

# SKA-France

Monthly bulletin

March 2019

## SKA-France

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## News from Maison SKA-France

### 29<sup>th</sup> SKA Board Meeting

The 29<sup>th</sup> meeting of the SKA Board of Directors was held on March 26 and 27, 2019 at the SKA Global Headquarters (UK).

Important progresses in all critical fields of the SKA design (construction, operation, procurement) were presented by SKA Organisation representatives to the Board members. It was a great pleasure to realise that, as expected, the signature of the IGO international treaty (see inset on the right) has positively boosted all activities and enthusiasm in the project organisation.

The governance structure in this transition phase between design and construction was discussed, focusing in particular on the link between the “Council Preparatory Task Force” (CPTF), including representatives of the IGO treaty signatory countries, and the Board of SKA Organisation. As more extensively explained in the [June issue of the SKA bi-monthly bulletin](#), a “Joint Working Group for Transition” (JWGT) will co-ordinate activities between the SKAO Board and the CPTF, providing oversight and supporting delivery of the transition plan and associated activities. **Dr. F. Zerbi (INAF, Italy) was elected as SKAO Board representative at the JWGT.**

This very rich Board meeting saw the presentation of the terms of reference for a new committee (SKA Regional Centre Steering Committee, SRCSC), whose mission is to define and create a long-term operational partnership between the SKA Observatory and an ensemble of independently-resourced SKA Regional Centre. **J.-P. Vilotte (CNRS/INSU) has been appointed by CNRS as French representative to the SRCSC.** Being a member of SKAO also allows CNRS to have a French member in the Science And Engineering Advisory Committee (SEAC), another key body in the scientific and technical preparation of the SKA. **The nomination of M.-A. Mivilles-Deschenes (AIM) was voted and approved during the last Board meeting.**



### Signature of the SKA Observatory treaty

On March 12, 2019, the SKA project arrived at a very important stage: the signature by the first seven countries (Australia, China, Italy, South Africa, Netherlands, Portugal and United Kingdom) of the [international treaty for the creation of the SKA Observatory](#). This was a historic moment, as it is the launch of the 2<sup>nd</sup> intergovernmental organisation dedicated to astronomy in the world after ESO.

The purpose of the convention is to create a stable organisation, capable of building and conducting the SKA Observatory in an international context, as well as managing the accession of new member countries, for at least 50 years.

SKA-France warmly congratulates the Project Office and the founding countries for this historic milestone, which provides a solid foundation for the future SKA Observatory.



For a more complete overview of the meeting, see the notes from the Chair of the Board (C. Cesarsky), which are published [on-line](#) at the SKA Organisation web-page.

*Members of the SKA Board of Directors at the 29th Board meeting. Image courtesy: SKAO*

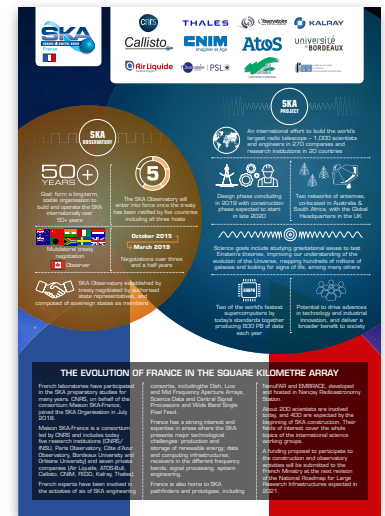
## Activities

### SKA-France Factsheet

All members of the SKA Organisation were invited to attend the historic event of the IGO signature in Rome and to produce a factsheet illustrating their on-going activities in the SKA design phase.

A detailed version of the French factsheet, which also includes an overview of the SKA project, can be retrieved [on-line](#). A short version (see image on the right) is also available (in [English](#) and [French](#)).

*Short version of the factsheet summarising the French participation to the design phase of the SKA*



### AENEAS meeting



*Participants in the fourth All-hands AENEAS meeting in Manchester University*

After the kick-off and first three All-hands meetings of the [H2020 project AENEAS “Advanced European Network of E-infrastructures for Astronomy with the SKA”](#) (February 2017, Den Haag, The Netherlands; October 2017, Granada, Spain; March 2018, Nice, France; October 2018, Bologna, Italy, the [fourth All-hands AENEAS meeting](#) was hosted by University of Manchester (United Kingdom) from March 5 to March 7, 2019.

The meeting saw a good French participation, with Y. Stein (Strasbourg Observatory/CDS), M. Caillat and F. Casoli (Paris Observatory), C. Ferrari (OCA) and J.-P. Vilotte (IPGP - CNRS/INSU).

In addition to the usual project updates by the responsible of the six Work Packages of the project, and presentations on regional center activities beyond Europe, much of the meeting was dedicated to focused discussions that aimed to produce a plan forward that takes results from the various groups in projects and translates them into a comprehensive proposal for a technical and governance architecture for the European SKA regional center.

Presentations are now available online at the [AENEAS webpage](#), where, more generally, a wider variety of [project outputs](#) can be found (key project findings, deliverable and milestones, presentations from previous meetings).

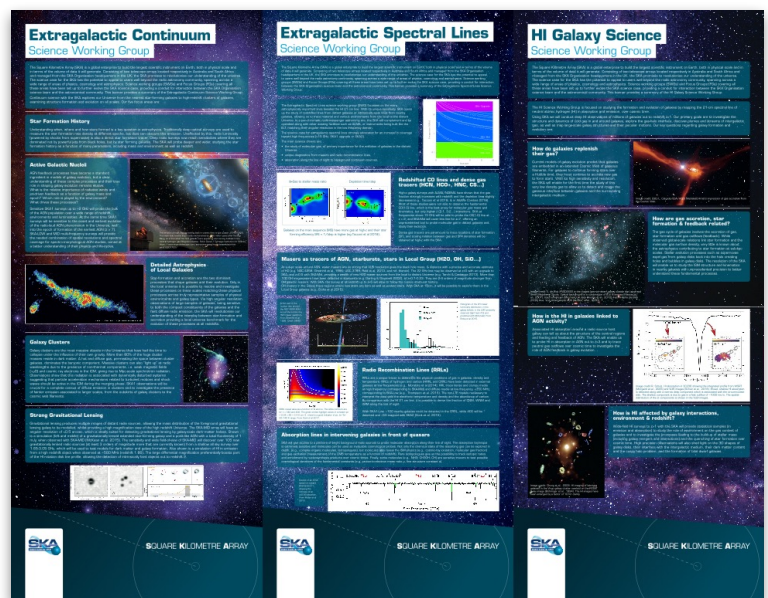
The closing AENEAS meeting will take place in the fall of 2019 in the Netherlands.

## Announcements

### SKA Science Banners

Beautiful banners have been produced by the SKA Organisation in order to summarise the richness of the science cases that will be covered by the future telescopes, SKA1-LOW and SKA1-MID. While only a few examples are shown in the image below, all banners are available at the following links:

- \* [Cosmic magnetism](#)
- \* [Cosmology](#)
- \* [Cradle of life](#)
- \* [Epoch of Reionisation](#)
- \* [Extragalactic continuum](#)
- \* [Extragalactic spectral lines](#)
- \* [HI galaxy science](#)
- \* [High Energy Cosmic Particles](#)
- \* [Our Galaxy](#)
- \* [Pulsars](#)
- \* [Solar and Heliospheric Physics](#)
- \* [Transients](#)



Examples of SKA Science Banners  
(courtesy: SKAO)

### Call for projects for PhD funds in the digital domain

The Île-de-France Region is committed to further develop PhD programs for training through research. 100 doctoral contracts will therefore be supported by 2022 with the main aim of introducing new digital technologies in companies and public organisations. This funding program is named "Paris Region PhD2".

The aim of this initiative is to develop further the digital skills of start-ups, small and medium-sized enterprises, without excluding large groups. Associations and administrations, including territorial authorities, are also concerned. The development of the knowledge and digital skills by the PhD students and the laboratories in which they will conduct their research will contribute to strengthen the competitiveness of companies and the attractiveness of Île-de-France.

Research activities will be carried out within the laboratories of the Domains of Major Interest ("Domaines d'intérêt majeur", DIM), which are the research networks financed by the Île-de-France Region on priority and promising themes and whose objective is to meet the challenges of tomorrow.

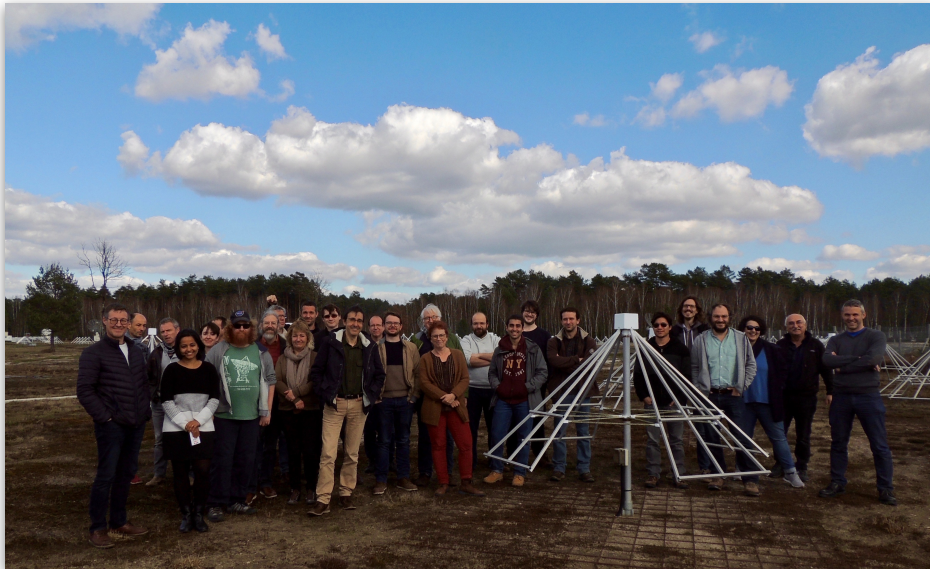
The effort of the Region for this call is consequent. 100 "Paris Region PhD2" projects will be funded by 2022, with, from 2019, a first wave of 30 doctoral contracts over 3 years.

For all information, please visit the [webpage of the call for projects](#).

## First NenuFAR Users workshop

While construction of NenuFAR progresses towards 75% completion, and commissioning/calibration are well underway, the first NenuFAR Users workshop was held from 18 to 20 March, 2019, in Nançay (France). It gathered 27 participants, representing a broader community of users who are preparing Key Program proposals. Another meeting with the Ukrainian radio community (that exploits the low-frequency radiotelescopes UTR-2 and URAN1-4 and will join NenuFAR) took place on the following week.

12 Key Programmes and pilot programmes proposals, gathering about 60 participants from french laboratories and 70 outside France, have been submitted, covering many fields of astrophysics from cosmology to exoplanets. They will coordinate the first scientific exploitation of NenuFAR during its early science phase, from July, 2019 to end 2021.



*Participants in the first NenuFAR Users workshop (courtesy: Nançay Radioastronomical Station)*

## Videos of the IGO signature

The SKA Organisation Communications and Outreach team, in collaboration with the whole SKA community, has done a great job in realising videos, pictures and documents to share the most important moments of the IGO signature meeting, illustrate the relevance of this event, as well as give a sense of the great satisfaction and emotion of its participants! Two videos are available at the following links and more material will be published soon at SKA-France web page:

- \* [The SKA Observatory Convention in 90 seconds](#)
- \* [A new observatory is born to explore the Universe](#)

*Chiara Ferrari*  
for the **Maison SKA-France**