

SKA-France

Monthly bulletin

May 2018

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News from Maison SKA-France

Outcome of the French Roadmap for Research Infrastructures

We are pleased to announce that the SKA has been inscribed as a project in the [French Roadmap for Research Infrastructures](#), published by the [French Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation \(M.E.S.R.I.\)](#) on May 17, 2018.

As explained in the [SKA-France bulletin of November 2017](#), this will not trigger an immediate funding from the Ministry, but will legitimate the Maison SKA-France to follow-up actions undertaken with international partners and SKAO towards a more active French participation to the SKA project.



Image courtesy: M.E.S.R.I.

SKA-France in the SKAO News

The SKA Organisation keeps following all the SKA-France activities with interest. A summary of the SKA-France initiatives from **December 2017 to March 2018** is included in the May edition of the [SKA eNewsletter](#), in the section "[News from Observer Countries](#)".

The [PDF version](#) of the SKA eNews is also available on line.



First SKA-LOW prototype station & IGO progresses

After the first assembly of SKA1-MID prototype dish (see [SKA-France March 2018 bulletin](#)), on May 24, 2018, SKAO announced another very important technological step forwards in the SKA conception: a [prototype station of 256 antennas that will constitute SKA1-LOW has been completed and is being tested at the SKA site in Western Australia.](#)

The day after, on May 25, 2018, the announcement came that [the text of the international treaty establishing the SKA Observatory has been agreed by all parties.](#) This step paves the way to the signature of the treaty later this year by founding members of the new intergovernmental organisation (IGO).

Activities

SKA-France meeting with Thales Services

On May 3, 2018, the Director of SKA-France and the French SKA ILO have been invited by Thales Services to visit the company Headquarters in Toulouse (France). The aim of this first meeting was to illustrate and exchange about mutual interests on the scientific and technological challenges of the SKA project, with a particular focus on the full data chain (including acquisition, control, processing, storage, transport, quality, maintenance).

The strong interest of Thales Services for the SKA project is also testified by the participation of the company to the [ASTRON Hackathon for SKA](#), organised, as announced in the [SKA-France bulletin of last February](#), on April 23 and 24, 2018 by the Dutch institute ASTRON (Dwingeloo, NL).

This hackathon was opened to governmental and industrial actors involved in challenging topics linked to this project. More precisely, subjects such as Machine Learning classification or feature detection in future SKA data were pushed forward. As a leader in BigData and Machine Learning frameworks applied to scientific data (thanks to its GAIA experience), Thales Services contributed to this event, sending two PhD-engineers. They participated to the data cube inversion and astronomical data indexing workshops, being more generally sensitised to future SKA data challenges in terms of performance and volumetry.

This first edition ended with the promise of a second one, which should permit to go further in the topics, and hopefully answering critical questions for SKA. In the meantime, projects of this hackathon are still opened to contributors and Thales Services will keep a close look to them, in order to potentially give improvements and technical answers to the SKA data challenges.



Participants to the meeting between Maison SKA-France and Thales Services

SKA-France meeting with CNIM group

After the strong interest expressed by the group CNIM to the SKA project and to SKA-France activities (see [SKA-France bulletin of last April](#)), the SKA-France Director and the French SKA ILO have met several representatives of the group on May 15, 2018.

The meeting was organised to illustrate the expertise of the group in equipment manufacturing in details, with possible SKA -related applications in the fields of dish production, cooling and energy provision.

A visit of two sites (CNIM in Toulon and Bertin Technologies in Aix-En-Provence) allowed to efficiently illustrate the vast variety of applications of the group in different technological markets (environment, energy, defence and high technology).



Some of the participants to the meeting between Maison SKA-France and CNIM group

SKA Day at LAM



SKA Day at Laboratoire d'Astrophysique de Marseille (May 16, 2018)

An SKA Day was held at Laboratoire d'Astrophysique de Marseille (LAM) on May 16, 2018. The meeting, was organised by LAM together with CNRS/INSU and SKA-France, and saw the support and participation of competitiveness clusters OPTITEC, SCS and CapEnergies.

The meeting started with an overview of the SKA scientific, technological and organisational perspectives, as well as with a presentation of Maison SKA-France, by the SKA-France Director, the French delegate at SKAO meetings and the French SKA ILO. Speakers from both private companies and research laboratories within the Marseille region illustrated their potential interest in the SKA project during the afternoon.

All the talks (slides and videos) are on-line at the [meeting web page](#).

Announcements

Workshop of A.S. SKA-LOFAR at SF2A meeting

5 July 2018, Bordeaux, France

On July 5, 2018, a workshop organised by the A.S. SKA-LOFAR will be held at the [annual meeting of the French Astronomical Society](#) (SF2A; Bordeaux, from July 3 to July 6, 2018).

During this session of the meeting, the scientific and technical preparation of the SKA, the commissioning of its French pathfinder NenuFAR, as well as the international activities of its precursor telescopes, such as MeerKAT and ASKAP, will be reviewed. You are invited to register to the workshop (Section 10, S10) and to submit a contribution (oral or poster) via the [conference web page](#).

Deadlines:

Financial support to A.S. SKA-LOFAR: June 1, 2018 - Directly contact [A.S. SKA-LOFAR Director](#)

Apply for contribution: June 3, 2018 - At the [conference web page](#)

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