

The Balloon-borne Large Aperture Sub-millimetre Telescope

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The Balloon-borne Large-Aperture Sub-millimetre Telescope (BLAST) will operate on a Long Duration Balloon platform with large format bolometer arrays at 250, 350 and 500 μm , initially using a 2.0 m mirror, with plans to increase to 2.5 m. BLAST is a collaboration between scientists in the USA, Canada, UK, Italy and Mexico. Funding has been approved and it is now in its building phase. The test flight is scheduled for 2002, with the first long duration flight the following year. The scientific goals are to learn about the nature of distant extragalactic star forming galaxies and cold pre-stellar sources by making deep maps both at high and low galactic latitudes. BLAST will be useful for planning FIRST key projects which use SPIRE.