



ISAAC NEWTON GROUP OF TELESCOPES  
LA PALMA, CANARY ISLANDS

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## Head of Operations

Ref: LSR01\_24

Closing date for applications: 16:00 (GMT) on the 29<sup>th</sup> March 2024

The Isaac Newton Group of Telescopes ([ING](#)) invites applications for the post of Head of Operations, a top-level management post responsible for ensuring that the telescopes, instruments and systems are working, on a daily basis, for use by astronomers.

The ING operates the 4.2-m William Herschel Telescope (WHT) and the 2.5-m Isaac Newton Telescope on behalf of the UK Research and Innovation Science and Technology Facilities Council, the Dutch *Nederlandse Organisatie voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek*, and the Spanish *Instituto de Astrofísica de Canarias*. The facilities, which are equipped with world-class imaging and spectroscopic instruments, are located at the *Observatorio del Roque de Los Muchachos (ORM)* situated at an altitude of 2400m on the Spanish island of La Palma. Exciting developments for both ING telescopes are currently underway: at the WHT, the [WEAVE](#) multi-fibre spectrograph has started science observations in 2023, while the HARPS-3 stabilised high-resolution spectrograph for the INT will be deployed in early 2025 following robotisation of the INT in mid 2024.

Reporting to the Director and contributing to the general direction and strategic development of the ING as a member of ING's management team, the post is ideally suited to an experienced engineer who is looking for opportunities to grow in a challenging, operational environment.

Our preference is for a mechanical or industrial engineer, but expertise in other areas, including team organization and project management, will also be valued.

## RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES

### Responsibility

The primary responsibility of the Operations Group is the handover, to the Astronomy Group, of two functional telescopes every day of the year. To that end, the post holder will lead and manage the Operations Group.

An associated responsibility is a leading contribution to the engineering activities in the area of specialization of the post holder.

### Duties

Management of the Operations Group includes, but is not limited to, the following duties:

- Leading ING operations, planning daily routine and repair work, as well as preventive maintenance activities;
- Leading the Operations Team, ensuring they have the skills, knowledge and resources required to carry out their tasks;
- Managing operational financial budgets;



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- Ensuring coordination of operational activities with other engineering groups, with the astronomy group and with ING administration.
- Ensuring that operational documentation is accurately produced and maintained;
- Keeping up to date with developments in operational environments, especially for astronomical observatories, and identifying organizational areas for further development.

Additionally, the post-holder

- will play a leading role in their team's contribution to the final deployment of WEAVE, and in any remaining adaptations of the WHT infrastructure to the WEAVE operation.
- Will use his/her engineering expertise in the maintenance and further development of the facility and WEAVE.

## SHORT-LISTING CRITERIA

### Experience

- Minimum: five years' experience in a engineering post in an operational environment.
- Desirable: five years' managerial experience in an operational environment; experience in astronomical observatory operations; skills in telescope mechanics, electronics, systems engineering or equivalent discipline (design, analysis).

### Qualifications

- Minimum: degree in mechanical, industrial engineering or equivalent discipline.
- Desirable: Masters' degree in an equivalent discipline.

### Other requirements

Applicants must also:

- be able to communicate effectively in English and Spanish;
- be fit to work at 2400 m altitude;
- be able to occasionally travel and work away from base and overseas.

### Valued knowledge, skills and personal qualities

For this post the following competencies are expected at a high level of expertise so that the post-holder is able to perform without supervision, adapting standard procedures to changing circumstances often in complex situations:

- Strong leadership abilities; proven ability to extract the best from the team and to promote the career development of team members.
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills. A teamwork spirit.
- A proven ability to think strategically. Skills in areas of planning and organisation, in a multi-disciplinary environment with strict operational requirements.
- Strong analytical and decision-making skills; drive, proactivity and initiative for problem solving; flexibility and adaptability to the varying conditions at the observatory.



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- A proven ability to produce quality technical documentation; fluency in the use and learning of today's information technology tools for work and for communication; knowledge about Spanish and/or UK health and safety principles and regulations.

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## CONTRACTUAL INFORMATION

The post is to cover a vacancy created by the retirement of the current Head of Operations in late 2024. During the hand-over period the post-holder will act as Deputy Head of Operations at band F, moving to Band G after taking Head of Operations responsibility.

In the case of grade F, the starting gross salary is €52,109.02 per annum which is subject to Spanish income tax and social security deductions. After the first year, the salary will increase to €54,853.58 per annum. In the case of grade G, the starting gross salary is €59,926.65 per annum, and €63,080.63 per annum after the first year.

Medical cover will be available to the appointee, partner and accompanying children under the Spanish National Health Service. ING will assist those coming from abroad in registering with the Social Security and Health Services. A relocation package and financial support for Spanish lessons are available.

Applicants from outside the EU need to be in possession of a residence permit and work permit both of which must be valid for Spain.

The successful candidate will have to present a medical certificate stating that they are fit to work at an altitude of 2400m.

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## APPLICATIONS

Send a completed application form, available from <https://ingconfluence.ing.iac.es/confluence/display/INGPublic/Job+Vacancies>, to [recruit@ing.iac.es](mailto:recruit@ing.iac.es). The form must be completed in English. Information related to the terms and conditions is available from the Head of Administration, Mr. Juan Jose Herrera Bujalance ([juanjo@ing.iac.es](mailto:juanjo@ing.iac.es)), + 34 922 425 413.

Applicants must also provide:

- A brief statement of the work undertaken within the last five years and
- CV
- Three professional references

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## FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information is available from the Director, Dr Marc Balcells ([director@ing.iac.es](mailto:director@ing.iac.es)), + 34 922 425 403. The ING is fully committed to equality of opportunity in the workplace. The closing date for applications is 16:00 (GMT) on the 29<sup>th</sup> March 2024.