SKA Organisation Bulletin

29th Issue, May – June 2018

From the Desk of the Director-General

Welcome to the 29th issue of the SKAO Bulletin, the internal newsletter of the SKA project. Reading through most of the contributions by my colleagues one will gain the strong impression of how the CDR season is dominating the work of all the engineering and operations planning staff, and of course those from the consortia who have to prepare the many hundreds of documents under review. It is an enormous effort and I thank all those who have been through the process to date (although they have not yet finished) and those who have CDR to look forward to.

The last few months have been an exciting and fast-paced period for the project; the significant milestones other than the CDRs are described below, but I record them here in bullet form:

- It was a great pleasure to welcome Spain as an Associate Member of SKA Organisation on 1 June.
- The long-awaited initialling of the SKA Observatory Convention began with Professor Nichi d'Amico of INAF being the first to do so on 24th May; four other countries (Australia, Sweden, South Africa and the UK) have now followed suit with more expected to do so shortly.
- The extension to the SKA HQ is nearing completion, as I write the contractors have now departed and the final checks of the building are underway before the keys are handed to SKAO, expected to occur on July 16th. We plan on beginning to move in towards the end of August.
- Last week, we welcomed Japan's VLBI Exploration of Radio Astrometry (VERA) telescope in the SKA pathfinders family.
- The Science and Engineering Committee met face-to-face adjacent to FAST in China on 2-4 July. The meeting was excellent, with strong advice being provided by the committee. I thank our Chinese hosts, led by Xiang-Ping WU for their kind hospitality. The highlight of the event was the SEAC visit to FAST, which is now well into its commissioning phase.
- StratCom met at Paris Observatory in June with a major focus being on the preparations for the impending transition to the SKA Observatory; there will be significant discussion of various transition -related topics at meetings adjacent to the Board and within the Board in Cape Town later this week.
- At HQ we hosted significant visits from Minister Halligan (responsible for Innovation and R&D) from Ireland; the President of CETC, Mr Liu Liehong (CETC is the parent company of both CETC38 and CETC54); senior colleagues from the National Astronomy Observatory of Japan, and Princess Sirindthorn of Thailand.

The SKA Board meets for its 27th meeting in Cape Town this week, followed, on Friday 13th July (paraskevidekatriaphobics beware) by the formal launch of MeerKAT by President Cyril Ramaphosa of South Africa. I'm sure you will see reports of this huge milestone for our South African colleagues and the SKA in the press and social media.

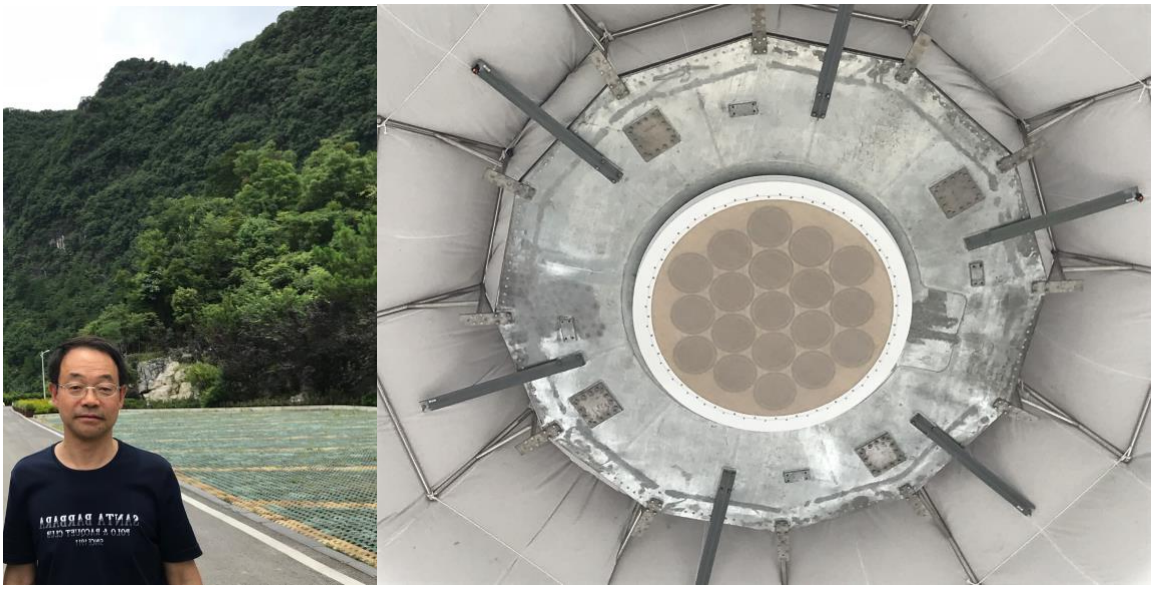
Philip Diamond
Director-General

Project

By Joe McMullin, Programme Director

During this period, the emphasis has continued on the development of the consortia CDRs (see Project Management, Project Engineering and Computing and Software sections for more details). Overall, the design review process appears to be working well; the staged gates provide early notification of issues and point to corrective measures to deliver on the needed design detail. The initial four consortia (TM, SaDT, INAU, INSA) have successfully navigated to the CDR review stage and are now actively engaged in close-out activities. Bridging and System CDR development have begun with System CDR activity accelerating in October with the completion of several consortia deliveries. There have been some schedule delays in other consortia as they work to complete their design verifications with several completing after October 2018 and into early 2019. Although this complicates the system coalescence, design information is being incorporated throughout the process.

On July 2-3, the SKAO Science and Engineering Advisory Committee meeting met in Guizhou, China. The group reviewed the SKA1 design review development and status as well as plans to deliver the construction proposal. SEAC members have been actively engaged in the CDR process and are reviewing further areas of participation in support of the development.



(Left) Wu Xiangping (SKA China Chief Scientist) provided a tour of the FAST facilities (Right) including the CSIRO-provided 19-beam L-band array.

Later this week, the SKAO Board will convene in Cape Town, South Africa to similarly review the management of the design development process; in addition, bridging and the early production array initiative will be discussed as well as an inflationary increase to the cost cap. We will report on this in the next issue.

Project Management

by Andrea Casson, Head of Project Management

CDRs

Both the TM and SaDT consortia are nearing completion of their CDRs with Panel reports received and the majority of close-out actions completed. The final step in the CDR process for each consortium will be drawing of the updated Element Design Baseline in eB. During this period both Infrastructure consortia submitted their CDR packs and processed hundreds of observations; their CDR meetings took place the last couple of weeks. Additionally, the pre-CDR meeting for SDP has been held and the Panel report drafted. CSP's element-level Review Readiness was successful and their full submission was received at the end of June. Dish continue to work through sub-element reviews and prepare their pre-CDR submission. The LFAA CDR Development Plan is in progress with an all-hands meeting planned for July. AIV are planning towards 2 CDR meetings with the MeerKAT Integration review set for October and an element-level review for AIV being planned for early January.

BD-27 and Bridging

The papers required for BD-27 included a summary engineering report and brief cost and Bridging updates produced together with input to the Business Plan for 2019-2020. Bridging planning is underway in earnest with the majority of member countries and their institutes providing feedback throughout May and June in response to the initial list of top priority activities and resource estimates. Bridging activities will support the System CDR and development of the Construction Proposal and Operations Plan, and have a staged start due to the reliance on Element Design Baselines as inputs.

Construction

June saw preparation for construction continue with the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) vendor, Unit 4, beginning work at the HQ and the engagement of an NEC consultant. Analysis of the Request for Information (RfI) submissions of the member and prospective member countries also started: complete coverage of the proposed contracts is seen. Work on the Construction Project Execution Plan also continued towards the next review, planned for October, with the emphasis on the organisation as this also informs the seating plan for the new building.

Key activities upcoming are:

- July: BD-27
- August: LFAA's second Review Readiness
- September: Interim Board of Directors meeting, SDP Review Readiness, CSP CDR meeting, DSH pre-CDR submission

Mission Assurance

by Tim Stevenson, Head of Mission Assurance

No update for this issue.

Project Engineering

by Luca Stringhetti, SKA Project Engineer

During the last couple of months, the main effort of the telescope engineering office (SKA-TE) has been the support to the element CDRs. TM, SADT, SDP, and INFRA CDRs have been just concluded; domain specialists and system engineers participated to the reviews are observers, as reviewers, and in some case as panel members.

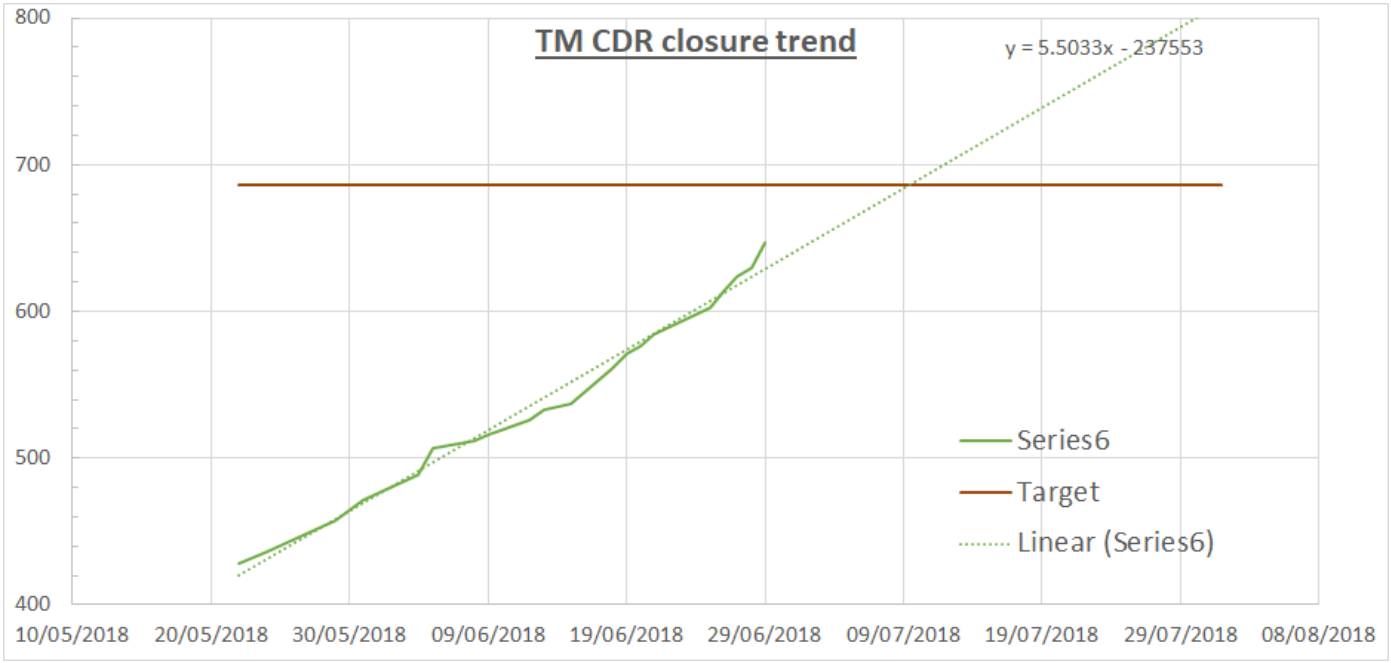
The LFAA CDR development plan has the objective to support and guide the LFAA consortium to an accelerated delivery of a successful CDR. This activity started a couple of months ago and it is one of our top priorities in the office. The activity is asking SKA-TE members, historically not so engaged with the Low Frequency Array, to jump in and reconsider priorities.

In parallel, the telescope engineers are working in cooperation with Mission Assurance and the SKA Head of Project Management to define the adoption process and the system CDR. The design adoption process is starting now with the first elements to have completed their CDR. Internally in the SKAO, the elements' documentation will be integrated in a system view by SKAO engineers supported by engineers from all over the world that worked during these last years in the element consortia. This collaboration will be managed by the Bridging Plan as explained in the Project Management section. In the next months we will integrate components of different elements to construct models or view to probe the consistency and the completeness of the system. These views will be used to compile system documents to be submitted to the System CDR. Adoption and System CDR plans and procedures have been initiated to prepare us for the next phase.

Computing and Software

by Nick Rees, Head of Computing and Software

Since the last report the Computing and Software team has continued to be heavily involved in consortia CDRs. The need to support the TM CDR, SaDT CDR and SDP PreCDR at one month intervals has severely tested the team because, to use an interferometric analogy, the closeout from one review interferes destructively with the preparation for the next. The TM CDR closeout has been progressing steadily, but it will not complete before the middle of July (see graph below) and the other consortia have similar trajectories. Additionally, there has been trips to India to support the TM CDR closeout, to Prague for the Tango collaboration meeting and to Frankfurt for the International Supercomputing Conference.



Closeout of TM CDR tickets vs time – we are steadily approaching the completion ceiling, but after that we still have the work of signing all the documents and ingesting them.

Looking forward, there are more CDRs, but the major task is to pivot towards construction by switching to a SAFe process for bridging. We are going to start small by working with institutes who mostly have been involved in the TM consortium – since they will be finished their CDR closeout. We will work to address system level risks, develop prototypes and start to develop essential infrastructure software needed to support construction. This will grow as other consortia close out and additional resources get included into the process. The whole effort starts with a SAFe training session and workshop to be held in the office at the end of July where we will be have a four day training course and a one day workshop for 20 consortia and office attendees to collectively start addressing the problems ahead.

Architecture

by Peter Dewdney, SKA Architect

It is difficult to generalise the activities of the Architect in the last few months. Here is a list of several examples that indicate that the project is entering a stage where review of design details is the main activity. Of course there are a huge number of details to be looked at, and so the key is to be selective. Quite obviously, one selects 'keystone aspects', small items that could have a large impact on performance, schedule or interfaces that seem weak when considered from a system perspective. This modus operandi is likely to continue until the System CDR. Participation among quite a few other people, some examples where I have provided advice and review:

- SKA1-low antenna design, which is being revised.
- Signal-chain analysis for both SKA1-mid and -low. The emphasis here is robustness in the face of RFI inputs.
- EMI review and discussions, mainly drawing on experience with the SKA EMI Standard.
- Review and comment on assumptions made by CSP; there are ~100 of these.

- SKA1-mid receiver/digitiser design and other Dish-related items.

In addition, along with most of people in the SKAO, reading, understanding and reviewing Consortia CDR documents.

Operations Planning

by Gary Davis, Director of Operations Planning

The work of the Operations Planning Group in the Office in the period since the previous Bulletin has been dominated by CDRs. The Group has supported the five element CDRs that have taken place to date (TM, SaDT, SDP, INAU and INSA) including chairing both INAU and INSA CDRs. From the perspective of the Operations Planning Group, the key criteria for the element CDRs are: compliance of the design with operational requirements; provision of RAM and ILS data than can be rolled up into system-level models; and provision of operations plans and associated cost estimates. Everyone involved in this process, whether from the perspective of doing the work and generating all the documents on the one hand or reading and critically reviewing them all on the other, will recognise the enormous effort that is involved.

In addition to supporting the element CDRs, the science operations group has continued to support the SKA Regional Centre Coordination Group (SRCCG). The Group has recently issued a document on international data networking. The near-term priorities for the Group are (a) to develop a revised requirements document, including a profile of requirements from the initial deployment to the Design Baseline over a period of some years, and (b) a distribution model to illustrate how those requirements might be distributed among the SRCs we expect to be operational. With these inputs, it will be possible for individual regions to develop their own business cases and resource estimates.

Science

by Robert Braun, SKA Science Director

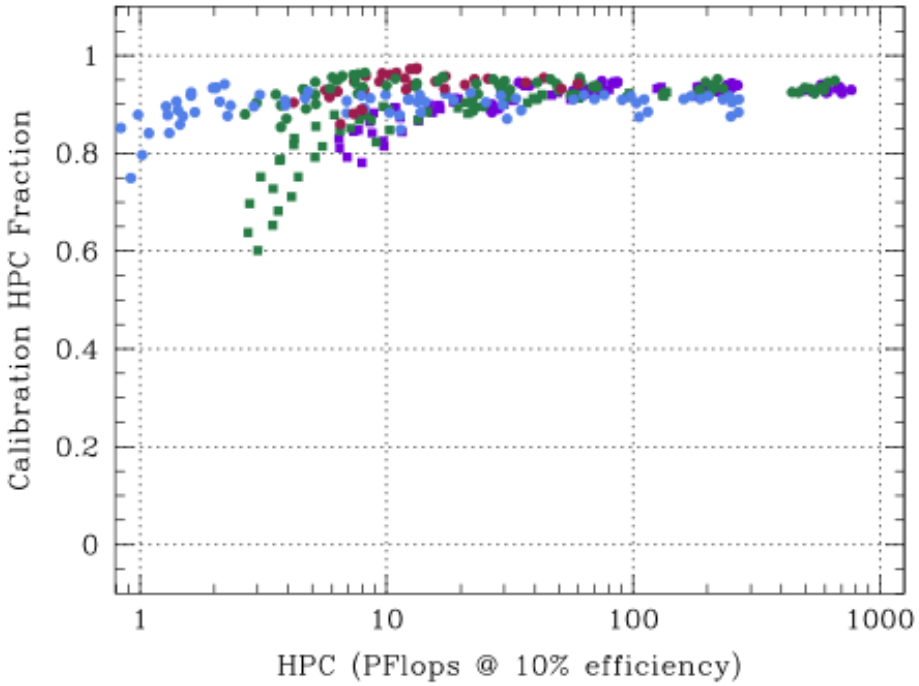
The Science Team have been supporting the international SKA Science community over the past weeks with participation in the Swiss SKA Days and a wide range of science events in China, including seminars in Beijing, Nanjing and Shanghai. Closer to home, we've been supporting each in the tight sequence of Critical Design Reviews that are underway throughout this year, as you'll see described in more detail elsewhere in this Bulletin.

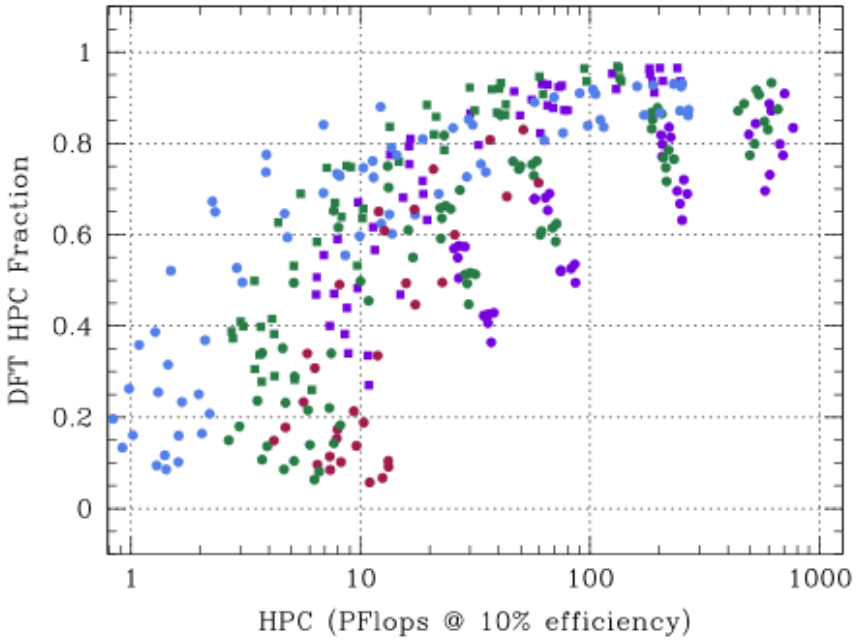
Other Science Team activities include continued work on understanding how the best scientific utilisation might be made of High Performance Computing (HPC) of varying total deployment scope. The first analysis document that describes the SKA1 Calibration Strategy and its HPC needs has now been released and can be found at the link below:

https://astronomers.skatelescope.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/SKA-TEL-SKO-0000941-01_Anticipated_SKA1_HPC_Req-signed.pdf

An important insight that has emerged from this analysis is that the HPC costs for all SKA imaging use cases are dominated by the process of calibration, rather than the generation of associated data products. It has further emerged that a single operation type, the calculation of Discrete Fourier Transforms (DFT) is the dominant contributor to the total HPC cost for all of the most computationally demanding experiments.

The pair of Figures shown below demonstrate these two points for the complete range of SKA imaging use cases under consideration on both SKA1-Low and SKA1-Mid. These insights should be helpful in developing an optimised HPC design for the SKA and might enable the highest possible computational efficiency to be achieved.





This work continues, with an ongoing analysis of the constraints that might apply during the first few years of operations to the scheduling fraction of the most HPC intensive experiments. In conjunction, we are quantifying the SKA1 archive requirements and identifying potential constraints that the planned data network capacity might place on the generation of some types of data products. We hope to release this analysis in July and will place it at the link below,

https://astronomers.skatelescope.org/documents/

where you can find all of the key documents intended for the Science community.

I thank all members of the Science Team, SDP and Office computing staff for their input into the above work.

Policy Development

By Simon Berry, Director of Corporate Strategy

After what seems like many months of 'something will happen soon', it is a pleasure to highlight and celebrate movement towards signing of the SKA Observatory Convention. Since the last Bulletin, the Italian Presidency, overseeing the final steps towards signature, opened the documents for 'initialling' in Rome. Within a matter of days, Professor Nichi D'Amico, was able to attend and undertake the task, confirming Italy's acceptance of the Convention text as final.

Since then, there have been a flurry of visitors to this same office, and at the time of writing, it is fantastic to see that each of South Africa, Sweden, Australia and the UK have sent representatives to confirm their national positions. We are aware that others from the negotiating group are making plans to complete the task too before the formal window closes at the end of July. Attention now moves to planning for a signing ceremony, which we hope will be possible in September or more likely now, early October. In the meantime, the upcoming Board meeting will allow an opportunity for detailed planning towards the signing

and beyond. Alongside the Board itself, there will be an informal meeting of the various Observatory negotiating countries as they look ahead to the formation of the co-called 'Council Preparatory Task Force' that will undertake much of the preparation for the new IGO when it comes into force. The meeting will be important so that everyone is ready to start what will be a complex process as soon as the Convention is signed.

Since the last Bulletin, the main focus of the team has been the StratCom meeting, held in Paris in early June, and then preparations for the Board meeting in July. StratCom was an excellent opportunity to discuss developments on a whole range of policy/strategy topics, reviewing the status of discussions with potential new Organisation members, and the coordination of the policy and engineering programme timelines. Another point of interest to many in the SKA community is the recent work on the so-called Request for Information (RfI). As described more fully last time, this was an initiative to understand informally where interests might lie in future procurement processes in construction. Thanks to the hard work of the various Industry Liaison Officers (ILOs) we now have a rich volume of information to assimilate and analyse representing each national position. After a status report at the forthcoming Board, we will continue working with the industry contacts and others over the coming months to make use of the information and plan the later steps in procurement.

SKA Board Matters and Administration

by Colin Greenwood, SKA Head of Administration

SKA Governance

On 1 June 2018, Spain's application for membership of SKA Organisation was approved unanimously by the Board. We are pleased to welcome Inmaculada Figueroa Rojas as Spain's Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness (MINECO) Nominated Representative.

The 12th General meeting of Members will take place in Western Cape, South Africa on the morning of 11 July 2018. The main order of business will be to update Members about progress towards establishing SKA Observatory as an Inter-Governmental Organisation (IGO) and preparations for the transition from a UK company to an IGO. This meeting will be followed later in the morning by a meeting of the Heads of IGO Delegations to discuss the establishment of the Council Preparatory Task Force (CPTF). The CPTF will be established once the SKA Observatory Convention has been signed by a minimum of five countries; it will remain in place until the IGO Council is established following ratification of the Convention by signatory countries.

The 27th meeting of the SKA Board of Directors (SKA-BD-27) will be held in Western Cape, South Africa on 11-12 July 2018. The main technical business of the meeting will be to discuss an update of detailed planning for the Bridging period, the status of plans for Early Production Arrays, progress to develop an Operations Model, SKA-1 construction cost and an integrated schedule for the project (engineering, science, operations and policy). The Board will also be asked to approve the company's Report and Financial Statements for 2017 and to discuss a progress with revision of the company's business plan. In addition progress reports on the SKA Observatory Convention and transition activities related to moving from a UK company to an IGO will be provided. The Board will also hear updates to the recent Procurement Request for Information and details about the updated communications strategy for the SKA.

Following the Board meeting, directors are invited to visit the MeerKAT site for the formal opening of

MeerKAT by President Ramaphosa on 13 July.

Global Safety Management

At time of writing this report, discussion and review of consortia hazard analysis and safety management plan submissions are being conducted as part of overall requirements for ongoing element Critical Design Reviews (CDR).

Telescope Management (TM) & Signal and Data Transport (SaDT) reviews have been held with no significant safety issues being raised at element level. Infrastructure Australia (INAU) and Infrastructure South Africa (INSA) element CDRs are about to be held (at the time of writing).

The System Safety in Design Review panel has held its first meeting; it looked at safety implications for design adoption and integration of element safety reviews into the overall system design.

Work continues on revision of the structure of the existing SKA Organisation's project safety management plan to align with the recently published international safety standard for Occupational Health and Safety Systems, ISO:45001. Project Safety Management Plan (Rev 2), and associated Environmental Management Plan (Rev 1), have target completion dates of 2018Q4 (in readiness for the System CDR).

Procurement Request for Information (RfI)

The RfI submissions were received by the deadline of 22 May 2018 and, since then, considerable effort has been expended to interpret and analyse the information provided. An initial paper covering the 2018 RfI exercise will be presented to the SKA Board at SKA-BD-27 meeting, but more work and analysis is required before definitive conclusions and recommendations are published.

Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP)

A successful kick-off meeting was held with service provider Unit4 on 21 June 2018. Unit4's tried and tested "Value Accelerator" methodology will be applied to the design of our business solutions. Over a number of years, Unit4 has built a considerable library of best practice business processes and, wherever possible, we intend to use this as the starting point for developing our own internal SKA processes.

Throughout the (northern) summer, facilitated workshops will take place with the various workstream leads to identify where we need to deviate from the standard "out of the box" Unit4 business process; it is our intention to deviate as little as possible. SKA Organisation is scheduled to switch to Unit4 Business World On! in early-January 2019.

Human Resources

by Fiona Davenport, Head of Human Resources

This HR update, continues to focus activity on the following four areas:

- Growth and transition
- Delivering HR Excellence
- Employee Engagement

- HR Administration

Growth and Transition

During this last period we have spent time refreshing our resource plan for the remainder of this year and into 2019. In this we continue to focus on resource planning and recruitment, seeking to ensure we have the resource and skills we need to achieve our deliverables. As part of this we have engaged the services of Daniel Murray, Business Systems Support Specialist and Pete Shepherd, Project Manager to support the delivery of the ERP system.

Looking forwards during the coming months we are delighted to announce the promotion of Andre van Es to Senior Project Manager SKA-Low who will start his new role in September. We also look forward to welcoming further new staff:

- Ailsa Dibben – Finance Assistant - July start
- Shelly Decker – Assistant In House Legal Counsel -August start
- Sam Lloyd – Network and IT Security Specialist (secondment) – July start
- Matthew Lilley – Senior Project Manager SKA-mid – September start

Work continues to support the sponsorship for two Chinese secondments and progress Junior Systems Engineer recruitment.

We also continue to work on the future organisation design and underpinning HR principles to support the development of future staff rules and regulations. Ahead of planning for transition, and recognising current levels of uncertainly both attached to transition and Brexit, we have planned for all staff members to have 1-1s with their managers during July. This will enable any questions or concerns to be raised to help us understand where staff need more support or information.

Delivering HR Excellence

In line with our roadmap, progress continues to be made against a number of priorities. In the last period we completed our Athena SWAN submission for a bronze award, a comprehensive document including a detailed equality and diversity action plan.

Continuing the theme of delivering HR Excellence, we have run refresher workshops for managers in preparation for upcoming mid-year reviews. The focus for the coming period will be to review our attraction methodology and recruitment approach to enable improved diversity and the recruitment of quality hires.

Employee Engagement

We completed a staff engagement survey during the period, the purpose being to understand what is working well and what we can do better as we enter a critical phase of the project. In addition it provides a useful baseline and helpful insight as we plan for transition and look at developing our future culture and engagement strategy. We are currently in the process of analysing the results and through staff discussion will develop a detailed action plan.

HR Administration

The primary focus remains the implementation of the ERP system. Work has started on process mapping ahead of identifying the ERP workflows and system configuration.

Safety and Facilities

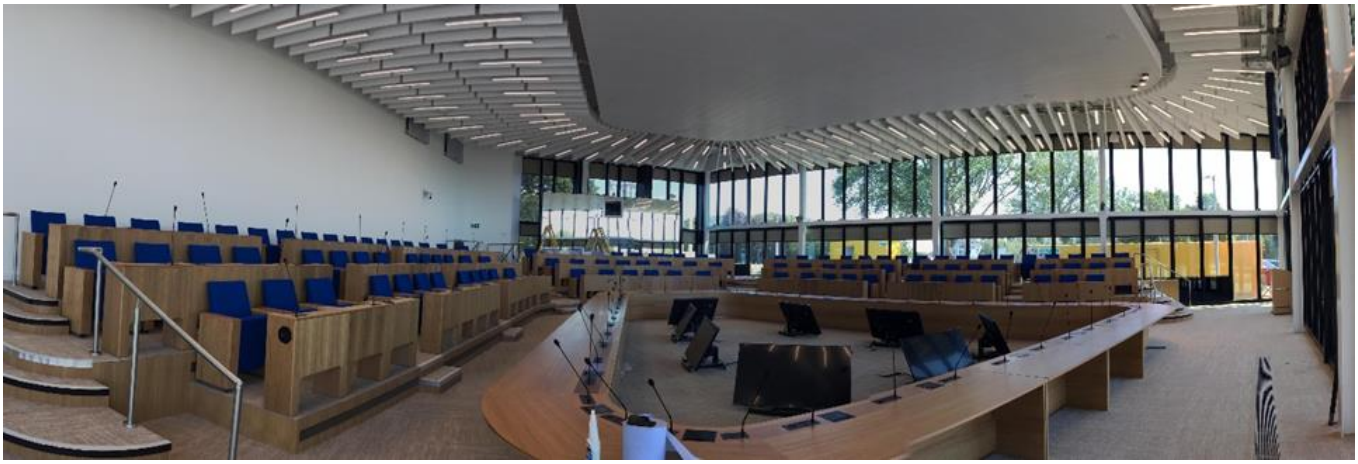
by John Kerr, Safety and Facilities Manager

SKA HQ

Construction of the extension to the SKA HQ at Jodrell Bank is approaching completion. All major internal and external work as well as soft landscaping around the new facility have been finalised with only a few finishing touches remaining. The Principal Contractor is in the process of finishing final commissioning and is demobilising from site.

External View of the SKA HQ Council Chamber and Auditorium (Courtesy: John Kerr)

Anticipating occupancy in the near future SKAO staff training and familiarisation has started.



Internal View of the SKA HQ Council Chamber and Auditorium (Courtesy: John Kerr)

Construction, news and progress can be monitored via the SKA HQ web page.

IGO Transition

by Theresa Devaney, Transition Coordinator

Work continues to plan the activity required to transition the SKA Organisation to the SKA Observatory. We discussed progress at the recent StratCom meeting hosted by CNRS in Paris and are now working on the transition update for the upcoming SKA Board.

The news that member countries have commenced initialling of the Observatory Convention means that we can now plan in more detail and schedule the detailed legal steps required for the transition.

Aligned with this we are starting to plan for design of the SKA Observatory operating model. This model will describe how the functions, relationships and structure of the new IGO will support delivery of the SKA Observatory objectives. This model will evolve from SKA Observatory Day 1 design through to the construction phase and later, telescope operations. This work is owned by the Council Preparatory Task Force (CPTF) on behalf of the future Observatory Council and is supported by the office Transition Team.

The Joint Working Group for Transition (JWGT) will co-ordinate activities between the SKA Board and the CPTF providing oversight and supporting delivery of the transition plan and associated activities. We are preparing for an initial JWGT meeting later this year to review and assure our transition progress to date and ensure connection across the governance bodies of the SKA Organisation and future IGO governance.

Communications and Outreach

by William Garnier, SKA Director of Communications, Outreach and Education

The impressive level of activities described by my colleagues in this bulletin has logically had a knock-on effect on the Communications activities, and the team has been busy catching up with and reporting on all developments happening across the board. In particular, our CDR platform, reporting on developments related to design activities across the partnership, is filling up, featuring progress of the various Elements, as well as profiles, stories, and summary videos of the CDR meetings themselves. Many more SKA design-related stories are in the pipeline, so stay tuned, and of course, if you feel your involvement deserves a mention on the page, please contact the SKA Comms team. Other stories featured in the last couple of months include Spain's membership of the SKA Organisation, the announcement of the upcoming MeerKAT inauguration this Friday 13 July, the excellent BBC Sky at Night programme on the Murchison Radio Observatory, the initialling of the SKA Observatory Convention, the AAVS1 completion in Australia, the installation of the Swedish Band 1 receiver on a MeerKAT antenna, and the SKA Swiss Days held in early June. We also proudly took part in the International Women in Engineering Day, profiling some of our colleagues involved in the project.

Celebrating International Women in Engineering Day at the SKA.

In preparation for the Board meeting this week, I have developed an updated overarching SKA Communications Strategy in collaboration with the SKA Communications Steering Committee, covering the period 2018-2020. The ever-changing nature of the SKA project in its current phase of development requires regular revision and development of our communications strategy to make sure it is aligned with the strategic objectives of the Organisation. The following 3 communications objectives have been identified as critical to the success of the SKA project in the short-medium term and areas where good communications can play a significant role.

- Objective 1: Support the legal foundation of the SKA Observatory by providing the worldwide SKA community with efficient stakeholder engagement and coordinated, targeted and timely communications across partner organisations;
- Objective 2: Maintain and enhance high levels of engagement with key stakeholders throughout the construction preparation phase using a variety of communications tools, vehicles and initiatives to demonstrate momentum and enhance credibility;
- Objective 3: Continue increasing the profile of the project internationally among the general public and expanding the number of followers/supporters in member and prospective member countries.

A comprehensive implementation plan detailing on we plan to deliver the strategy will also be presented to the SKA Board.

One important element of the Comms strategy is the SKA "Brand". While a marketing term we are loathe to use, it is a reality that SKA, ESO, CERN, NASA and others are brands that enter people's consciousness through their achievements but also through their name, logo and graphics, tagline, mission statement, etc. The transition from the existing SKA Organisation to an IGO is therefore a key opportunity to assess the level of awareness of the current SKA brand, which has been in place for over six years, and potentially evolve and adapt it to make sure it is fit for purpose for the next phase of the project. This is quite a common exercise, looking at work done with the previously known NGST (now JWST), various ESA missions once they are accepted, NASA's Ebb & Flow moon mission or the Japanese space probes once they launch. The approach used for undertaking this brand health-check exercise is through focus group discussions and/or targeted surveys to test the current branding. A large fraction of the recipients of this bulletin, namely the Science Working Groups and Engineering Consortia were recently invited to complete a survey, and the response rate we received was beyond expectations, showing a real interest and engagement with the SKA Brand, so I would like to take the opportunity to thank all of you who did take some time for this critical exercise. A detailed analysis will be provided in the next few months, once this exercise has been conducted with all relevant audiences. 93 respondents entered our draw to win a laser-engraved cube, and I'm glad to announce Jose Miguel Rodrigues Espinosa from IAC in Spain won, well done!

This week (9-14 July), several of us from SKA Organisation and other partner institutions are attending the Euroscience Open Forum (ESOF) science-policy conference in Toulouse, France. The 3 sessions we submitted have been accepted by ESOF, allowing us to table discussions on several matters of relevance for the project, including 1) Reproducibility in science in the era of big data; 2) spin-offs coming out of blue sky research; 3) astronomy for development. Several colleagues from across the SKA partnership and beyond have accepted to speak in these sessions and bring their expertise and experience on these subjects, so we definitely look forward to interesting discussions with the ESOF crowd. We also have an SKA booth allowing further interaction during the week and are taking part in outreach through the Science in the City festival on the city's main square, where it is expected we will interact with over 1,000 people a day!

A delegation of Chinese students visiting the SKA booth at ESOF

Cédric Villani (second to the right), Fields Medal winner and French MP, here in discussion with (from left to right) William Garnier, Olivier Dessibourg (Science Journalist, SOC Chair of the 2019 World Congress of Science Journalists to be held in Lausanne, Switzerland) and Valeria Foncea (Head of Communications of the ALMA Observatory)

Agenda for the remainder of July and August already looks pretty filled for the SKAO Comms Team, with hopefully some more exciting news on the IGO front, further developments on the brand health-check exercise, and preparations for the Bluedot festival (Jodrell Bank, July 19-22). Many colleagues have volunteered to help at Bluedot where we will have a large SKA booth featuring the SKA Virtual Reality as well as the inflatable Dish, allowing some promising and entertaining interactions with the expected thousands of visitors. We have also secured a talk for Anna Bonaldi from our science team. We will also be at the International Astronomical Union General Assembly (IAU GA), taking place in Vienna, Austria, the second fortnight of August where we will have a booth and certainly welcome members of the Science Working Groups and the community planning to attend the conference to spend some time at the booth to help field questions from the community and interact with peers. Please get in touch with us if interested. Report on these activities will be provided in the next issue of this bulletin.

Connect with us

For any enquiries, requests or feedback please write to skao-outreach@skatelescope.org

You can also find the SKA Organisation on Facebook, Twitter, Google+, YouTube and now Instagram!