

SKA-France

Monthly bulletin

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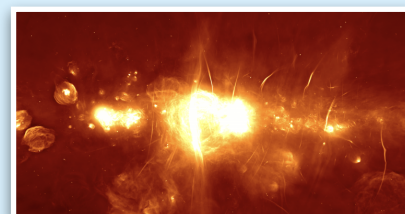
Maison SKA-France joins SKA Organisation

Following approval by the Board of Directors of the SKA Organisation, July 26, 2018 saw the announcement of Maison SKA-France, lead by CNRS, becoming the 12th member of the SKA Organisation.

After the publication of the French SKA White Book in October 2017, the kick-off meeting of the new research and industry consortium named "Maison SKA-France" (MSF) in February 2018 and the inscription of the SKA as a project in the French Roadmap for Research Infrastructures in May 2018, this represents another important milestone of the last 12 months for the French participation to the SKA project.



Members of SKAO Board of Directors and observers standing behind the Board Chair, Dr. C. Cesarsky, and French representatives, Dr. M. P  rault and Dr. C. Ferrari (Image credit: SKA Organisation)



MeerKAT inauguration

The South Africa's 64-dish MeerKAT telescope, SKA precursor that will be incorporated in SKA1-MID, was inaugurated on July 13, 2018. The ceremony, organised at the telescope site near Carnarvon, saw the presence of the South African Deputy President David Mabuza, national and local politicians, representatives of the South African Radio Astronomy Observatory (SARAO) and of the international scientific community. The members of SKAO Board, whose 27th meeting was held in South Africa on July 11 and 12, 2018, were also invited to the event.

Among the amazing pictures of the radio sky obtained with MeerKAT and unveiled during the ceremony, the image of the region surrounding the supermassive black hole at the centre of the Milky Way is shown above (Credit: SARAO).

CNIM: a new member of Maison SKA-France

It is our greatest pleasure to announce that, after having expressed its strong support through a [letter of interest](#) sent to the SKA-France Director in April 2018, **CNIM** has recently joined the Maison SKA-France, following unanimous approval of MSF Board Members on July 2nd, 2018.



Logos of the 12 current members of Maison SKA-France

Activities

Maison SKA-France at the MeerKAT inauguration

Two representatives from MSF had the privilege to attend the MeerKAT inauguration. Dr. M. Pérault (French lead delegate at SKAO meetings) and Dr. C. Ferrari (MSF Director and science delegate at the SKAO Board of Directors), both present to the 27th SKAO Board meeting, were also invited to this important event, having the chance to visit the telescope site, assist to the exciting presentations and strengthen the excellent relations with members of the South African community.

The Maison SKA-France warmly congratulates SARAo colleagues for this major achievement!



Left: M. Pérault, C. Cesarsky (SKAO Board Chair) and C. Ferrari, with part of the MeerKAT core in the background. Right: a MeerKAT antenna

SKA at the SF2A meeting

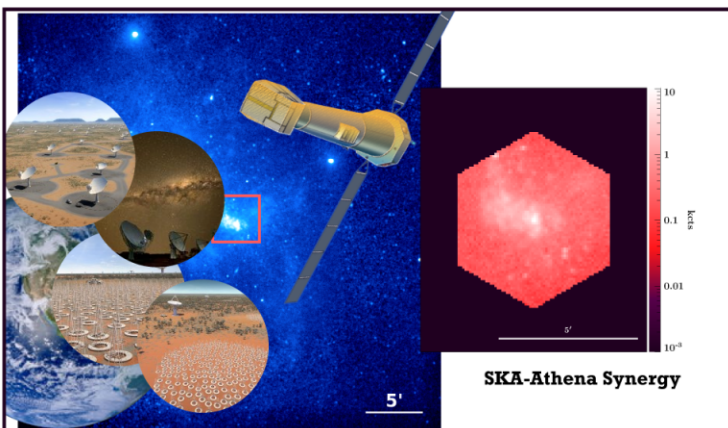
Great attention was paid to the **SKA project and its pathfinder and precursor telescopes during the annual meeting of the French Society of Astronomy & Astrophysics (SF2A)**, which was held in Bordeaux from July 3 to July 6, 2018.

During the whole meeting, plenary session presentations were held in the mornings, while the afternoons saw parallel sessions on specific topics and research domains. On the mornings of July 5 and July 6, respectively, C. Ferrari (OCA) presented the MSF and the activities of the French community towards the SKA project, while S. Corbel (AIM and Paris Observatory) and C. Tasse (Paris Observatory) illustrated the important French implication in SKA pathfinder and precursor projects, with particular attention to the first results of the LOFAR survey at 150 MHz.

In the afternoon of July 5, a workshop (“SKA, its French pathfinder NenuFAR and its precursors”) was organised by the Action Spécifique SKA-LOFAR, which allowed to get an overview of the wide variety of low-frequency radio astronomy related activities in France: from the development of new simulation and data reduction methods, to the analysis and interpretation of both numerical and observational results, without of course forgetting the technological developments and the conception of new instruments.

Announcements

SKA-Athena Synergy White Paper released



After the successful SKA-Athena Synergy Workshop, held on April 24 and 25, 2017 at the SKAO Headquarters in Jodrell Bank Observatory (UK), the SKA-Athena Synergy White Paper has been released on July 25, 2018.

The paper illustrates the main science areas for which unique insights will be obtained by combining radio observations of the SKA with the view of the X-ray sky that will be offered by the ESA satellite Athena. These areas mainly include the first stars and the epoch of reionisation, large-scale structures, active galactic nuclei, galactic and compact objects and transient phenomena.

The white paper, which is available on-line, was authored by a group of experts based at four leading research organisations (the SKA-Athena Synergy Team: R. Cassano - IRA/INAF; R. Fender - University of Oxford; C. Ferrari - Observatoire de la Côte d’Azur; A. Merloni - Max-Planck Institute for Extraterrestrial Physics), and based on contributions from 34 scientists in 13 different countries. In addition to C. Ferrari (member of the SAST), France was represented by N. Webb (IRAP) and G. Pratt (AIM), expert in compact object and galaxy cluster studies respectively.

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