Section A: Overview of the Research Project Proposal

- 1. Academic level (Masters or PhD): Doctorate PhD (Physics)
- **2. Broad field of research:** Research on an Engineering aspect of the Telescope
- 3. Title of research project

Optical Fibre Networks using Flexible Spectrum Technology for the SKA

4. Research project abstract/ summary

MeerKAT and SKA rely on optical fibre communication technology for transporting tremendous amounts of data. For example, the dishes of the SKA and aperture arrays will produce 110 times the current global Internet traffic. Transporting this data requires research into dense wavelength division multiplexed (DWDM) network technologies that are flexible, adaptive and self-optimizing. Wavelength division multiplexing refers to the transmission of multiple optical fibre wavelengths within a single optical fibre. Flexible spectrum refers to the fact that the channel wavelength assignment is not statically fixed, but is dynamically optimized in real time to ensure optimum network performance at all times. In order for these "self-driving" networks to function optimally, novel hardware and dynamic algorithms need to be identified and developed to perform critical tasks. Such tasks include wavelength assignment, signal routing, network restoration and network protection. This project focuses on developing, implementing and testing modulation formats, hardware technologies and algorithms for optimizing the operation of such networks. Nelson Mandela University has the best equipped optical fibre research lab in the country. Our students have the opportunity to travel and present at overseas conferences, as well as spend time on research visits abroad.

Section B: Supervisor Details

1. Primary Supervisor Details

- a) Professor Tim Gibbon
- b) Nelson Mandela University (Port Elizabeth, South Africa)
- c) Email: Tim.Gibbon@mandela.ac.za
- d) Student supervision record:

South African Stud	South African Students		South African Students Black		Coloured		Indian	1	White		
Degree	Total	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male		
Masters	5	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	2		
Doctoral	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0		
Postdoctoral	3	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0		

Non-South African Students (other African countries)		Black		Coloured		Indian		White	
Degree	Total	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Doctoral	5	0	4	0	1	0	0	0	0
Masters	2	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	3
Masters/MTech	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Postdoctoral	3	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0

Non-South African Students (International)		Black		Coloured		Indian		White	
Degree	Total	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Undergraduate degree (four year)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Masters	4	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	3

(Full details of each student is uploaded as a separate attachment to the application)

Section C: Full Research Project Proposal

1. Research project abstract/ summary

MeerKAT and SKA rely on optical fibre communication technology for transporting tremendous amounts of data. For example, the dishes of the SKA and aperture arrays will produce 110 times the current global Internet traffic. Transporting this data requires research into dense wavelength division multiplexed (DWDM) network technologies that are flexible, adaptive and self-optimizing. Wavelength division multiplexing refers to the transmission of multiple optical fibre wavelengths within a single optical fibre. Flexible spectrum refers to the fact that the channel wavelength assignment is not statically fixed, but is dynamically optimized in real time to ensure optimum network performance at all times. In order for these "self-driving" networks to function optimally, novel hardware and dynamic algorithms need to be identified and developed to perform critical tasks. Such tasks include wavelength assignment, signal routing, network restoration and network protection. This project focuses on developing, implementing and testing modulation formats, hardware technologies and algorithms for optimizing the operation of such networks. Nelson Mandela University has the best equipped optical fibre research lab in the country. Our students have the opportunity to travel and present at overseas conferences, as well as spend time on research visits abroad.

2. Relevance of the research proposed to the priority areas of SARAO, MeerKAT and the SKA

The research relates to "Big Data topics, including the development of hardware and middleware platforms." – specifically technology required to transport Big Data between individual telescope subsystems and to make Big Data freely available to Astronomers and telescope end users. Optical networks to meet these Big Data requirements demand rely on complex technologies and networks, with thousands of individual network

components (transceivers, routers, wavelength selected reconfigurable add-drop multiplexers, optical amplifiers, etc.) distributed within optical networks spanning thousands of kilometers. The underpinning technologies and control algorithms for real time dynamic operation of these networks in terms of operations such as wavelength assignment, wavelength routing, network restoration and protection have not yet been fully developed or implemented.

3. Research work breakdown:

Year 1

- 1) Background study on theory and operation of network components (reconfigurable optical add drop multiplexers, wavelength selective switches, optical transceivers etc.) and modulation formats (QPSK, DPQPSK, coherent etc.).
- 2) Background study on optical fibre network architectures, specifically relating to DWDM flex spectrum. This includes experimental work to gain expertise with equipment in the Nelson Mandela University lab.
- 3) Full review of algorithmic approaches: genetic algorithms, evolutionary algorithms, particle swarm optimization, ant colony optimization etc.
- 4) Publish novel and innovative work at relevant conferences and journals (SAICSIT, SATNAC, SAIP etc.).

• Year 2

- 5) Clear formulation of the control plane and hardware requirements as relating to future networks, MeerKAT and SKA.
- 6) Identify and improve the best technologies from 1) and algorithms from 3) most suited to the problem. This features proposing novel and hybrid solutions.
- 7) Design and build an experimental lab testbed reflecting a full flexible spectrum DWDM network architecture.
- 8) Publish novel and innovative work at relevant conferences and journals (SAICSIT, SATNAC, SAIP etc.).

• Year 3

- 9) Using the experimental lab testbed developed, implemented the relevant technologies and algorithms and fully evaluate their performance and success.
- 10) Publish novel and innovative work at relevant conferences and journals (SAICSIT, SATNAC, SAIP etc.).
- 11) Write-up and submit.

4. Availability of required data / access to required equipment / availability of research facilities and other resources required (max 200 words)

The Nelson Mandela University has an extremely well equipped laboratory with cutting edge optical fibre research equipment. The equipment and expertise have been assembled over a period of seventeen years, with a proud history of producing MSc and PhD graduates. We collaborate closely with both local and international universities, as well as key industry partners such as Telkom. CISCO is a notable world leader and research partner in the area of flexible spectrum research. We also work closely with the SKA-SA Engineering team on the MeerKAT project in developing technologies implemented in the MeerKAT telescope. With the campus situated in Port Elizabeth beside the ocean on a nature reserve, Nelson Mandela University is a great opportunity for pursuing postgraduate studies.

Section D: Signatures

Supervisor signature, Date: 31 July 2018

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Timothy Gibbon, Student Supervision Record

Student Supervision Record

South African Students		Black		Coloured		India	า	White		
Degree	Total	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	
Masters	5	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	
Doctoral	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	
Postdoctoral	3	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	

Non-South African Students (other African countries)		Black		Coloured		Indian		White	
Degree	Total	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Doctoral	5	0	4	0	1	0	0	0	0
Masters	2	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	3
Masters/MTech	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Postdoctoral	3	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0

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Non-South African Students (International)		Black		Coloured		Indian		White	
Degree	Total	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Undergraduate degree (four year)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Masters	4	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	3

Title	Mr
Surname	Oladipo
Initials	J
Race	African
Gender	Male
Citizenship	South Africa
Institution	Nelson Mandela University
Level	Masters
Name of Degree/Diploma	MSc (Computer Science)
Title of Thesis	
Fulltime	Yes
Year of First Registration	2016
Status	Completed
Year of First Registration	2016
Year in which Degree was Awarded	2018
Year Supervised From	2016
Year Supervised To	2018
Supervisor	No
Co-Supervisor	Yes

Title	Dr
Surname	Wassin
Initials	S
Race	Coloured
Gender	Male
Citizenship	South Africa
Institution	Nelson Mandela University
Level	Doctoral
Name of Degree/Diploma	PhD (Physics)
Title of Thesis	
Fulltime	Yes
Year of First Registration	2015
Status	Completed
Year of First Registration	2015
Year in which Degree was Awarded	2017
Year Supervised From	2015
Year Supervised To	2017
Supervisor	Yes
Co-Supervisor	No

Title	Dr
Surname	Isoe
Initials	GM
Race	African
Gender	Male
Citizenship	Kenya
Institution	Nelson Mandela University
Level	Doctoral
Name of Degree/Diploma	PhD (Physics)
Title of Thesis	
Fulltime	Yes
Year of First Registration	2015
Status	Completed
Year of First Registration	2015
Year in which Degree was Awarded	2017
Year Supervised From	2015
Year Supervised To	2017
Supervisor	Yes
Co-Supervisor	No

Title	Dr
Surname	Bezuidenhout
Initials	L
Race	Coloured
Gender	Male
Citizenship	South Africa
Institution	Nelson Mandela University
Level	Postdoctoral
Name of Degree/Diploma	PhD (Geophysics)
Title of Thesis	
Fulltime	Yes
Year of First Registration	2013
Status	Completed
Year of First Registration	2013
Year in which Degree was Awarded	2017
Year Supervised From	2013
Year Supervised To	2017
Supervisor	No
Co-Supervisor	Yes

Title	Dr .
Surname	Boiyi
Initials	D
Race	African
Gender	Male
Citizenship	Kenya
Institution	Nelson Mandela University
Level	Postdoctoral
Name of Degree/Diploma	Postdoc (Physics)
Title of Thesis	
Fulltime	Yes
Year of First Registration	2017
Status	Completed
Year of First Registration	2017
Year in which Degree was Awarded	2017
Year Supervised From	2017
Year Supervised To	2017
Supervisor	Yes
Co-Supervisor	No

Title	0.
Title	Dr
Surname	Boiyo
Initials	D
Race	African
Gender	Male
Citizenship	Kenya
Institution	Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University
Level	Doctoral
Name of Degree/Diploma	PhD (Physics)
Title of Thesis	
Fulltime	Yes
Year of First Registration	2014
Status	Completed
Year of First Registration	2014
Year in which Degree was Awarded	2016
Year Supervised From	2014
Year Supervised To	2016
Supervisor	Yes
Co-Supervisor	No No

Title	Miss
Surname	Dlamini
Initials	PP
Race	African
Gender	Female
Citizenship	South Africa
Institution	Nelson Mandela University
Level	Masters
Name of Degree/Diploma	MSc (Physics)
Title of Thesis	
Fulltime	Yes
Year of First Registration	2015
Status	Completed
Year of First Registration	2015
Year in which Degree was Awarded	2016
Year Supervised From	2015
Year Supervised To	2016
Supervisor	Yes
Co-Supervisor	No

	_
Title	Mr
Surname	Gravette
Initials	A
Race	White
Gender	Male
Citizenship	South Africa
Institution	Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University
Level	Masters
Name of Degree/Diploma	MSc (Computer Science)
Title of Thesis	
Fulltime	Yes
Year of First Registration	2015
Status	Completed
Year of First Registration	2015
Year in which Degree was Awarded	2016
Year Supervised From	2015
Year Supervised To	2016
Supervisor	No No
Co-Supervisor	Yes

Title	Mr
Surname	Chabata
Initials	V
Race	African
Gender	Male
Citizenship	Zimbabwe
ID / Passport / Unique Number	s212410180
Institution	Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University
Level	Doctoral
Name of Degree/Diploma	PhD (Physics)
Title of Thesis	
Fulltime	Yes
Year of First Registration	2012
Status	Completed
Year of First Registration	2012
Year in which Degree was Awarded	2015
Year Supervised From	2012
Year Supervised To	2015
Supervisor	Yes
Co-Supervisor	No

Title	Dr .
Surname	Rotich
Initials	E
Race	African
Gender	Male
Citizenship	Kenya
Institution	Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University
Level	Postdoctoral
Name of Degree/Diploma	Postdoc (Physics)
Title of Thesis	
Fulltime	Yes
Year of First Registration	2015
Status	Completed
Year of First Registration	2015
Year in which Degree was Awarded	2015
Year Supervised From	2015
Year Supervised To	2015
Supervisor	Yes
Co-Supervisor	No

Title	Mr
Surname	Rotich
Initials	E
Race	African
Gender	Male
Citizenship	Kenya
ID / Passport / Unique Number	s212238523
Institution	Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University
Level	Doctoral
Name of Degree/Diploma	PhD (Physics)
Title of Thesis	
Fulltime	No
Year of First Registration	2012
Status	Completed
Year of First Registration	2012
Year in which Degree was Awarded	2014
Year Supervised From	2012
Year Supervised To	2014
Supervisor	Yes
Co-Supervisor	No

Title	Mr
Surname	Wassin
Initials	S
Race	Coloured
Gender	Male
Citizenship	South Africa
Institution	Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University
Level	Masters
Name of Degree/Diploma	MSc (Physics)
Title of Thesis	
Fulltime	Yes
Year of First Registration	2013
Status	Completed
Year of First Registration	2013
Year in which Degree was Awarded	2014
Year Supervised From	2013
Year Supervised To	2014
Supervisor	Yes
Co-Supervisor	No

Title	Mr
Surname	Gamatham
Initials	RRG
Race	Coloured
Gender	Male
Citizenship	Namibia
ID / Passport / Unique Number	s205062326
Institution	Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University
Level	Doctoral
Name of Degree/Diploma	PhD (Physics)
Title of Thesis	
Fulltime	Yes
Year of First Registration	2009
Status	Completed
Year of First Registration	2009
Year in which Degree was Awarded	2013
Year Supervised From	2011
Year Supervised To	2014
Supervisor	No
Co-Supervisor	Yes

Title	Miss
Surname	Tatarczak
Initials	A
Race	White
Gender	Female
Citizenship	Poland
Institution	Technical University of Denmark
Level	Undergraduate degree (four year)
Name of Degree/Diploma	Bachelor thesis
Title of Thesis	
Fulltime	Yes
Year of First Registration	2009
Status	Completed
Year of First Registration	2009
Year in which Degree was Awarded	2010
Year Supervised From	2010
Year Supervised To	2010
Supervisor	No
Co-Supervisor	Yes

Title	Mr
Title	
Surname	Rodes Lopez
Initials	R
Race	White
Gender	Male
Citizenship	Spain
Institution	Technical University of Denmark
Level	Masters
Name of Degree/Diploma	MSc
Title of Thesis	
Fulltime	Yes
Year of First Registration	2008
Status	Completed
Year of First Registration	2008
Year in which Degree was Awarded	2009
Year Supervised From	2009
Year Supervised To	2009
Supervisor	No
Co-Supervisor	Yes

Title	Mr
Surname	Jiménez Ruano
Initials	С
Race	White
Gender	Male
Citizenship	Spain
Institution	Technical University of Denmark
Level	Masters
Name of Degree/Diploma	MSc
Title of Thesis	
Fulltime	Yes
Year of First Registration	2008
Status	Completed
Year of First Registration	2008
Year in which Degree was Awarded	2009
Year Supervised From	2009
Year Supervised To	2009
Supervisor	No
Co-Supervisor	Yes

	_
Title	Mr
Surname	Gamatham
Initials	RRG
Race	Coloured
Gender	Male
Citizenship	Namibia
ID / Passport / Unique Number	s205062326
Institution	Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University
Level	Masters
Name of Degree/Diploma	MSc (Physics)
Title of Thesis	
Fulltime	Yes
Year of First Registration	2007
Status	Completed
Year of First Registration	2007
Year in which Degree was Awarded	2008
Year Supervised From	2007
Year Supervised To	2008
Supervisor	No
Co-Supervisor	Yes

Title	Mr
Surname	Pawlik
Initials	M
Race	White
Gender	Male
Citizenship	Poland
Institution	Technical University of Denmark
Level	Masters
Name of Degree/Diploma	MSc
Title of Thesis	
Fulltime	Yes
Year of First Registration	2007
Status	Completed
Year of First Registration	2007
Year in which Degree was Awarded	2008
Year Supervised From	2008
Year Supervised To	2008
Supervisor	No
Co-Supervisor	Yes

Title	Miss
Surname	Diaz Hernandez
Initials	Т
Race	White
Gender	Female
Citizenship	Spain
Institution	Technical University of Denmark
Level	Masters
Name of Degree/Diploma	MSc
Title of Thesis	
Fulltime	Yes
Year of First Registration	2007
Status	Completed
Year of First Registration	2007
Year in which Degree was Awarded	2008
Year Supervised From	2008
Year Supervised To	2008
Supervisor	No
Co-Supervisor	Yes

Title	Miss
	Dlamini
Surname	
Initials	PP
Race	African
Gender	Female
Citizenship	South Africa
Institution	Nelson Mandela University
Level	Doctoral
Name of Degree/Diploma	PhD (Physics)
Title of Thesis	
Fulltime	Yes
Year of First Registration	2016
Status	Continuing
Year of First Registration	2016
Year Supervised From	2016
Year Supervised To	2018
Supervisor	Yes
Co-Supervisor	No

Title	Mr
Surname	Leburu
Initials	K
Race	African
Gender	Male
Citizenship	Kenya
Institution	Nelson Mandela University
Level	Masters
Name of Degree/Diploma	MSc (Physic)
Title of Thesis	
Fulltime	Yes
Year of First Registration	2016
Status	Continuing
Year of First Registration	2016
Year Supervised From	2016
Year Supervised To	2018
Supervisor	Yes
Co-Supervisor	No No

Title	Ms
Surname	Ngugi
Initials	M
Race	African
Gender	Female
Citizenship	Kenya
Institution	Nelson Mandela University
Level	Masters/MTech
Name of Degree/Diploma	Masters (Engineering)
Title of Thesis	
Fulltime	Yes
Year of First Registration	2018
Status	Continuing
Year of First Registration	2018
Year Supervised From	2018
Year Supervised To	2018
Supervisor	No
Co-Supervisor	Yes

Title	Mr
Surname	Burdett
Initials	J
Race	White
Gender	Male
Citizenship	South Africa
Institution	Nelson Mandela University
Level	Masters
Name of Degree/Diploma	MSC (Computer Science)
Title of Thesis	
Fulltime	Yes
Year of First Registration	2018
Status	Continuing
Year of First Registration	2018
Year Supervised From	2018
Year Supervised To	2018
Supervisor	No
Co-Supervisor	Yes

Title	Prof
Surname	Wassin
Initials	S
Race	Coloured
Gender	Male
Citizenship	South Africa
Institution	Nelson Mandela University
Level	Postdoctoral
Name of Degree/Diploma	Postdoc (Physics)
Title of Thesis	
Fulltime	Yes
Year of First Registration	2018
Status	Continuing
Year of First Registration	2018
Year Supervised From	2018
Year Supervised To	2018
Supervisor	Yes
Co-Supervisor	No

Title	Dr
Surname	Isoe
Initials	G
Race	African
Gender	Male
Citizenship	Kenya
Institution	Nelson Mandela University
Level	Postdoctoral
Name of Degree/Diploma	Postdoc (Physics)
Title of Thesis	
Fulltime	Yes
Year of First Registration	2018
Status	Continuing
Year of First Registration	2018
Year Supervised From	2018
Year Supervised To	2018
Supervisor	No
Co-Supervisor	Yes

Title	Dr .
Surname	Bezuidenhout
Initials	L
Race	Coloured
Gender	Male
Citizenship	South Africa
Institution	Nelson Mandela University
Level	Postdoctoral
Name of Degree/Diploma	Postdoc (Geophysics)
Title of Thesis	
Fulltime	Yes
Year of First Registration	2018
Status	Continuing
Year of First Registration	2018
Year Supervised From	2018
Year Supervised To	2018
Supervisor	No
Co-Supervisor	Yes