

## CPU maker brings African SKA bid closer to home

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CPU maker Intel has become the latest multinational to throw its weight behind South Africa's bid to house the [Square Kilometre Array](#) (SKA).



The company signed a memorandum of understanding with the SKA team and [Department of Science and Technology](#) today. This agreement will see the technology giant provide the latest processing technologies to the project.

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

Speaking at the signing of the agreement in Pretoria, Intel's vice president and Europe Middle East and Africa (EMEA) general manager, Christian Morales, said that the company viewed South Africa as the gateway to Africa. He stated that the SKA project would give the country, as well as 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," explained 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 as well as Zambia.

South Africa already has existing astronomy capabilities in the form of the [Southern African Large Telescope](#) (SALT), 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.

In related news Intel also [recently announced](#) that it signed a definitive agreement to acquire Fulcrum Microsystems, a privately held semiconductor company that designs Ethernet switch silicon for data centre network providers.