



SKA Organisation

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To whom it may concern,

Impact of the EC-funded GO-SKA project on the SKA

I am writing in my capacity as the Director-General of the Square Kilometre Array (SKA).

The SKA is the next-generation radio telescope. It will be, once complete, the largest scientific facility on Earth, with antennas spread across several thousand kilometres on two continents (Africa and Australia). The SKA Organisation (SKAO) currently has 11 members (Australia, South Africa, United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden, Canada, China, India and New Zealand), who between them fund the €150M detailed design process. The detailed design is due to be complete in 2017 at which point, assuming funding has been approved, Phase 1 of the SKA will move to construction.

GO-SKA, a policy development project funded by the EC, began its work in early 2011, before the SKAO existed as a legal entity. The principal objective of GO-SKA was to support the SKAO in the development of its detailed policy in several areas. Since the project was, and is, extremely dynamic, GO-SKA had, necessarily, to be 'light on its feet' and to respond rapidly to new directions and a changing environment: this it did very well.

GO-SKA's greatest impact has been in the work undertaken in WP3, in which it helped the SKAO to develop and implement a global governance model. Without the resources GO-SKA was able to provide, I sincerely doubt that the project would be as far along in its development of a long-term governance model as it now is. The GO-SKA team developed an integrated timeline of decisions and their dependencies, which was critical in guiding SKA as it started down the road.

When SKAO set up its Strategy and Business Development Committee (StratCom), the GO-SKA coordinator became a member of StratCom, ably supported by members of her GO-SKA funded team. Working closely with StratCom, GO-SKA played a central role in all governance-related work streams, e.g. the development of possible Privileges and Immunities if SKAO was to become a treaty organisation; assistance in developing a key Letter of Intent to be signed by governments indicating they would begin the negotiations leading to a treaty organisation; funding work by the SKAO's legal advisors, Squire, Patten & Boggs, to study a particularly complex contingency option if a treaty structure was not to be adopted; and more.

In GO-SKA WP2, considerable resources were expended in supporting a range of activities key to the development of the coordination of the global project. These covered items such as a series of workshops related to the funding of the SKA, research into potential future members of the SKAO and, importantly, the funding of a study of the societal impact of radio astronomy. The latter will be an integral part of the SKA Prospectus, which governments will use as the basis of their SKA business plans.

WP4, through the use of consultants, provided a very useful Procurement Handbook, funded a procurement workshop for the SKA Board and assisted in the development of the SKA's procurement principles and processes which were adopted by the Board at its March 2015 meeting as the basis for negotiation by governments. Similarly, WP5, which looked at how SKA could be part of the toolset to address global challenges, undertook a range of useful activities. I think it is true to say that we have not yet seen the full impact of the WP5 work; it will require further development as the project and its engineering develops.



Overall, I strongly commend the EC for funding GO-SKA. The work undertaken was extremely important in helping SKAO develop and mature; GO-SKA's close engagement with StratCom has been beneficial and the resources the project brought to bear have enabled SKA to develop in all the ways mentioned above.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Philip Diamond'.

Prof. Philip Diamond
Director-General
SKA Organisation