SKA Organisation Bulletin

31st Issue, September – October 2018

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From the Desk of the Director-General

I find it hard to believe that it’s only been two months since the last Bulletin, where does the time go? In the articles below, my colleagues detail the significant work going into closing out some element CDRs, preparing for forthcoming CDR meetings, beginning the design adoption process, undertaking bridging (about 20% of the Priority 1 bridging tasks are under way) and thinking ahead to the generation of the Construction and Operations Proposal. At the same time, the strategy team is working with colleagues from the partner countries on various policy issues, key being those to support the establishment of the SKA Observatory and the transition of the current SKA Organisation company into the future IGO. At the same time, we have started moving staff into the new extension of the SKA HQ building, this is relieving the massive pressure we had on office space in the original part of the building.

Over the past two months, there have been several events at which I have been pleased to represent SKAO:

- On 11th September, we were very pleased to welcome Her Excellency, Nomatemba Tambo, the South African High Commissioner to the UK to SKA HQ.
- On the 13th, I was invited to attend the opening of Apertif, the new phased-array feed system that has been installed on the Westerbork Synthesis Radio Telescope. On a beautiful early autumn day in the Netherlands we witnessed a very novel pressing of the button by a 25-m dish.
- On 2nd October, I and many colleagues attended the inaugural University of Manchester Fanaroff Lecture held at the imposing Imperial War Museum North. Introduced by Bernie Fanaroff, Rob Adam gave an absorbing lecture on the impact of policy on big science, using three examples from South Africa. I was relieved that, so far, he believes SKA is doing well in this regime. We all managed to depart from the Museum just before the 76,000 attendees at the Champions League game at Old Trafford (500m away) started streaming from the stadium.
- 11-13 October (yes, including a Saturday), our colleagues at INAF Rome hosted us for StratCom, described below by Simon Berry.
- On the 17th, SKA Finance Committee met for their annual face-to-face meeting at SKA HQ;
- 29-30 October, SEAC met for the second face-to-face of the year, also at the HQ.
- The afternoon of the 29th saw us welcome the participants from the Widefield SETI meeting being held at the University of Manchester. It was with great pleasure that we had Jocelyn Bell-Burnell as the first speaker in our new Council Chamber/Auditorium. I could not think of a more fitting inauguration of that room.
- On 8th November, the Group of Senior Officials on Research Infrastructures visited us (see the Comms section below)
- And then, we welcome the SKA Board next week.

So, did I ask where the time goes? The list above demonstrates that.

I hope you enjoy reading this Bulletin.

Philip Diamond, Director-General
For September and October, progress continued on the consortia design developments culminating in their CDR execution and follow-up (see Project Management, Mission Assurance, and Computing and Software sections for more details). In addition, this month, the system design adoption process was initiated (see Project Engineering section) drawing together the available element designs and probing issues or gaps in the integrated system performance, planning or costing. Bridging activities continue to be elaborated in support of this process, drawing together the member country expertise to further the system development. Currently, the pre-construction development plan is under pressure from a range of sources but continues to align with the IGO development plan; the current tracking for the start of construction is Q4 2020.

During this period, two high level committees convened: 1) SKA Board of Directors, 2) Science and Engineering Advisory Committee (SEAC). For the first, an interim video meeting was called to focus on the review of the business plan proposal information, outlining the SKAO required resources in 2019-2020 as it transitions from the consortium era to the delivery of the system design and the Construction & Operations proposal (including execution of identified bridging tasks between SKAO and member institutes); approval will be sought for the
The SEAC met at the end of October at SKA HQ to review the overall progress but focusing on the design development, particularly lagging areas which will enjoy increased visibility to the group, as well as proposed opportunities for early construction within the planning; the SEAC continues to fully participate in the programme CDR process. In addition, the Programme Director also participated in the October Stratcom meeting in Rome to discuss the anticipated processes for procurement and contracting within the construction phase. These discussions illuminated the complexity of the multi-national organisation but also reaffirmed the path toward a standard procurement model.

Internally, the team worked with the broader observatory to further develop the organisational structure to ensure alignment with the committed deliveries and with the ability to initiate the construction project. Construction Proposal development continued during these months, focusing on the transition from the element consortia to the WBS/PBS structures in construction; in particular, the need to review and challenge the work package costs and the execution logic was progressed using the INAU/INSA work package groups (as examples) which provided an iteration on their WBS areas, informed by their CDR content. The November Construction Planning workshop will broaden this review across the construction areas to develop an initial cost book (with identified uncertainties).

**Project Management**

*by Andrea Casson, Head of Project Management*

**Element CDRs and other reviews**

Following TM’s successful CDR closure in July, INAU, INSA and SaDT Consortia are also nearing closure of their CDRs with updated documents submitted and baselines being prepared. CSP’s CDR meeting was held in September and received a recommended pass (with no significant actions!) from the panel; their updated documents are now being received and baselining will follow. This is a very busy time for our Configuration Management team! The LFAA passed through its RRN and held a workshop at HQ to complete the additional actions in preparation for the document submission to the CDR panel for early November.

The MeerKAT Integration Review took place in October and the panel report is awaited. SDP Consortium are on track for CDR submission at the end of October and the CDR meeting is scheduled for January. Dish made their Pre-CDR submission in October and the review will take place at the end of November. The LFAA Recovery team passed their Review Readiness gate and are on track to submit in early November for a CDR meeting in December. AIV’S CDR submission in November will be reviewed in early March.

**Bridging**

Bridging tasks have a staged start due to the reliance on Element Design Baselines as inputs; around a fifth of the Priority 1 tasks have started, mainly in the infrastructure and software areas. As the Bridging work is taking place in the post-Consortia era, new agreements are being established directly between SKAO and each provider: one of these MOUs has already been signed and the others are circulating for comment.

**Construction planning**

Work continued this period towards the CP2 reviews happening in November. Approximately half of the consortia-costed construction work packages have been entered into the new Dash 360 tool that will form the heart of the Project Management Control System. The rest is being completed and then the internal work packages will be added.

Additionally, Early Production Array discussions (re-labelled as Early Construction Opportunities) have re-started, catalysed following receipt in August of a proposal from SARAO, Max Planck Gesellschaft and JLRAT.
with respect to MID. The 2 SKAO Senior Project Managers are leading the development of plans for this early construction work as a stepping stone en-route to Array Assembly 1, being termed “AA0.5”.

Key activities upcoming are:
- November: Board of Directors meeting, Dish Pre-CDR meeting, CP2 reviews
- December: SKA Software Programme Increment Planning meeting, LFAA CDR meeting
- January: SDP CDR meeting

**Mission Assurance**

*by Tim Stevenson, Head of Mission Assurance*

As the Element CDRs are progressing, the SKA Configuration Manager in collaboration with the respective Consortia Configuration Managers is auditing the CDR close-out documentation. Once the CM Audit Reports are concluded, the Element Design Baselines (DBL) are established in eB. These Element Design Baselines form the departure point for bridging activities and are the basis for design adoption activities towards the System CDR. Thus far the TM Consortium DBL is completed and the DBLs for SADT and the Infrastructure Consortia are nearing completion.

As part of the MeerKAT and MID Integration activities, SARAO and SKA have agreed to migrate the MeerKAT configuration data from their eB system to the SKA eB system. This provides both organisations the opportunity to have a single controlled information/data source for PBS and documents, with the benefit of enabling a joint change process on all common items within both telescopes. It also presents the facility to have a joint procured parts database, preventing unnecessary duplication. Besides the significant cost benefits, this approach will also support organisational alignment between SARAO and SKA. Once the data is migrated and merged, the PBS can be represented indicated in the diagram below.
The migration process will be initiated with formalised agreements between the stakeholders and will consist of a pilot project to migrate the MeerKAT Infrastructure followed by the migration of the full MeerKAT telescope. The required security will be applied to all objects that require confidentiality. We look forward to a joint and streamlined approach to Configuration Management on this front.

Project Engineering
by Luca Stringhetti, SKA Project Engineer

During the last months we were busy following the element CDRs as reported in the project management section. In parallel, in October we internally kicked off the adoption process that will bring us to the System CDR. I’ll take the opportunity to go a bit more into the details of the process we will face in the months to come. The system CDR is going to deliver the design baseline answering to the SKA1 design requirements. This is possible through a systematic integration process that starts from the element baselines. Each element will complete their element critical design, M1 milestone in Error! Reference source not found., and will deliver an element design baseline. From that point on, SKAO will start to formally integrate the design in the system that is currently described by the Lev1 Rev 11 requirement specification and by the design baseline description document. During this process, called Adoption because the design of the elements will be “adopted” by SKAO, the Office will possibly find gaps and issues that were not visible during the element CDRs. These gaps will be addressed using the engineering competencies inside the office and when this is not possible, external expert resources through the bridging process will be found. In practice the adoption process is preparatory work for the system CDR.

The Adoption Process will continue up to the Adoption Readiness. The ADR meeting will be organised to show a representation of this integration some time before the CDR-S to have some time to recover the gaps that the
meeting review will find. The review meeting will be organised as a working meeting, chaired by the Telescope engineers, including people from the office and people from the bridging phase.

Once this phase is over and after a CDR formal meeting in SKA HQ where the observations and the plans to resolve them is discussed, we will enter in the close out period (CDR-C). During this period the observation plans will be executed, and a new baseline of the system will be delivered. This baseline will answer to the REV12 of the system requirements. This new baseline, Design baseline 2, will be used as a starting point to produce the deployment baseline.

In relation to staffing, we’ve just been joined by a new secondee from SARAO, Shagita Gounden, who will take the place left by Juande Santander, who is still on career break. Shagita is already familiar with the organisation, having been seconded here in the past. She will work as system engineer supporting the Sw architecture group. Sadly at the end of November we will lose Wallace Turner, our domain specialist in signal processing. Wallace joined the project in 2009 and in all these years he contributed in many fields of the engineering and of the system engineering, always delivering first class job. We can only wish him all the best for his new career.

**Computing and Software**
*by Nick Rees, Head of Computing and Software*

Since the last report much of the computing and software focus has been on ramping up bridging whilst continuing to support consortia that have yet to close out. We have run a number of Scaled Agile Framework training courses – one in the office for the senior project leadership, and others sponsored by the University of Manchester and SARAO in South Africa. There are now four teams operating, working primarily on work outstanding from the TM CDR, and we are discussing with other consortia (primarily SaDT and CSP) how to integrate their bridging requirements into a scaled-up process when they dissolve. Key events will be the Program Increment meetings, with the first one to be held in early December and others to be held at three month increments thereafter. Because of the use of the Scaled Agile Framework the management of the bridging process has a different flavour than the rest of the project, but we believe it is essential to get experience in managing the work in this way before attempting the full construction scale-out.

In other work we continue to support the consortia CDRs, with the Dish LMC CDR and the CSP element CDR both being held as well as supporting the work on the LFAA design leading up to the CDR in December. Finally the IT team has grown with the return of Jay Mooneyan, and they have been working on provisioning the IT equipment for the new HQ Extension.

**Architecture**
*by Peter Dewdney, SKA Architect*

The CDR theme continues apace. The Architect has been closely involved in reading the voluminous CDR documentation. The most recent one, the Central Signal Processing (CSP) CDR, is almost ready for close-out. This is a particularly complex part of the system, encompassing both telescopes, major parts of the signal chain and correlation, the heart of interferometry, consisting in combining signals from several antennas. The preliminary report holds some lessons that can be generalised:

- The effort put into multi-level requirements (‘L1, L2, L3) has paid off. It forces the designers to critically examine the intent of the design; in the CSP case, the analysis led to a list of about 120 new assumptions required to complete the design and assure consistent traceability to higher levels. As many
Some will require modifications up to the L1 level. Ultimately it will lead to an orderly capturing of the design-intent at a detailed level.

- Simulation and judicious prototyping are important; necessary to demonstrate the feasibility of the design, where analysis alone is not enough. In particular the signal-chain simulators will become a tool for hardware and system verification later on. A system of this complexity could arguably not be built without simulators.
- Success in a multi-continent, multi-lateral project is highly reliant on proactive, demanding project-management. This has inspired cross-institutional mutual support and collaboration.
- It is very useful to break the review into ‘sub-Element’ CDRs, followed by an overall CDR. This is a practical way of managing the volume and detail of the implementation.
- Scenario-building is a very useful tool for understanding the dynamics and other aspects of the system. This has shown to be particularly useful in the software world, but has been shown to be equally useful in mixed world of CSP.

## Operations Planning

*by Gary Davis, Director of Operations Planning*

It has long been planned to convene two Operations Workshops, one each for LOW and MID. The objectives of these workshops are to learn lessons from the precursor telescopes operating on the sites, to socialise the operational concept, and to gather input for the Commissioning Plan and the Operations Plan. These meetings have been re-scheduled for February and March 2019. Details will be forthcoming. In the previous Bulletin I reported that the Operational Concept Document was being revised: this document will serve as the primary input to these workshops.

Similarly, it has long been planned to validate the SKA1 operations budget estimate through a detailed benchmarking exercise against comparable observatories. In September and October, members of the group visited VLA, ALMA and LOFAR to gather detailed data on staffing and budgets. This information is currently being digested and will form a critical input to the SKA1 Operations Plan.

The SKA Regional Centre Coordination Group (SRCCG) has developed (a) a revised requirements document, including a profile of requirements from the initial deployment to the Design Baseline over a period of some years; (b) a revised networking document, illustrating the concept for shipping large volumes of data around the world; and (c) an overall cost estimate for the SRC system (subject of course to a number of assumptions). The outcome of this work will be presented to the imminent meetings of the SEAC and the Board.

## Science

*by Robert Braun, SKA Science Director*

Although significant effort is still focused on supporting the Critical Design Reviews, the Science Team have also been involved in contributing to a special issue of Nature Astronomy released on 31 October that deals with Fast Radio Bursts (FRBs).

FRBs are bright brief flashes of radio light originating from rather large distances, with substantial redshift, and have huge potential for investigations into cosmology in new ways that complement existing work (e.g. by Planck etc.). The relatively young field is now just over a decade old, and a large and growing community has sprung up from nothing during that time. Recently the discovery rate has been accelerating from one FRB every few years to now one every few weeks. This is all thanks to instruments like Parkes, the Australian SKA Pathfinder.
(ASKAP), the upgraded Molonglo Synthesis Telescope (UTMOST) and the Canadian HI Mapping Experiment (CHIME), to be joined imminently by MeerKAT. FRBs are one of the High Priority Science Objectives of Phase 1 of the SKA, whose yield is uncertain as it depends on the as-yet-unknown cosmic evolution of FRBs, but hourly discoveries are likely based on our current knowledge and for likely telescope configurations. With the detection of a large number of FRBs, localised precisely on the sky, we can find the so-called “missing baryons”, measure reionisation histories of Helium and Hydrogen, determine the distribution of matter in galaxy halos, identify the dark energy equation of state and much more besides.


Our own Evan Keane provided a Review Article entitled “The future of fast radio burst science” that can be found here that demonstrates both the rapid advances that have been made in this field since the first detected event, and the great potential for further discovery that still remains. A video about FRBs produced by our Comms team is available here.
We have also enjoyed an unexpectedly strong interest in participation in the upcoming 2019 SKA Science Meeting and Key Science Project Workshop, (details [here](#)) with more than 300 people expressing their wish to attend. Since the interest significantly exceeds our HQ auditorium capacity (of 160), we will be making use of a larger backup venue for the first three days of the General Science meeting, before reconvening at the SKAO HQ for the final two days of break-out sessions of the KSP Workshop. We should be able to accommodate most of those interested in attending, although there will still be a modest waiting list that we will work through in the coming weeks.

**Policy Development**

*By Simon Berry, Director of Corporate Strategy*

September began with attendance at the International Conference on Research Infrastructures (ICRI) in Vienna. ICRI is a major meeting of global research infrastructure projects and organisations, and an extremely useful place for networking with peer organisations facing similar challenges to ours as they plan implementation of organisations to deliver major construction and facility operations projects. ICRI was preceded by the launch of the 2018 ‘ESFRI Roadmap’, the European Commission’s listing of prioritised research infrastructure project. SKA has again been listed as a ‘Landmark Project’, which in addition to ensuring a high degree of visibility in the European government system, also opens the door for ongoing support for the project through the various European funding mechanisms. As a UK company, the implications of the UK’s withdrawal from the EU remain uncertain, in this area of funding and indeed for many other operational areas, but we are working with the our UK government partners to ensure we are as prepared as possible for all eventualities.

For our team, October was dominated by the StratCom meeting that took place in Rome. Here, in addition to the usual StratCom business, the committee spent a considerable time considering the key policy issues that will underpin the future SKA Observatory IGO. In addition to considering how procurement and IP will be handled, StratCom discussed how the initial funding schedule (the document that will describe the funding shares from each Member) will be developed and agreed. StratCom's discussions will be reported to a meeting of the so-called 'Heads of Delegations’, the group of representatives of the IGO negotiating countries. They’ll be meeting at SKA HQ immediately after the Board in November.
StratCom’s meeting in Rome enabled a side meeting with the IGO negotiation Presidency team at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Here, we agreed that the Presidency will convene the signing ceremony for the SKA Observatory Convention as soon as all the necessary preparations have been made across the likely signing States. That means we will begin preparations at the end of the calendar year, aiming for a signing in the period mid-February to mid-March 2019. Behind the scenes, effort continues to ensure as many as possible will be able to arrive at that point and sign the Convention.

**IGO Transition**

*by Theresa Devaney, Transition Coordinator*

Transition from the SKA Organisation to the SKA Observatory

Work continues in the SKA Office to prepare for the transition from the SKA Organisation to the SKA Observatory.

The transition change delivery covers a number of areas:
- Legal and governance steps to enable transition;
- Activity to establish the SKA Observatory as a functioning organisation;
- Engaging with our employees and supporting them through the transition; and,
- Getting the SKA Organisation ready for transition by making sure we have relevant policies and systems in place to support operation of the future Observatory.
Once the Observatory Convention is signed, we will establish a Joint Working Group for Transition (JWGT) to facilitate connection between the SKA Board and the representation of the future Observatory, the Council Preparatory Task Force. Initially, the JWGT will review and assure transition progress and the future plan of work against the pre-defined set of success criteria for transition.

In preparation for this we have recently carried out an initial assessment of transition delivery and this was reviewed and assured at the recent StratCom meeting in October. We are now preparing to provide an update on progress to the SKA Board at its November meeting.

**SKA Board Matters and Administration**

*by Colin Greenwood, SKA Head of Administration*

**SKA Governance**

The 28th SKA Board of Directors meeting (SKA-BD-28) will be held on 12-13 November 2018 in the new Council Chamber at SKA HQ; this will be the first major meeting to use the new facility. The main items of business will be to present an extension of the SKA Organisation’s Business Plan to 2019-20 and a proposed organisational design for the SKA Observatory. The Board will also be asked to approve the budget for 2019 and new membership and officers of its Finance Committee. Directors will also be presented with engineering updates and progress with construction costs, bridging, plans for early production arrays, development of an operations plan and proposals for the SKA Regional Centres (SRCs). Reports from StratCom and the SEAC will be presented, together with an update on establishment of SKA Observatory as an Inter-Governmental Organisation (IGO) and preparations for the transition from a UK company to an IGO.

The 13th General meeting of Members (SKA-MEM-13) will take place in the Council Chamber at SKA HQ on the morning of 14 November 2018. The main items of business will be to seek the Members approval for the extension of the Company’s Business Plan to 2019-20 and to report on progress towards establishing SKA Observatory as an IGO. There will then follow an informal meeting of Members and a meeting of the Heads of IGO Delegations in preparation for the establishment of the Council Preparatory Task Force (CPTF).

**Human Resources**

*by Fiona Davenport, Head of Human Resources*

**Human Resources**

This HR update focuses on activity in the following areas: growth and transition, delivering HR excellence, employee engagement, and HR administration.

**Growth and Transition**

During the period since the last Bulletin, work has continued on business planning and defining the resources needed to deliver the project and manage the transition to the future IGO. As part of this, recruitment has continued in line with the approved resource plan and we welcome a number of new staff who have joined in the period:

- Matthew Lilley – Senior Project Manager SKA-Mid;
- Manu Girdonia – Fixer term HR Advisor;
- Beatrice Kioko – Legal intern, 4-month contract;
- Sally-Ann Mitchell – Project Planner, 6-month secondment (UK Civil Service);
- Ben Hopkinson – Bid Support Manager, 6-month secondment (UK Civil Service);
- Hui Deng – Calibration and Image Processing Specialist – secondment;
- Feng Wang – Calibration and Image Processing Specialist – secondment;
- Jill Hammond – Engineering Project Manager Networks, Timing and Computing;
- Kesseven Mooneyan – Fixed term IT support analyst;
- Alex Barry – Fixed term HR Project Manager, Resourcing and Capability; and
- Debbie Bann – Fixed term HR Project Manager, Policy, Engagement and Reward.
- Shagita Gounden – Junior systems engineer – secondment,

We also look forward to welcoming a number of other staff and secondees in the near future:
- Qiqi Liu – Project Planner, January 2019 start; and
- Joe Hayes – Facilities Manager, November start.

Work continues to recruit a number of other staff and secondees:
- Domain Specialist (shortlisting underway);
- Post Doc (closing date 28th December 2018);
- Head of Finance (due to be advertised - closing Date 10th January 2019);
- Release Train Engineer (closing date end November 2019); and
- Head of IT (due to be advertised).

We very much welcome international applicants for all roles. Please feel free to contact HR directly for more information regarding these roles or other activities we are looking to carry out to build an external international talent pool for the sourcing of future roles.

More broadly on planning for transition, staff 1-1s were conducted in July to better understand staff concerns and questions. Following this, many action are being progressed in order to put the right level of support in place. Further 1-1s will continue in line with the transition actions.

Work conducted in the last period on future organisation design proposals, including socialising the favoured structure with key stakeholder groups. As part of this, further work will be conducted on future culture in line with staff survey feedback as detailed further below.

Delivering HR Excellence

Work continues on how we improve our attraction methodology and recruitment approach, including developing actions to improve the diversity and the recruitment of quality hires.

Line manager training modules have been developed and are now scheduled over the coming period with the purpose of improving line manager capability in a number of key areas, critical for effective support and management of our staff.

Employee Engagement

Analysis of the recent staff engagement survey results over the summer months highlights a number of areas which are working well, but also some key areas to which we must pay more attention. Feedback to staff and focus groups have been conducted in the period and associated action plans are being developed for
HR Administration

The primary focus remains the implementation of the ERP system with significant activity required for process and workflow mapping, system configuration and data gathering for the development of the Recruitment and Core HR modules.

Safety and Facilities
by John Kerr, Safety and Facilities Manager

SKA HQ

Following handover of the extended SKA HQ by the University of Manchester on 18 July 2018, we have started occupying and using many of the new offices and meeting rooms. Initial procurement of furniture, fixtures and equipment in nearly completed and the new AV and ICT systems are expected to be installed by mid-November.

Global Safety Management

At time of writing this report, discussion and review of consortium hazard analysis and safety management plan submissions continue as part of overall requirements for ongoing element critical design review (CDR).

INFRA (AU) & INFRA (SA) CDR reviews have been held with no significant safety issues being raised at element level. An LFAA CDR planning meeting was held mid-October and plans for full element CDR are underway. Safety in AIV Consortia is on track to be finalised before planned CDR approx. March 2019.

Safety and environmental issues were discussed at the recent MeerKAT Integration review process in Cape Town during week of 22 October 2018.

Our System Safety in Design Review panel continues to meet looking at safety implications for design adoption and integration of element safety reviews into the overall system design.


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

As has been the case since the start of the CDR season earlier this year, a lot of work has been put into developing stories around CDR deliveries, aiming at promoting progress and achievements as well as teams and institutions. As such, the CDR website has continued to grow in content as the consortia progress through their final reviews. In particular, in September and October we boosted the number of profiles on the site, publishing interviews with nine consortia members to find out more about their work on the SKA. These were spread across INSA, INAU, CSP and Dish consortia, with more to follow in the coming weeks. We added further science perspectives to the platform too, with Prof. Naomi McClure Griffiths and Prof. Ben Stappers explaining why...
Infrastructure and CSP are important for astronomers. We were also pleased to receive several contributions from partner institutions and industry, including a CSIRO feature on the Low.CBF team within CSP, and a video produced by Persistent Systems, which was heavily involved in the TM consortium. Finally, we produced a video following the CSP CDR, with the first impressions of those who gathered at SKA HQ for the review, and added an assortment of images and social media posts to the platform. In the pipelines are stories we’ve been developing with our partners to celebrate the imminent close-out of INSA, INAU, CSP and SaDT consortia. These stories will be published when official close-out is announced so watch this space.

The team has also been heavily involved in coordinating the visit from the Group of Senior Officials (GSO) on global Research Infrastructures to the HQ, mentioned by the DG in his contribution at the top of this bulletin. The remit of this group, comprising representatives from Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, the European Commission, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, South Africa, UK and USA, consists in preparing the work of the periodic G8 meetings of global Science Ministers. The SKA being a fitting exemplar of a global collaboration, our UK colleagues -who chair this group this year, after the USA last year and France next year- offered to take the group to the SKA HQ for the 3rd day of their series of meetings in the country. This visit was a great opportunity for us to give our guests a flavour of our partnership, notably by including some of our partner countries in the conversation. To that effect, we used this opportunity to test the AV capabilities of the new auditorium and, thanks to the support of our IT team here as well as colleagues in Australia, China and South Africa, we managed to successfully set up live links with the CSIRO control room in Marsfield, the Murchison Radio Observatory site in Western Australia, the FAST control room in China, and the MeerKAT control room at the SARAO office in Cape Town. Live demonstrations of remote observing were conducted by the partners in Australia and South Africa, while our Chinese colleagues treated us with live views of the always impressive FAST telescope from the control room. The feedback received from our GSO guests was extremely positive, all acknowledging the immense work undertaken by the partners to get to this point and the momentum in the project going forward. We then offered our guests a flavour of the outreach initiatives we’ve been developing, including an immersive experience into the SKA thanks to Virtual Reality demonstrations and the viewing of a few artworks from our indigenous art-astronomy exhibition Shared Sky.
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+, Instagram and YouTube.