

The Venus Transit 2004 Programme

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ESO's public outreach activities comprise communication and media activities, educational projects and targeted events, addressing well-defined audiences. However, in 2004, one major activity stands out both in terms of visibility and in covering all of the above areas: the Venus Transit 2004 Public Science Discovery Programme. The objective was to use the 2004 Transit as a vehicle for disseminating knowledge about the Solar System, for raising the awareness of method of transit-based observations of exoplanets, to enable the public to re-enact a historical scientific exercise, to raise public appreciation of the scientific method and to collectively obtain a scientific result based on geographically distributed observations. The very successful programme comprised the development of an extensive set of teaching materials for schools, a web-based information and reporting system, observational activities on the day of the transit (8 June) as well as a video contest and a final event in Paris in November.