

# Intel backs South African SKA bid

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**Intel has become the latest technology company to throw its weight behind South Africa's bid to house the Square Kilometre Array (SKA).**

South Africa is currently bidding against Australia to house the largest and most sensitive radio telescope in the Southern Hemisphere. The agreement will see Intel providing its most sophisticated high-performance computing processors to process the enormous amounts of data which will be generated by the project's radio telescopes.

Speaking at the signing of the agreement in Pretoria today, Intel Vice President and EMEA General Manager [Christian Morales](#) said the company viewed South Africa as the gateway to Africa, and the SKA project would give the country – and the continent – the opportunity to showcase its technology, infrastructure and expertise to the world.

“The SKA will unlock many benefits for South Africa and Africa through job creation, enhancing ICT skills and monetary inflows,” said Morales. “We feel we can help put South African scientists on the map, reaffirm the country's scientific and engineering capabilities, and attract young people to careers in science and engineering.”

The project calls for a wide range of engineering skills in areas such as digital signal processing, radio frequency engineering, antenna design and software development.

Part of the attractiveness of the African bid is that South Africa provides the ideal site for the telescope due to its well-placed and legally protected radio-quiet environment. If successful, the project will also have outstations in Namibia, Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique and Zambia.

South Africa already has existing astronomy capabilities in the form of the Southern African Large Telescope, Gauteng's radio astronomy observatory HartRAO and the KAT-7 array radio telescope. Currently under construction is the MeerKAT, a 64-dish cutting-edge pathfinder, which forms a test bed to determine which technologies are best suited to the international project.