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Welcome to the AEI, and introduction to ASPERA

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I'll first give you a lightning overview of the AEI. The Max-Planck Institute for Gravitational Physics, also known as the Albert Einstein Institute or AEI, is the world's largest institute devoted to the study of gravitation. The main focus in Hannover is the detection of gravitational waves. These were first predicted by Einstein about a century ago; we hope to make the first direct detections with the LIGO/VIRGO and GEO instruments in the coming five years. Searching for weak gravitational-wave signals in detector noise is a large-scale computing and data analysis problem, hence the relevance of this ASPERA workshop.

I'll then give you a lightning overview to ASPERA. ASPERA is a network of European national government agencies responsible for coordinating and funding national research efforts in Astroparticle Physics. Within the ERA-NET scheme of the European Commission, ASPERA started in July 2006. After a first successful three-year period, ASPERA, as ASPERA 2, is now continuing for another three-year programme towards the development of a sustainable body for astroparticle physics in Europe. ASPERA 2 is funded by the European Commission through the 7th Framework Programme.

Presenter: Prof. ALLEN, Bruce