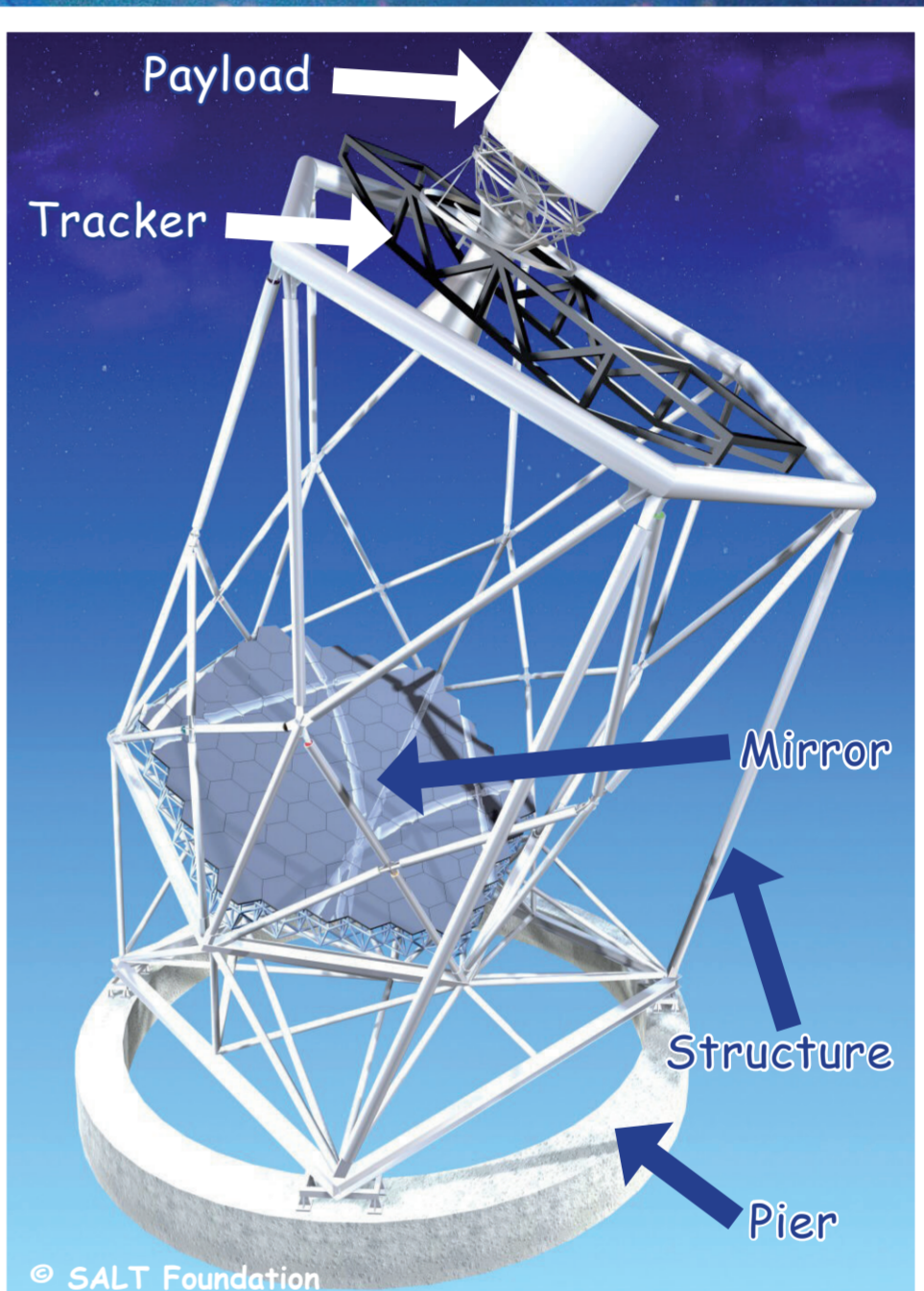


# Southern African Large Telescope (SALT)

The Southern African Large Telescope (SALT) is the largest single optical telescope in the Southern Hemisphere and is located just outside Sutherland in South Africa. Astronomers use telescopes like SALT to study the planets, stars and galaxies.

## How SALT works

The SALT telescope has a large mirror which collects starlight. SALT does not have a telescope tube. Instead there is a network of metal struts which support the tracker and payload at the top of the telescope. The whole telescope structure weighs 85 tons. The payload contains detectors which take pictures of the night sky.



## Where is SALT?

SALT is located in the Karoo because there are no large towns, so the skies are very dark at night. Also there are few clouds and very little rain in the region, which is just what astronomers need to see faint stars and galaxies.



## SALT's mirrors

SALT's huge mirror is actually made up of 91 individual hexagon-shaped segments. Each segment is 1m wide and weighs 100kg. The total size of the mirror is 11 x 9 m.



## How SALT follows the stars

Stars move during the night just as the Sun moves across the sky in the day. The telescope must follow the stars as they move. The tracker at the top of SALT is used to follow the drifting stars.

