Report on the **SKA Project Information Meeting**

GEPI, Meudon, 16.06.2009

In the morning, five presentations were given with updates on various aspects of the Square Kilometre Array (SKA) project. In the afternoon discussions were held on ways to organize the scientific and technical participation of the Observatoire de Paris in the SKA Project.

The meeting was attended by 15 persons, from the GEPI, LERMA and USN departments.

All presentations will be made available on the website http://www.obspm.fr/SKA

Wim van Driel (GEPI) gave an update on the state of the SKA project at the global, European and French levels. The global personnel effort for the SKA is at the 100+ FTE/yr level, whereas in France it is about 15 FTE/yr. Global funding for SKA R&D in the period 2007-2012 is at the 140 MEUR level. It was pointed out that as of January 2010, after the end of the FP6 SKA Design Studies (SKADS) no more EC funding will be available for SKA activities in France, whereas we will have to continue our FP7 PrepSKA activities and start the Aperture Array Verification Programme (AAVP) activities on national funding alone.

Steve Torchinsky (USN) gave an overview of the SKA science case, with an example of Epoch of Reionisation modelling made at LERMA in the framework of SKADS.

Philippe Picard (USN) gave an overview of SKA multi-beam technology, in particular on the French efforts towards aperture arrays in the framework of SKADS, PrepSKA and AAVP, whose aim is to provide the SKA with an unprecedented large field-of-view (50 sq.degrees at λ 21cm), enabling it to reach unheard of survey speeds.

Wim van Driel (GEPI) gave a presentation on the SKA Precursor instruments that are being built on the two shortlisted SKA sites, ASKAP in Australia and GEPI. ASKAP has launched a call for Expressions of Interest to use the instrument, whereas a similar call for MeerKAT is expected later this year. At the Panoramic Radio Astronomy meeting which was held in Groningen on 2-5 June, it was made clear that the ASKAP observing proposals are open to new participants. The New Generation Virgo Survey, 3D-NTT Fabry-Pérot imaging of nearby galaxy velocity fields and VLT IFU imaging of galaxies were considered by the participants of today's meeting as providing potentially unique angles to define our participation in ASKAP and MeerKAT projects.

Françoise Combes (LERMA) and Matt Lehnert (GEPI) gave presentations on, respectively, potential synergies between the SKA and ALMA and the SKA and other future large instruments like the E-ELT. It is obvious that many interesting, complementary kinds of observations can be defined, given the extremely large numbers of SKA survey sources.

In the afternoon discussion, it was suggested that the responsability and role of the persons in France that will be involved in the various Work Packages of the Aperture Array Verification Program (AAVP) be made more visible - the total contribution of their salaries to the AAVP is estimated at 800 kEUR.

A meeting will be organised soon of the French SKA Science Group (see the web site), to inform the community of the SKA Precursors science projects that are being (or will soon be) organised, and to organise the French participation in these projects.

An SKA Forum will be organised at Paris Observatory at the beginning of October, as a next step towards coordinating the proposed French participations in SKA Precursor science.

Some useful SKA-related links :

International SKA Project http://www.skatelescope.org
Aperture Array Verification Programme (AAVP) http://www.ska-aavp.eu/
ASKAP SKA Precursor instrument http://www.atnf.csiro.au/projects/askap/
European SKA Consortium (ESKAC) http://www.euska.org/
MeerKAT SKA Precursor instrument http://www.ska.ac.za/
FP7 SKA Preparatory Phase (PrepSKA) http://www.jb.man.ac.uk/PrepSKA/
FP6 SKA Design Studies (SKADS) http://www.skads-eu.org/
MCCT SKADS Training School in Paris, August 2009:
 http://mcct.skads-eu.org/paris/paris-mcct.php
MCCT SKADS Workshop in Nançay, September 2009:
http://mcct.skads-eu.org/nancay/nancay-mcct.php