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- News & Analysis

Ground-Based Astronomy

Pleading Poverty, NSF Delays Plans for Giant Telescope

1. [Yudhijit Bhattacharjee](#)

The architects of the Giant Magellan Telescope (GMT), a 24.4-meter instrument that a consortium led by Carnegie wants to build in Las Campanas, Chile, and the Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT), a rival project planned for a Hawaiian mountaintop, have long expected the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) to bear a significant part of the sizable cost of the two instruments: GMT's price tag stands at \$700 million and TMT's at \$1.1 billion. But last month, NSF announced that it would not be able to support construction of either project in this decade. The best the agency can offer right now, according to a funding solicitation posted on 30 December, is a chance at \$1.25 million over 5 years to continue their planning.