

SKA SWG Chairs meeting – January 2025

Minutes/Notes

Attending:

Chairs & Guests: Nicola, Catherine, Tessa, Cathryn, Jason, Jun, Ian, Marta, Fernando, Eleonora, Jack, Ke, Philippa C.

SKAO: Anna, Robert, Wendy, Rosie, Omkar, Tyler, Philippa H,

Robert: construction update. The video shows the core of Low as it is at the moment. Amazing progress in infrastructure and the first images of the AA0.5 4 Low stations will be soon produced. On Mid, dish erection is accelerating. AA0.5 is happening in parallel to the Meerkat extension. A little behind schedule for AA0.5 but catching up.

Rosie: SRCNet project update. The SRCs running on confederated system will allow users to discover data in the archive, solve the data problem and maximising the science productivity. Observing groups will have one or more allocation on the SRCNet to access either public data or those allocated to telescope proposals. A common gateway will allow you to log in and select one project with an allocation of resources and services available. This will be a full end-to-end ecosystem. The software can be made one of the products of your research as well, so following reproducibility and reusability guidelines will be key. The data replication has to be minimal and efficient, we don't want to have a copy of the same data in every node of the network. At least two copies globally. This also minimises storage cost that will be the dominant one. We aim to provide a consistent user experience across different sites.

In terms of development, the timeline needs to be synchronised with that of the SKAO. In 2026-2027 we need to be ready for science verification. We have an architecture of SRCNet and since Sep 2024 we have some pledged resources. There is an Agile release train for the development with currently 50 FTEs but growing.

SCRNet 0.1: we now have eight sites for testing our system. No external access to this, only an engineering version. A new value stream is the science delivery which covers user support, science analysis and scientific engagement. We recruited SRCNet project scientists to represent the needs of the science community, trying to cover different science areas. Some areas like pulsars and spectral line are currently under-represented so we will work to fill the gaps.

Jason: can the resource board reach out the working groups for additional project scientists?

Rosie: yes but bear in mind that the project scientists' FTEs are pledged efforts, with a 0.5 FTE each, so it is a big commitment.

Tyler: For example, some of those people are employed by dedicated SRC grants.

Ian: science verification use cases: how formal is this? do we need to start thinking about them?

Rosie: this is the job of the project scientists. It requires good communication with engineers. The science cases will be based on the science verification needs.

Tyler: SWG engagement survey. last year we did a survey on how well we have been engaging with the science community. The survey got 250 responses. We first asked: Are people looking at our emails, look at the slides and minutes? And if no, why not? Typically lack of time. The main feedback is to write a bit more in the body of the email, add more precursors/pathfinders news, and send important news as soon as available rather than waiting for the meeting.

We asked if a newsletter would be welcome, as they do in other observatories. Less than half of the survey participants said it was a good idea, so we are not going to implement that for the moment. A webinar open to everyone was welcome, especially if a Q&A session is included.

How well does the SWG engage the community? in some cases it was reported that there was not a lot of interaction. We rely on the chairs for that. We recommend to form core groups and focus groups to help organise activities across large working groups.

Philippa: 2025 science meeting and science book. A few announcements sent at the end of the year. We opened registrations and abstract submission for the conference. The meeting is now focusing on the early science with AA*. Regarding the book: thanks all for the work to consolidate the expression of interest for chapters. We now have a list of 230 chapters. We will perform a final collective review of the chapter list by 31 January. September is the deadline for the submission of chapters.

Catherine: on the science meeting, people are asking if precursors and pathfinder work is within scope.

Philippa: yes we encourage that.

Catherine: On the collective review: how do different and possibly conflicting comments get dealt with? Philippa: we will collect the various comments and resolve if there are conflicts.

Jason: there is a range in the scope of the chapters, with some very broad and other very focussed. Does it need to be managed? Philippa: we don't want to be too prescriptive. Of course different topics will require different lengths. Chapters should use the space appropriately and the editorial stage will enforce that. Robert: broader chapters will be more extensive than the focused ones, we tried to capture that on the latest guidance. Philippa: we can use this final review to have a census of the specialist vs focussed chapters. Jack: VLBI for example is a lot of focused chapters, due to the nature of the technique and the SWG. So we recommended about 8 pages per chapter.