

Intel throws its weight behind African SKA bid



Christian Morales, VP Intel, Dr. Fanaroff, head of SKA South Africa project team and Dr. Tshepo Seekoe, Department of Science and Technology (image: Denisa Oosthuizen)

The Square Kilometre Array (SKA) Africa project has entered a new exciting phase with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between technology giant Intel and the South African Department of Science and Technology, held on the 26 of July at Sheraton, Pretoria, South Africa. Intel Vice President and EMEA General Manager, Christian Morales, demonstrated Intel's support and commitment to the SKA African bid by joining forces with SA Department of Science and Technology, represented by Dr. Tshepo Seekoe and the SKA South Africa project team, headed by Dr. Fanaroff.

"We are bidding for the SKA African project and various future innovations that will bring research and development in science, technology and astronomy to the global market and establish Africa as a global player in these industries", says Dr. Seekoe, spokesperson of the Department at the event. Christian Morales, Intel VP and head of Intel EMEA, has strengthened Intel's commitment of investing in the region, by heading the call for private funding and investment in the SKA African bid. "The SKA African bid is a promising initiative and Intel will keep its promise of investing in the region to support the pillars of innovation: smart performance, connectivity, security and infrastructure deployment. The project is a demonstration of the African potential to have its people communicating and teaming up globally", affirmed Morales.

Intel will support the SKA bid with state-of-the-art hardware and software architecture, infrastructure deployment, simulations and human capital development. Most of the technology hasn't been developed yet and represents the future in radio and satellite communications, capturing, processing and analyzing the data, making SKA the most advanced project of its kind in the world.

"We are grateful for Intel's involvement in the SKA African project. The MoU shows Intel's commitment to innovation, already on the way with the MeerKat project. Their commitment shows that Africa has young brilliant engineers and scientists and that South Africa does have the capabilities to play an important role in the science and technology industry", says Dr. Fanaroff, head of the SKA African project.

The SKA project is set to be the most technologically advanced radio telescope on the African continent. The African bid will see the core site hosted in South Africa in the Karoo area, with outstations in Namibia, Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique and Zambia. South Africa is competing against Australia and New Zealand in its bid to bring the SKA to the continent. The international SKA consortium is due to announce the winning bid in 2012.

South Africa has already committed to the project with the building of Karoo Array Telescope, called the MeerKat, a precursor to the SKA, using the most advanced cutting edge technology to available.

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