

# NOVA

The Netherlands Research  
School for Astronomy

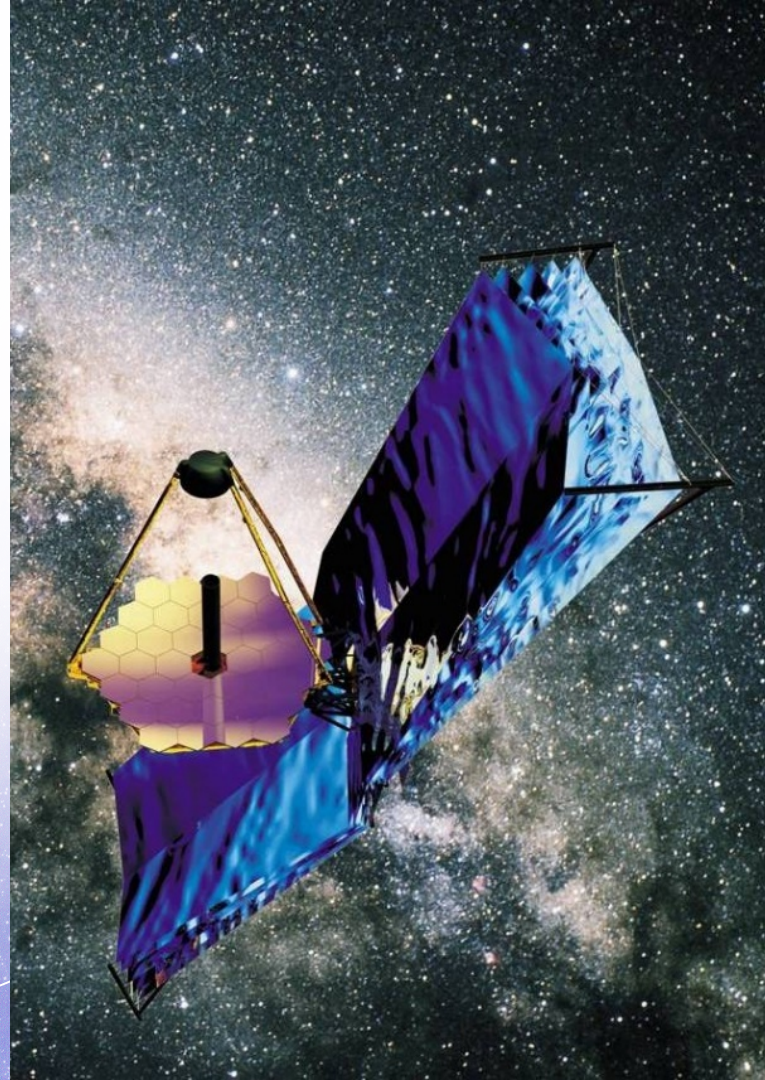
NAC2026 update



Scott Trager

*Scientific Director*

11 May 2026



# NOVA – A virtual institute



The alliance of astronomical institutes at 4 Dutch universities

Our mission:

- Conduct astronomical research at the highest international level
- Train the next generation of astronomers
- Share our discoveries with society

Our philosophy:

- Top astronomy = top talent + top instrumentation



# NOVA – Our people



# NOVA – Our organization



NOVA Oversight Board (RvT)

NOVA Board



NOVA Directorate



Peter Jonker  
Deputy Sci. Director



Scott Trager  
Scientific Director



Michiel Rodenhuis  
Executive Director

Research Networks

NOVA Office

Instrumentation groups:  
Op-IR & Sub-mm

NOVA Information Center

# NOVA – Our organization

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## NOVA Office:



Jantine Liesting  
Management Assistant



Thomas Wijnen  
Instrumentation Coord.



Mieke Paalvast  
Research Community  
Coord.



Lena Jaworksa  
Financial Controller



Hafize Olgun  
Financial Administration

# NOVA – Our organization



## NOVA Information Center @UvA

<https://astronomie.nl>

The screenshot shows the homepage of Astronomy.nl. At the top left is the NOVA logo and the text 'Astronomie.nl'. A navigation menu includes 'Actueel', 'Encyclopedie', 'Telescopen', 'Organisaties', 'Onderwijs', 'Over NOVA', 'Colofon', and 'IAU100'. The main content area features several news items with images and headlines:

- Black Hole Finder**: Astronomen roepen hulp in van het publiek bij het zoeken naar zwarte gaten. Nieuws.
- Telescopen**: Hubble meet grootte van nabije exoplanet. Alles over sterrenkunde.
- James Webb Space Telescope**: James Webb Space Telescope ziet zandwolk op 'suikerspinplaneet' WASP-107b. Nieuws.
- 20 november: Halve maan bij Saturnus**: Hemelverschijnselen.
- Webb-ruimte telescoop**: Webb-ruimte telescoop ziet zandwolk op 'suikerspinplaneet' WASP-107b. Alles over sterrenkunde.
- 'Doorgegeven'**: 'Doorgegeven' komen kunnen exoplaneten van bouwstenen voor leven voorzien. Alles over sterrenkunde.
- Astronomen ontdekken**: Astronomen ontdekken de verste snelle radioflits tot nu toe. ESO.
- De verste waarneming**: De verste waarneming ooit van het magnetische veld van een sterrenstelsel. ESO.

### NOVA Informatiecentrum (NIC)

Marieke Baan, MSc - Hoofd NOVA Informatiecentrum

Roel van der Heijden, MSc - Persvoorlichter en webredacteur

Dr. Joanna Holt - Manager educatie PO en VO

Nelleke Theijssen, MSc - Coördinator Mobiel Planetarium

Joris Hanse, MSc - Planetarium-specialist

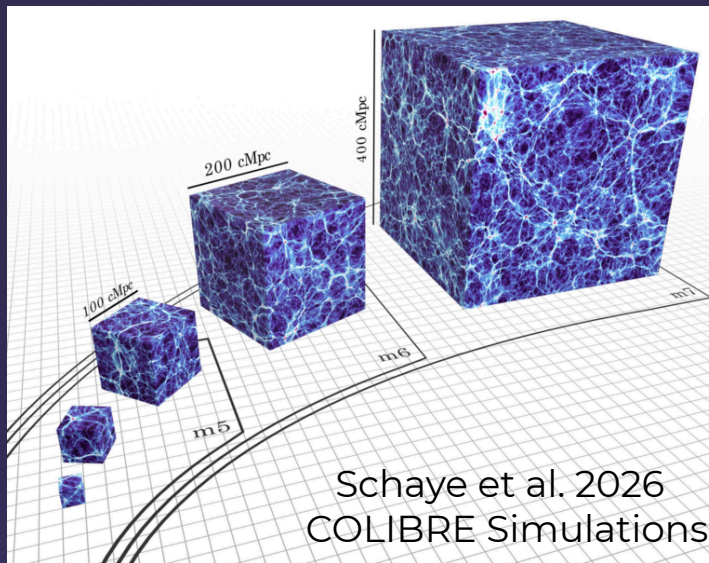


# NOVA highlights since the last NAC

# Leiden Observatory



WISPIT 2b – a newborn planet  
Van Capelleveen et al. 2025



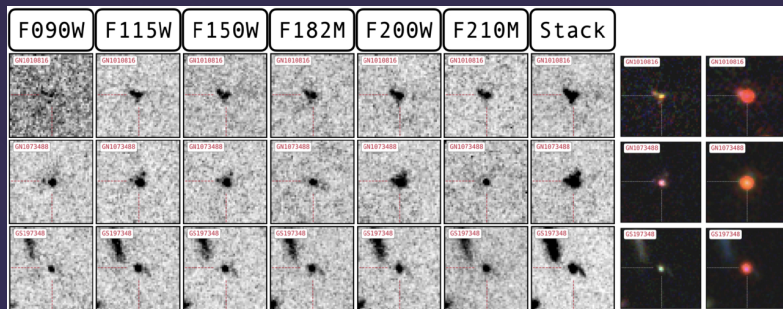
Schaye et al. 2026  
COLIBRE Simulations



Joeri van Leeuwen  
Endowed professor  
AI for Astronomy

... and Reinout van Weeren received an NWO VICI !

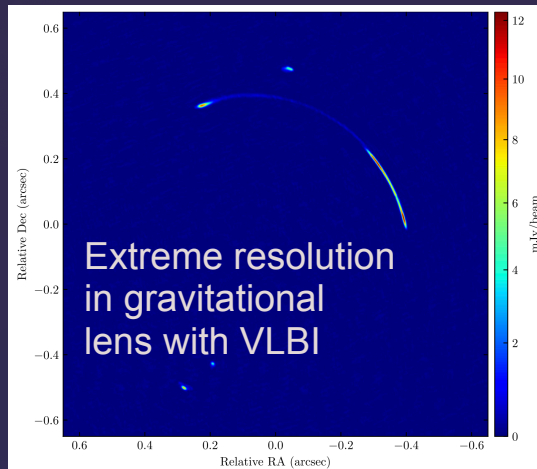
# Kapteyn Astronomical Institute



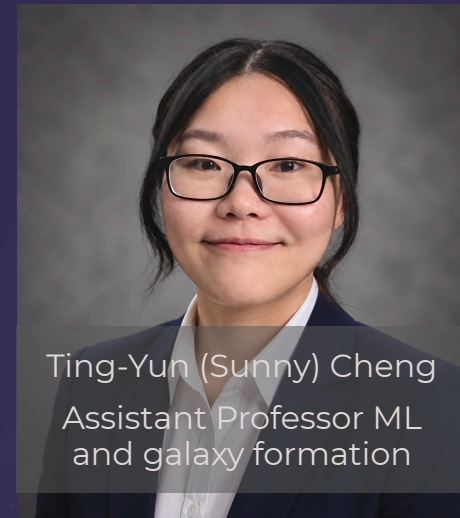
Complex morphologies of Little Red Dots reveal their nature, Rinaldi et al. 2025

NWO VENI Quentin Changeat,  
ERC advanced grant Inga Kamp,  
ERC starting grant Tim Lichtenberg,  
NWO Open Science Platform GOOD (Gijs Verdoes Kleijn with TU Delft)

Order of the Star of Italy Renzo Sancisi,  
Europlanet Early Career Medal Tim Lichtenberg, RAICES award Mariano Mendez,  
KHMW Graduation Prize Sten Sipma, Van Swinderen Jury Prize Petra Awad



McKean et al. 2025



Ting-Yun (Sunny) Cheng  
Assistant Professor ML  
and galaxy formation

Pratika Dayal left to join CITA  
(Canada)

# Anton Pannekoek Institute



## Cool science result(s)!

- Invisible jets from tiny black holes sculpt the Galaxy
- Massive stars in metal-poor environment often have a close partner

## Prizes/grants!

Jacco Vink: Humboldt prize

Nathalie Degenaar: NWO/VICI grant

Carsten Dominik: ERC Advanced Grant

Ziggy Pleunis: ERC Starting Grant

Joe Callingham: NWO/VIDI

## Personnel changes!

Samaya Nissanke & Jean-Michel Désert: Potsdam

Gudmundur Stefánsson: Schmidt Sciences

Sera Markoff: Plumian Professor Cambridge

Lex Kaper: new director API



An exceptionally precise location of a repeating fast radio burst with the European VLBI network confirms that it originates from the heart of a persistent radio source.  
(Moroianu et al. 2026, ApJ 996, L16)

# Astrophysics/Radboud



- New EHT images reveal unexpected polarization flips at M87\*
- Solar Orbiter traces superfast electrons back to Sun
- LOFAR: largest ever radio sky survey maps the Universe in unprecedented detail

## Prizes/grants:

- ERC CoG Katharine Mulrey
- VENI Lieke van Son
- MERAC prize Katharine Mulrey

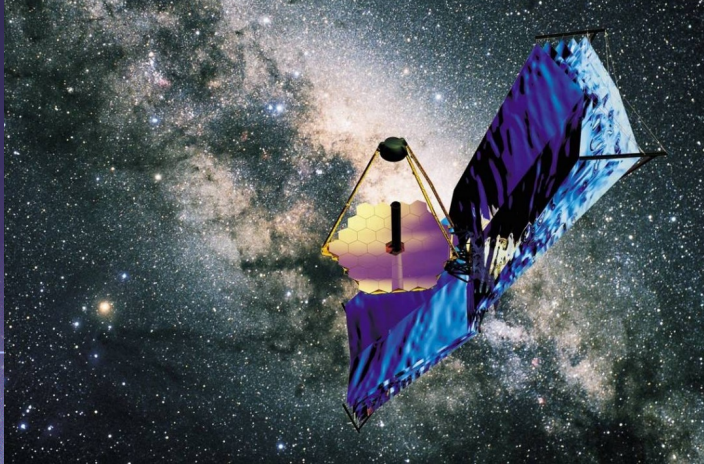
## Personnel changes:

- New assistant professor Lieke v Son
- Marijke Haverkorn in NWO ENW board



**earliest supernova to date (JWST), originating from a time when the universe was only 730 million years old.**

# NOVA's instrumentation program



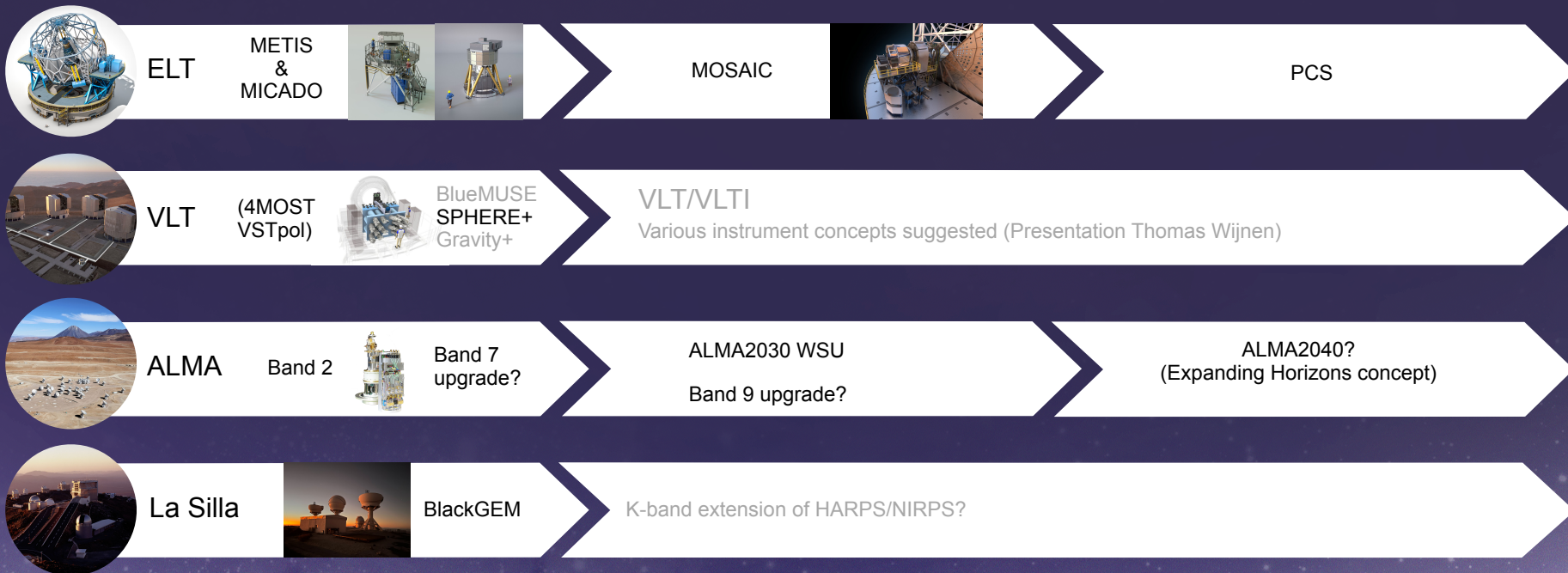
# ESO facilities



2030

2040

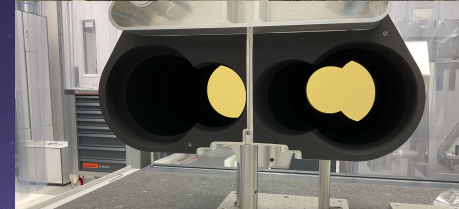
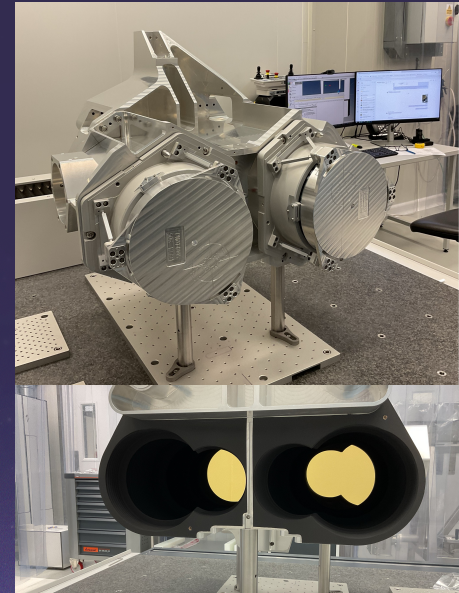
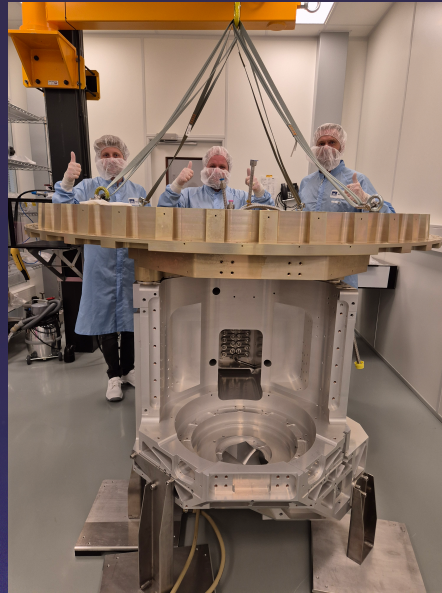
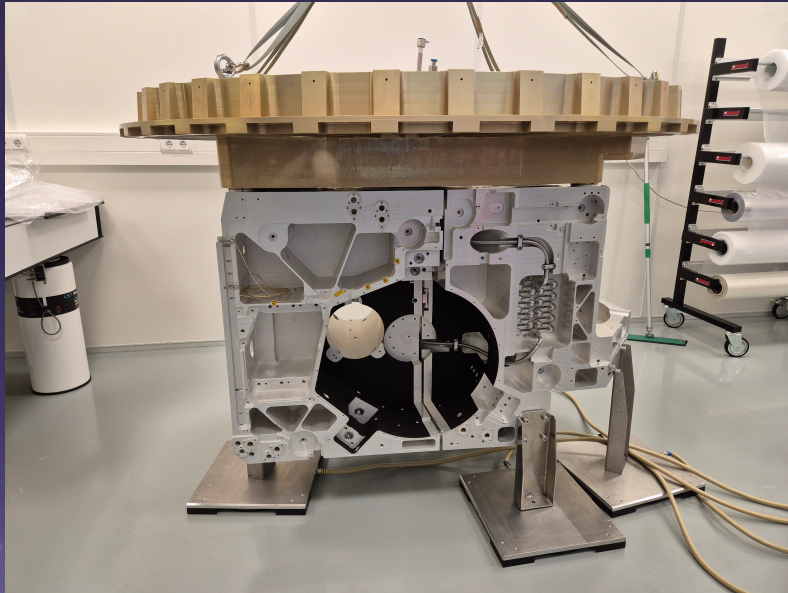
2050



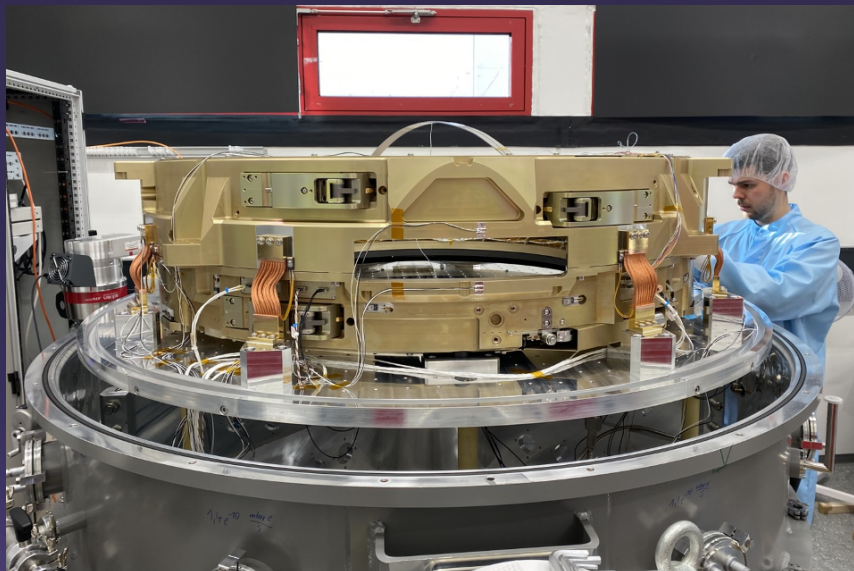
# Op-IR group



METIS CFO Hardware progress:  
backbones and reimager successfully integrated



# Op-IR group



MICADO CWM integrated and successfully cold tested

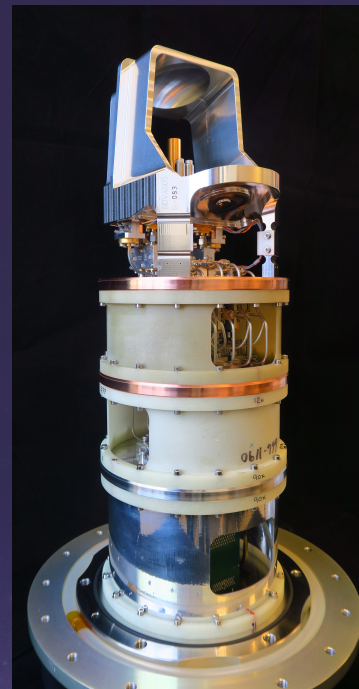


MOSAIC agreement signed with ESO

# Sub-mm group



ALMA Band 2 production of 73 receivers almost completed



Completed LLAMA Band 6 receiver

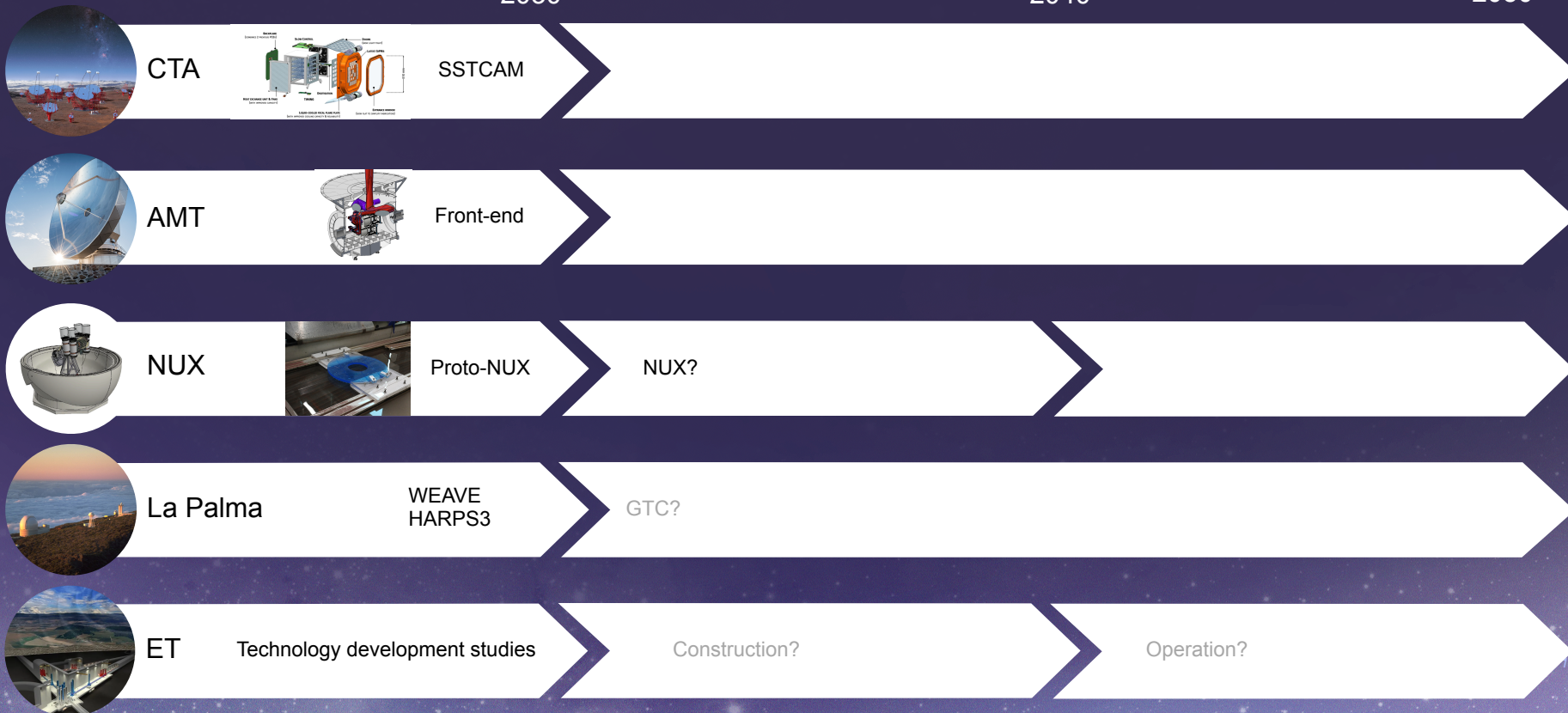
# Other ground-based facilities



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2050



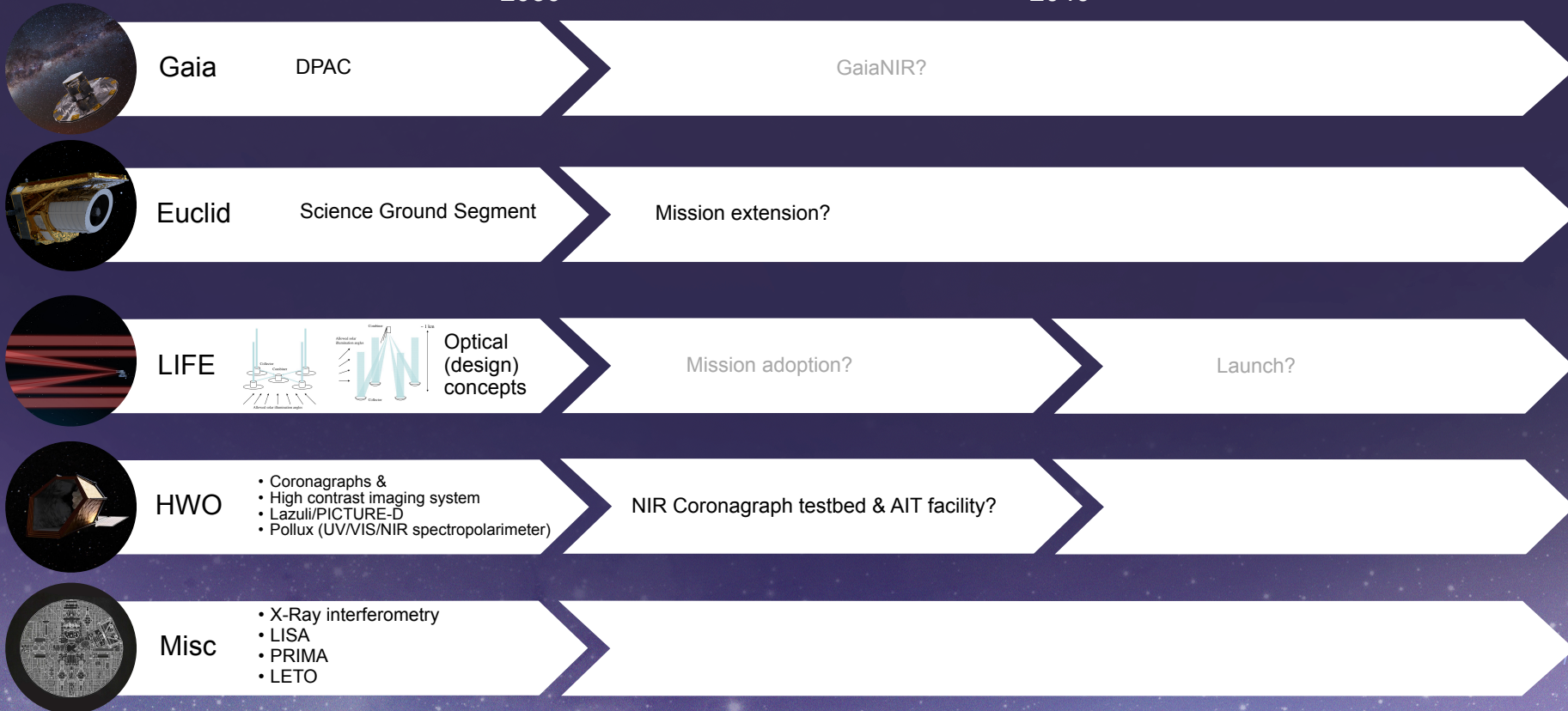
# Space missions



2030

2040

2050



# Research & community coordinator at NOVA

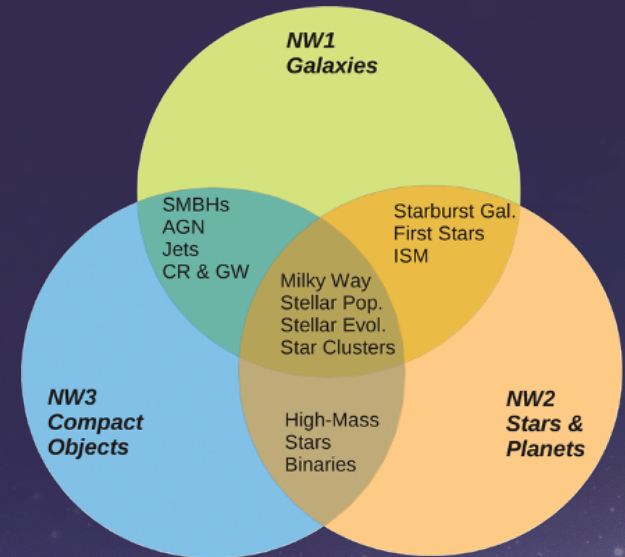


## A changing NOVA landscape

- Transition in funding structure
- Keeping institutes connected
- Stengtening communication and community

## Focus areas

- Community  
*NOVA PhD school, alumni network*
- Communication:  
*New website & community portal*
- Strategy and coordination  
*Strategic plan, triennial report, future funding planning*



# New NOVA website & member portal

*Launch expected after summer 2026*



Strengthening communication and connection across the Dutch astronomy community

## Community updates

- News from across the community
- Shared calendar for events and opportunities
- Visibility of activities

## Collaboration & connection

- Find people working on similar topics
- Networks, expertise & facilities
- Easier cross-institute collaboration

## Shared platform & resources

- Public website + member portal
- Central access to documentation
- Shared community information

One shared platform for communication, collaboration and community

