

# Global partners form the SKA Organisation

SAinfo reports that the world's biggest telescope project has taken a crucial step forward, with its international partners joining forces and agreeing funding for the detailed design of the Square Kilometre Array (SKA), a 1.5 billion euro global science project to build the world's largest and most sensitive radio telescope.

Scientists, engineers and industry partners from around the world are collaborating on research and development for the SKA, which will be capable of answering some of the most fundamental questions about the universe.

Allied with eight other African countries, South Africa is competing against Australia (allied with New Zealand) to host the SKA. The decision on the host country is due to be announced early in 2012. Late last year, seven national governmental and research organisations announced the formation of the SKA Organisation, an independent, not-for-profit company established to formalise relationships with international partners and centralise the leadership of the SKA project. The signatories plan to spend €69-million (including in-kind contributions) to fund the project in the period leading up to the construction phase, which starts in 2016.

According to SAinfo, Professor John Womersley, chair of the founding board that prepared the formation of the SKA Organisation, said "I am delighted that the partners have recognised the scientific, economic and societal benefits that investing in international science projects like the SKA can bring." The new SKA Organisation will directly employ staff, have the power to make legally binding decisions and lead the work of the international partners on the design of the telescope.

Read the [full article](#) on [www.southafrica.info](http://www.southafrica.info).

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