



A 12-meter radio telescope built in the Atacama Desert in Chile will soon be taking a peek at the cosmos' early history. It functions in the submillimeter wavelength range – a radiation band that, up to now, has been little explored and that will provide us with a look into some of the universe's unexplored "dusty corners": stellar nurseries, the centers of galaxies and, above all, into the "dark epoch" that occurred at the beginning of the history of the cosmos when the first stars, quasars and black holes were formed. The telescope is being developed as an international team effort under the overall control of a research group for millimeter and submillimeter astronomy at the Max Planck Institute for Radio Astronomy in Bonn. Its name, *APEX – Atacama Pathfinder Experiment* – highlights its further function as a forerunner to the *Atacama Large Millimeter Array* ALMA, which will be constructed on the same spot in the Atacama Desert and shown here as an artist's conception. This alliance of 64 antennae in total, each effectively a sibling of the 12-meter APEX telescope, will hopefully shed some "submillimeter light" on stellar history, star systems and the universe.

ILLUSTRATION: ESO