

The Terrestrial Planet Finder
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The Terrestrial Planet Finder (TPF) mission has as its goal the detection and characterization of earth-like planets around nearby stars. NASA is currently funding a number of small studies to look at the trade-offs in the design of TPF. The possible trade-offs include orbit location (1 to 5 AU), aperture size (6 to 1.5111), physically connected baselines or separated spacecraft flying in close formation. A key performance aspect of TPF relates to the brightness and radial dependence of the local zodiacal dust cloud, as well as the brightness and degree of structure in the zodiacal dust cloud around other stars.