

**UPDATE ON THE SQUARE KILOMETER ARRAY**

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In August 2000 representatives of 24 groups in 10 countries signed a memorandum of understanding to continue cooperative technology development on five different antenna concepts intended to enable the cost-effective construction of a radio telescope array with one million square meters of collecting area; the Square Kilometer Array (SKA). The goal of this MOA is to find innovative ways of solving the many technical challenges posed by this mammoth array, and to drive down the costs so that this can realistically be afforded as a groundbased, international project for radio astronomy. The science drivers for this large instrument are diverse and very exciting; SETI being one of them. However, this means that the technical specifications are extremely challenging. There is historical reason to believe that these goals can be met. For the past six decades, the capability of radio astronomy facilities has been improving exponentially, and the SKA represents the logical extrapolation of this trend. In 2005 a selection of one or more of the current antenna concepts will be made, along with the choice of a suitable site and configuration for the array. Final detailed designs and prototyping will follow. Construction could start by the end of this decade. The SKA will permit SETI observations over a wider range of frequencies, and will offer a sensitivity that is two orders of magnitude better than current arrays. This improved performance justifies all the effort needed to overcome the technological, political, and bureaucratic challenges inherent in this international mega-science project.