SKA Memo Series Framework

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Rationale for a Memo Series

The SKA is like any other research infrastructure; it is created through a meeting of minds, and these minds need to express themselves. The SKA has always had a Memo series, and in the early (PrepSKA) era, key documents were written as Memos.

Today, key documents are part of the engineering document corpus. However, the challenges of the Project are such that a Memo Series remains a useful avenue of expression, such as deep engineering analysis or speculative papers on SKA exploitation.

The principle is that most forms of expression are encouraged, including criticism. If editorial control is exercised, it will be limited to matters of factual accuracy and presentation.

Features of a Memo Series

- An SKA Memo template (not the same as Engineering Document template).
- A (purely numerical) number scheme (as in ‘Memo 213’).
- A small editorial panel.
  - SKA Architect
  - Director of Science
  - Head of Mission Assurance
- Light touch quality control.
- Publication on SKA website with download.
- Collaboration in Confluence.
- Rapid turnaround.
- Mechanism of Editor’s Note – ‘This paper does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Observatory but is being published in order to stimulate debate.’

Editorial Process

Memos may be proposed, or indeed submitted in nearly final form, at any time. Submission would be to the chair of the editorial panel. The chair would solicit comments, according to the spirit, remit and rules as set out below, as to the suitability of the submission based on the draft or abstract. If only a proposal, encouragement would be given developing the text collaboratively, using a tool that the authors and the editorial panel share.

Memo series spirit

- Collaboration.
- Constructiveness.
• New ideas, especially for small design changes with large benefits, and fresh science use-cases.

Remit for SKA memos

• Topics arising from SKA development activity which inform decisions but require moderately deep analysis or method development which may have wider significance or utility.
• Analysis of SKA capabilities or emergent properties.

Rules

• Single topic with mainly technical or scientific content, relevant to the SKA project.
• Clearly written and readable by an informed SKA-audience, but otherwise non-specialist.
• No particular judgement on whether the content is entirely correct, as long as the arguments are expressed clearly (i.e., allowing an informed reader to judge).
• No use of protected information (‘For Project Use Only’ or higher).
• No opinions which gratuitously bring the Project into disrepute.
• Memos which subsequently become part of the SKA design rationale will also be repackaged as project documents and subjected to the same controls.