



## Newsletter

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SKA South Africa shines at the SKA Forum 2011 in Banff, Canada	1
The road to the final SKA site decision	2
More industry contracts for SKA South Africa	2
MeerKAT passes Preliminary Design Review with flying colours	3
PAPER array extended to 64 dishes	3
Agreements with INTEL, SEACOM and NOKIA-SIEMENS boost SA's SKA bid	4
Crucial cold receivers successfully installed on KAT-7	4
Progress with KAT-7 commissioning	5
Control and monitoring upgrades for KAT-7	5
On-site UPS for KAT-7	5
KAT-7 digital back-end (DBE) acceptance test procedure (ATP)	6
Super-realistic MeerKAT movie	6
SA promotes the African SKA bid abroad	7
SKA SA presentations in London – Youth Day 2011	7
Outreach programme hosted at SAAO wins prestigious international award	8
Mission MeerKAT – the adventure continues	8
SKA SA bursar wins top UCT research award	8

More info on the SKA South Africa Project at

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## SKA South Africa shines at the SKA Forum 2011 in Banff, Canada

"It was truly a great event and, in some sense, represents the culmination of our efforts over the last seven years," Jasper Horrell from the SKA South Africa office in Cape Town summarised the team's attendance at the SKA Forum 2011 in Banff, Canada, held during the first week of July 2011. Jasper Horrell and Simon Ratcliffe were part of the SKA South Africa team, who joined representatives from the Department of Science and Technology and the Northern Cape Government.

The SKA Forum 2011 was the last major international SKA meeting before the final site decision is made in February 2012. As such, it provided the ideal platform for strategic and scientific discussion on the current state of the SKA, and the efforts of the final two competing proposals.

The South African team showed the international community that, in addition to having the ideal geographical environment and climatic conditions, the country also has the technical capacity, engineering ability and above all, the political commitment to build a world class scientific instrument. South Africa put in a strong presence, with presentations by science and technology minister Ms Naledi Pandor, and SKA SA project director Dr Bernie Fanaroff, driving home the point that South Africa is not only ready to host the bid, but that considerable advances have already been made with regard to the infrastructure (such as roads, buildings, optical fibre network and power lines).

According to Minister Pandor, the African commitment to hosting the SKA on the continent was clear from the financial, political, legal, technical and infrastructural support given by all involved parties.

As part of the overall presence in Banff, live demonstrations were conducted of the KAT-7 telescope in operation, including controlling KAT-7 remotely from Banff. The feed from the site included streaming webcam images, system health and configuration displays, as well as real-time displays of data from the telescope.

"A major highlight of the South African team's attendance at this event was that the rest of the world really sat up and took notice of our efforts," said Simon Ratcliffe, praising the team effort. His words were echoed by Jasper Horrell: "By proving the competence of the team and emphasising the strong support from government, we have shown without doubt that Africa is ready to host major scientific instruments such as the SKA."



The SKA South Africa stand at the SKA Forum 2011 in Banff