and productivity of the ING

As an employee of STFC, reporting to the Executive Director of Programmes STFC, the Director will have responsibility for the efficient and proper use of resources, consistent with the requirements of public accountability, employment legislation, policy and best practice, and health & safety compliance.

The key responsibilities of the Director of ING are to:

- recruit and retain high quality astronomical, technical and administrative staff, in particular leading the ING through the ongoing succession planning of senior staff;
- cultivate an inclusive and equitable work environment and support staff in their professional development
- plan and organise the staff and other resources to ensure that they are deployed most efficiently to deliver a high quality of service
- operate the ING within its financial envelope and develop an annual budget for review and approval by the ING Board
- develop a long-term vision for the ING
- effectively communicate with British, Spanish, Dutch and other stakeholders;
- maintain effective communications and relations with the ING users and its host communities
- maintain effective communication and relations with the Instituto de Astrofisica de Canarias (IAC) and with the Operations Subcommittee of the Comité Científico Internacional (CCI) as STFC representative to ensure the smooth running of the ORM and that its overall development is consistent with the interests of the ING
- maintain effective relations with the local community and a high profile for the ING through effective national and international public engagement.

Your Skills and Experience

We understand that individuals might hesitate to submit an application if they don't meet each of the criteria. If you're enthusiastic about joining our organisation and possess a majority of the skills or experience, we encourage you to proceed with an application. We recognise that a variety of perspectives, backgrounds, and experiences enriches



our work environment and therefore actively welcome applications from a diverse range of candidates.

The successful applicant must be an astronomer with a proven track record of achievement in their field, as well as managerial experience in the operation of a research group or research facility, including financial budgeting and control.

Candidates will also be assessed against the following criteria throughout the recruitment process:

- the leadership and communication skills to manage international and multi-disciplinary teams in a highly demanding environment, where complex problems have to be diagnosed and solved against very tight deadlines while maintaining a 365 day per year operational service
- awareness of the cultural differences between the three partner countries funding the ING operations
- a sense of vision, commitment and purpose to lead the longer-term future of the ING, this should include awareness of the developments in astronomical research and of the capabilities of other international Observatories
- good knowledge of Spanish is highly desirable; if necessary, intensive language training will be provided prior to taking up the appointment

The successful candidate will be required and must be able to work at an altitude of 2400m.

Terms of Appointment

Although employed by STFC, the successful individual will be issued a local contract, subject to Spanish law.

Contract Type: Open-ended (permanent) role

Salary: The appointment will be at Grade I, according to the ING Pay Scale. The starting basic gross salary for a Grade I is €80,044.68 per annum which is subject to Spanish income tax and social security deductions. After the first year, the salary will increase to €84,257.92 per annum. The salary will be increased with an annual allowance up to €34,000.00 dependent on skills and experience.

Hours: Full time (37 hours). We support flexible working, and we would encourage applicants to have a conversation with us to discuss FTE and flexible/compressed hours

Contractual and base Location: La Palma, Canary Islands

Travel Requirements: The successful individual will be required to travel to represent ING, attend meetings, conferences etc.



Benefits: This position offers a benefits package designed to provide an excellent work/life balance, including 23 days’ annual leave plus public holidays, flexible working hours, private medical insurance, advanced payment of salary, enhanced sick pay and payment in-kind, according to ING ‘Convenio’ (Bargaining Agreement).

Relocation Package: Relocation expenses up to a maximum of €8,000.00 can be claimed using UKRI’s standard claim process, providing evidence of expenditure.

Timescales and Selection

The selection process will consist of an interview and presentation. Interviews will be held at the ING in La Palma. *Please note, dates are subject to change.*

| Process | Date |
|------------------|--|
| Closing Date | 18 th August 2024 |
| Panel interviews | September 2024 (exact date to be confirmed) |
| Start date | Ideally by 1 st January 2025 (flexible) |

How to Apply

Please submit your application to ING recruitment (recruit@ing.iac.es) **by 23:59 WEST on 18th August 2024.**

You will need to supply:

- A curriculum vitae (up to two pages)
- A supporting statement/cover letter (no more than four pages)
- Application form fulfilled (available at [ING Careers Portal](#))

Your supporting statement/cover letter should:

- Cover how you meet the criteria listed under the person specification
- Be tailored to the role and describe your vision for **the Isaac Newton Group of Telescopes** for the next ten years

Please note, failure to provide a supporting statement/ cover letter, or failure to address the above points may result in your application not being considered further.

Prospective applicants may informally discuss the role and work of ING with the current Director, Marc Balcells. (director@ing.iac.es)



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion



UKRI believes that everyone has a right to be treated with dignity and respect, and to be provided with equal opportunities to flourish and succeed within an ethical and trusted working environment that is attractive and accessible to everyone who is interested in developing their career with us.

When submitting your application, please clearly highlight any accessibility needs or reasonable adjustments you require to support you throughout the recruitment process.

We also value diversity of thought and experience and are committed to creating systems that value difference so that everyone can feel welcomed, included and nurtured throughout their time with us.

We know actions speak louder than words. For further information, please visit the UKRI web page: [‘How we support EDI in the workforce’](#)

Pre-employment screening

To enable us to hire the very best people and to safeguard our people, our assets and our important role we will conduct a comprehensive pre-employment check on successful applicants as part of the recruitment process.

UKRI supports research in areas that include animal health, agriculture and food security, and bioscience for health which includes research on animals, genetic modification, and stem cell research. Whilst you may not have direct involvement in this type of research, you should consider how this aligns with your personal values or beliefs. Our pre-employment requirements include a security check and an extreme organisation’s affiliation check.

As part of the recruitment process, the successful candidate will also be required to register their [Declarations of Interest](#).

The Seven Principles of Public Life

In 1995, the Committee on Standards in Public Life defined seven principles, which should underpin the actions of all who serve the public in any way.



Consistent with the Commissioner's Code of Practice, applicants will be expected to uphold the standards of conduct set out in the Seven Principles of Public Life, which are:

Selflessness

Holders of Public Office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or other friends.

Integrity

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.

Objectivity

Carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

Openness

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

Honesty

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

Leadership

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

Complaints Procedure

If you feel you have reason to complain, you should direct your concerns in the first instance to the Senior Appointments team (SeniorRecruitment@ukri.org) who will make every effort to deal with this and respond to you within 48 hours.

If your complaint is not dealt with satisfactorily, you can find information about the steps you can take under [UKRI Complaints Procedure](#).