

## **The FIRST mission: Implementation status and schedule**

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The Far InfraRed and Submillimetre Telescope (FIRST) is one part of the ESA FIRST/Planck programme that combines two ESA missions of the HORIZON 2000 programme, the fourth cornerstone mission (CS4), FIRST, and the third medium sized mission (M3), Planck.

FIRST is a multi-user observatory, observing in the far infrared and sub-millimetre part of the electromagnetic spectrum, in the wavelength range from 60 to 670  $\mu\text{m}$ . The Planck mission is a survey mission dedicated to map the anisotropies of the temperature of the cosmic background radiation.

Both missions are planned to be launched in February 2007 on a single ARIANE V launcher from the European Space Port of Kourou. The baseline scenario for the launch assumes the carrier configuration, i.e. FIRST is mechanically carried by the Planck spacecraft. Both missions use orbits around the 2nd Lagrangian libration point  $L_2$ , that is approximately 1.5 million kilometres away from the earth in the anti-sun direction.

The programme is now close to the start of the spacecraft development and the paper will give an overview on the FIRST system design, the planned overall project implementation and the actual status of the programme.