

SKA-France

Monthly bulletin

November 2017

SKA-France

News from the SKA-France coordination

Page 1

Announcements

Call for Astro-Informatics projects
International SKA meetings

Page 2

News from the SKA-France coordination

Summary of the current situation of the SKA project in France presented at the SKA Board of Directors

As largely described in the SKA-France bulletins of the last months, the French community has worked very actively during 8 months on the French SKA White Book, which includes the contribution of 176 authors from 40 research laboratories and 6 private companies. Their fields of interest intersect most topics of the international SKA Science Working Groups, as well as several of the most ambitious technological challenges of the SKA.

In parallel scientific and technological workshops continued to be organised by the SKA-France coordination on topics of specifically strong interest, with the participation of a number of companies, and dedicated studies have been started. In order to efficiently support this activity, the academic coordination SKA-France is being extended to a formal partnership including a number of companies now participating to the so called "Maison SKA-France".

An important meeting took place in Paris on October 16th, for an official presentation of the White Book and of the Maison SKA-France to institutional leaders and representatives from the Research and Innovation Ministry, and to the wider community. More than 120 persons attended, including a few key decision makers. Phil Diamond gave a much appreciated introduction. The meeting has unanimously been considered as a success.

All this happens while the French Ministry launched the process of the biennial revision of the National Roadmap for Large Research Infrastructures a few months ago. The outcome will not be known until late spring 2018. In case of a positive answer, this will not trigger an immediate funding from the Ministry, but will legitimate the actions undertaken by SKA-France to enter SKAO and in a future step will allow the submission of a funding proposal to participate to the construction and observatory activities.



Last meeting of the SKA Board of Directors

The 25th meeting of the SKA Board, the first chaired by Dr. Catherine Cesarsky, was organised in Bologna on November 8th and 9th, 2017.

As detailed at the [SKAO web page](#), several crucial topics were treated, including:

- the System Pre-CDR Review to be conducted by the SKA Office in late November 2017
- an update on the pre-construction schedule, on the construction and operations costing, on planning for operations
- the process for issuing a non-binding procurement 'Request for Information' (RfI) in 2018
- the planning for the transition of SKA Organisation to an Inter-Governmental Organisation (IGO)
- the reports of a number of countries that aspire to become more formally engaged with the project

In the meantime and, again, in case of a positive answer for the current revision of the Roadmap, SKA-France, with support from CNRS and its academic and industrial partners, will apply for joining the SKAO Company. Since no funding will be available from the Ministry for SKA during the next 2 years, SKA-France needs to rely on the voluntary financial contributions of its partners, both academic and industrial, in order to financially backup the French application. If the available resource can provisionally match the SKAO Members requirements, France could aim at a full membership starting in 2018.

Announcements

Call for Astro-Informatics projects

The [Interdisciplinary Mission of CNRS](#) has launched a **call for projects in Astro-Informatics**.

Astronomical data processing needs are evolving and becoming more complex as new observation and acquisition technologies provide a sharper, deeper view of the sky, and as techniques evolve. Data sampling, image processing and learning offer new perspectives for understanding observations.

The objective of this Call for Projects is to mobilise an interdisciplinary community around astronomical data challenges to bring out concepts, models and original methods allowing a better understanding of the treatments carried out on astronomical data and a greater control of the associated softwares.

Applicants can request up to 15 k€ for covering equipment and travel costs. For more information, see the [web page of the call](#).

Deadline: December 13, 2017

Contact points:

- * [Mokrane Bouzeghoub](#) and [Guy Perrin](#) (scientific leaders of the Call)
- * [CNRS Interdisciplinary Mission](#)

International SKA meetings

Two important **international meetings** related to the SKA have been recently **announced to the community** by Dr. **Robert Braun**, SKA Science Director.

After the successful 2015 and 2016 SKA Science Conferences in [Stockholm](#) and [Goa](#), the **next SKA General Science Meeting and Key Science Project Workshop** will be held at the SKA Headquarters on the Jodrell Bank Observatory campus from **September 3 to 7, 2018**. Save the date! More details will be distributed in the coming months.

Closer in time, a **four-day SKA science and computing conference** is organised from **February 13 to February 16, 2018**, by **New Zealand** colleagues. The New Zealand annual Computing for SKA Colloquium (C4SKA) will be preceded by a Science for SKA Colloquium (S4SKA), the two meetings being open to national and international participants.

The **deadline for submitting a title and short abstract** is **January 26, 2018**, by contacting [Sergei Gulyaev](#) (Science for SKA presentations) and [Andrew Ensor](#) (Computing for SKA presentations). More information at the [conference web page](#).

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