# Director-General

**Job Location**

Cheshire, UK (Head Office)

**Area / Department**

Business Support

**Contract Type**

Fixed Term Contract

**Salary**

Competitive salary with attractive benefit package

**Closing Date**

10/03/2025

**Ref No**

10336

At the SKAO we are coordinating a global effort to deliver one of the largest science facilities on the planet. The SKAO telescopes will be next-generation instruments that will help to answer key questions in astrophysics, drive technological innovation and support human capital development.

More than a dozen partner countries and over a thousand scientists and engineers around the world are already on board, making the SKA project an international collaboration like no other, and one of the most ambitious science and engineering endeavours of the 21st century.

Headquartered in the UK, with telescope sites in Australia and South Africa, the SKAO will be one observatory operating two telescopes, an endeavour spanning three continents. Multinational by design, in early 2021 the SKAO became an intergovernmental organisation, one of only a select handful of science infrastructures to do so worldwide.

Our Global HQ is located near the buzzing city of Manchester at the historic Jodrell Bank Observatory, a UNESCO World Heritage site located in the Cheshire countryside. It is home to a rapidly expanding international team of more than a hundred, working in a highly collaborative and inclusive way, in coordination with SKAO teams in Australia and South Africa as part of a global astronomy and engineering community.

Being part of Team SKA means contributing to something extraordinary: a uniquely exciting project to advance human knowledge that will last for decades. In return, we offer a diverse multicultural working environment, 30 days annual leave plus public holidays, a generous pension scheme, visa and support with relocation (if applicable), regular social events, a family-friendly environment and much more. Come and join us!

This is a rare opportunity to lead a significant project on behalf of the international scientific community.

The Director-General will have a distinguished profile in disciplinary areas associated with the SKAO. They will be an outstanding leader, ambassador and advocate, with a proven track record of working across academia, government, and civic society. They will have demonstrable experience of leading large organisations or programmes across a complex stakeholder environment, and will exercise project, operational, and financial authority of the SKAO.

They will bring a deep-rooted belief in the work of the SKAO, and have the reputation, confidence and experience to lead the Observatory. The successful candidate must demonstrate the personal presence, authority and credibility to be the ‘face and voice’ of the Observatory, and to build effective relationships with a wide range of international audiences.

**We encourage applicants to apply through** <https://www.odgers.com/92574>

## The Role

The Director-General acts as the Chief Executive Officer of the SKA Observatory and as its legal representative, being responsible for delivering the mission and the Observatory’s high level strategic objectives. SKA Observatory’s mission is “to build and operate cutting-edge radio telescopes to transform our understanding of the Universe and deliver benefits to society through global collaboration and innovation”.

The Director-General is the visible leader of the mission, working across many international and professional boundaries to drive and maintain the support for its goals.

The role provides overall strategic leadership, direction, and management of the SKA Observatory and its staff to ensure delivery of the construction and operation of the Observatory, spanning the UK, Australia and South Africa.

This role will be based at the SKAO Global Headquarters at the iconic Jodrell Bank Observatory, Cheshire, UK, and will require frequent international travel.

SKAO is committed to providing an inclusive and flexible working environment, meeting the requests of our Colleagues whilst also fulfilling the needs and objectives of the Observatory.

## Key Responsibilities, Accountabilities and Duties

* Provide strategic leadership of SKA Observatory through its construction and initial operations phases.
* Deliver a working Observatory according to the Construction Plan timeline.
* Represent the Observatory in dealings with governments.
* Maintain and develop close relations with the Members, Cooperating Partners, and Local and Indigenous Communities, as well as the global scientific user community.
* Effectively promote the values and culture of the SKA Observatory, both within the Observatory and in relations with partner organisations.
* Enhance the SKA Observatory’s membership and global partnerships.
* Represent the SKA Observatory in its leading role in astronomical research and the global scientific community.
* Exercise project, operational and financial authority of the SKAO.

## Mandatory Knowledge, Skills and Experience

* An international reputation in a relevant scientific field.
* Demonstrated experience in leadership of large organisations or programmes.
* A strong business/financial acumen.
* A demonstrable commitment to human, social, economic and environmental sustainability.
* The ability to build consensus within diverse stakeholders with potentially conflicting views.
* A demonstrable commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

## Desirable Knowledge, Skills and Experience

* Experience of working in radio astronomy.
* Familiarity with the SKA project.
* High-level experience of operating in large-scale international scientific organisations.

**Equality Diversity and Inclusion Statement**

SKA Observatory recognises that our diversity is a strength. We aim to create a welcoming and inclusive environment where everyone feels they belong, and diverse perspectives and ideas thrive. As such, Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion are at the core of SKA Observatory’s agenda.

Our aim is to recruit and retain the most talented individuals, regardless of gender, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, marital status, religion, nationality or background.

Women have traditionally been under-represented in the fields of science and engineering; SKA Observatory welcomes and encourages female applicants.

Where applicants with a disability need facilities or adjustments to enable them to participate in the recruitment process, these will be provided.

SKA Observatory welcome all candidates, especially those from member countries.

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# Chief Scientist

**Job Location**

Cheshire, UK (Head Office)

**Area / Department**

Science

**Contract Type**

Permanent

**Salary**

Competitive salary with attractive benefit package

**Closing Date**

13/04/2025

**Ref No**

10337

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Construction activities for the SKAO's telescopes in Australia and South Africa started in 2021, along with a ramping up of SKAO staff in both countries. It is expected that the transition from the Construction Phase to the Operations Phase will happen around 2029, although science verification is expected to begin with a subset of the telescopes in 2027.

Following the planned retirement of the incumbent Director of Science, SKAO is seeking a Chief Scientist. This is a rare opportunity to play a major, leading role in one of the iconic global scientific facilities of the 21st Century.

The Chief Scientist will have a strong record of astronomical research, a deep understanding of modern, state-of-the art astronomical facilities with extensive experience of radio astronomy interferometry. The appointee must be globally recognised as a leading researcher in their field, and have a demonstrable record of shaping scientific thinking across a broad community. They will be expected to communicate well and effectively across the Observatory and the SKAO’s science community.

## The Role

The Chief Scientist will be based at the SKAO Global Headquarters at the iconic Jodrell Bank Observatory, Cheshire, UK, and will be part of the executive team reporting to the Director-General. International travel will be required.

SKAO is committed to providing an inclusive and flexible working environment, meeting the requests of our colleagues whilst also fulfilling the needs and objectives of the Observatory.

## Key Responsibilities, Accountabilities and Duties

The Chief Scientist will:

* Champion the scientific capabilities and accomplishments of the SKA Observatory;
* Be the primary face of science to the SKAO science community, the SKAO Council, and to the Science and Engineering Advisory Committee, and be responsible for actively shaping the Observatory science strategy;
* Have responsibility for the co-ordination of the scientific priorities for the SKA Observatory Development Plan, and the development of the Science Roadmap (through consultation including community workshops with the science community and expert advisory groups);
* Act as the Science “Head of Profession” for the Observatory:
	+ Mentoring scientific staff (all PhD scientists with a research component to their role), cultivating their professional growth and participating in promotion reviews; and
	+ Advocating for the scientific interests and research time of all scientific staff;
* Work with the Director of Operations to maximise the overall scientific return of the Observatory;
* Effectively promote the values and culture of the SKA Observatory, within the Observatory, in relations with partner organisations and in the global SKA scientific community;
* Establish and oversee an SKAO post-doctoral research programme;
* Conduct their own independent research.

## Mandatory Knowledge, Skills and Experience

* A PhD in astronomy or physics and an international reputation in astronomy;
* A strong track record of research in astronomy;
* An understanding of the science enabled by the SKAO, with in depth knowledge of the environment and context for developing SKAO as an advanced scientific facility;
* A deep technical understanding of astronomical techniques, including extensive experience of radio interferometry;
* A track record of leadership with scientific research groups;
* A strategic thinker, with a track record of working across international, diplomatic and cultural boundaries to build commitment to a common science strategic vision;
* Advanced communication and influencing skills demonstrating an ability to build consensus within diverse stakeholders with potentially conflicting views;
* A track record of acting as a role model and building an environment that supports organisational values, including a demonstrable commitment to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.

## Desirable Knowledge, Skills and Experience

* Familiarity with the SKA project;
* High-level experience of operating in large-scale international scientific organisations and/or observatories.

**Equality Diversity and Inclusion Statement**

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Women have traditionally been under-represented in the fields of science and engineering; SKA Observatory welcomes and encourages female applicants.

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SKA Observatory welcome all candidates, especially those from member countries.

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# Deputy Senior Project Manager, SKA-Low

**Job Location**

Perth, Australia

**Area / Department**

Project Management

**Contract Type**

Fixed Term Contract

**Salary**

AUD170,000-200,000 Depending on experience plus excellent benefit

**Closing Date**

28/02/2025

**Ref No**

10334

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Construction activities for the SKAO's telescopes in Australia and South Africa started in 2021, along with a ramping up of SKAO staff in both countries. It is expected that the transition from the Construction Phase to the Operations Phase will happen around 2028.

SKAO Operations in South Africa will be conducted in partnership with the South African Radio Astronomy Observatory (SARAO). SKAO Operations in Australia will be conducted in partnership with the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO). The Observatory will also partner closely with a global network of SKA Regional Centres through which astronomers will access science data products and a suite of tools and resources to further analyse the SKA telescopes' data.

For more information on the SKA project visit https://www.skao.int/

The SKA Observatory offers a competitive salary and a generous pension and benefits package. As an employee of an intergovernmental organisation, an appointee who is not a national of the country in which the role is based may be subject to personal Privileges and Immunities.

At SKAO we’re one observatory building 2 radio telescopes that will transform our understanding of the Universe.  We have people based in the UK, Australia and South Africa and collaborate with partners and contractors based all over the world.  The Deputy Senior Project Manager for SKA-Low is the most senior delivery role within Australia and will engage with a diverse range of stakeholders locally, overseeing the Australian-based project managers and providing a critical link to the Global Headquarters in the UK.

## The Role

The SKAO Project Management Group holds the project management and control expertise within the Observatory.
During Construction, the Senior Project Managers (SPMs) procure and deliver the SKA-Mid and SKA-Low telescope facilities and the enabling computing & software required by leading matrixed Telescope Delivery Teams (TDTs).  Deputy Senior PMs for SKA-Low and SKA-Mid based in the telescope host countries are key members of these TDTs who provide local management and co-ordination and form critical links for the UK-based SPMs.

The role reports into the Senior Project Manager, SKA-Low and directly line manages several project managers.

**This is a fixed term position with a duration of three years and six months and is based at the SKAO Science Operations Centre in Perth, Western Australia, with frequent travel to Geraldton and the construction site.**

SKAO is committed to providing an inclusive and flexible working environment, meeting the requests of our Colleagues whilst also fulfilling the needs and objectives of the Observatory.

This role requires the post holder to work across different time zones and, in line with SKAO policy, flexible working hours will be supported in agreement with the line manager.

## Key Responsibilities, Accountabilities and Duties

* Represent the Senior Project Manager, SKA-Low in meetings with key stakeholders in Australia, managing effective communications through formal and informal channels.  This includes being a member of the local SKA-Low Executive Team and forming links with the Site Management, Operations and across the collaboration between SKAO and CSIRO.
* Deputise for the SPM SKA-Low in leading TDT activities when needed.
* Guide and support local project managers in actively managing budget, schedule, changes, risks and issues and perform regular reporting and variance analysis within SKAO’s governance framework.
* Manage project quality reviews in order to identify, assess and take action to mitigate risks to project success.
* Assess programmatic, safety, environmental and reputational risks, recommend appropriate actions and implement and report on agreed actions.
* Lead and co-ordinate efforts across the internal matrix organisation, including project control, engineering, procurement, assurance and operations, to guide and support the contractors and consultants, with all applicable processes overseen and integrated.
* Lead a diverse team, set objectives and review performance to ensure staff have the necessary skills and understanding to deliver their objectives, coaching more junior colleagues as appropriate.
* Deliver Stakeholder Management of a diverse range of stakeholders ranging from contractors on site, other Observatory teams, to Governmental departments.

## Mandatory Knowledge, Skills and Experience

* Degree qualified or equivalent experience supported by a relevant professional project or programme management qualification (e.g. PMI’s PMP or APM’s PPQ or ChPP), with deep understanding of the theoretical principles which apply to project and programme management.
* Substantial experience of managing delivery of complex projects, including in multi-year, multi-disciplinary, multi-national programmes.
* Financial and budgetary planning and management skills. Ability to agree resources for a defined area as part of forward planning, monitoring progress and adjusting resources or priorities to meet goals.
* Experience of Stakeholder Management in a diverse range of stakeholders such as agencies, contractors, consultants and member states and working with them to sell a vision for project outcomes.
* Proven ability to provide team leadership for a geographically dispersed, diverse and multi-cultural team working across several time-zones.
* Able to seek out and examine a range of information to identify patterns, trends and options, to solve multifaceted and complex problems, and apply this with due consideration to the specific operating context of the client.
* Proficient user of web-based tools and services used in the delivery of complex projects, including scheduling, financial, configuration, design, engineering, collaboration and risk tools.

## Desirable Knowledge, Skills and Experience

* Post-graduate qualification in management, engineering or physical sciences
* Full membership of a project management or engineering professional body
* Experience in managing delivery in multi-disciplinary, multi-national projects
* Knowledge of international relations and working with Intergovernmental Organisations
* Industry experience and/or a track record in successful collaboration with industry
* Experience in using the NEC4 contract suite
* Experience in using CEMAR, Primavera P6, Confluence, Google Drive and Jira
* Experience of delivery in remote environments.

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# SKA-Low Commissioning Scientists

**Job Location**

Perth, Australia

**Area / Department**

Science

**Contract Type**

Fixed Term Contract

**Salary**

AUD 125,000- 150,000 Depending on experience plus excellent benefit

**Closing Date**

23/02/2025

**Ref No**

10332

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Join the SKA-Low Science Commissioning team and use your creativity, flexibility, and expertise to help unlock the scientific potential of the telescope during its construction phase.

## The Role

As part of the construction of the SKA-Low Telescope, a growing team of commissioning scientists is presently planning, executing and analysing a suite of test observations on the array. This recruitment aims to expand the established team to facilitate comprehensive science commissioning activities as construction continues to ramp up.

We aim to fill **three** posts, who will take responsibility for specific technical areas, working under the direction of the Lead Commissioning Scientist, who will act as their functional and line manager.

The appointees will be encouraged to carry out research in astronomy or astronomical instrumentation at a level commensurate with the requirements of the post and in particular to exploit early opportunities with the SKA. Appropriate support, including conference travel, will be provided.

These roles are based in Perth, Western Australia, and occasional international and domestic travel will be required, to the SKAO Headquarters in the UK, to the SKAO Engineering Operations Centre in Geraldton, WA, and to the telescope site.

SKAO is committed to providing an inclusive and flexible working environment, meeting the requests of our colleagues whilst also fulfilling the needs and objectives of the Observatory. We are open to discussing flexible working opportunities with these roles being offered on a full-time, part-time basis. Please raise your preference in your application.

There may be occasions where this role requires the post holder to work across different time zones and, in line with SKAO policy, flexible working hours will be supported in agreement with the line manager.

**These are fixed-term positions with a duration of 4 years.**

## Key Responsibilities, Accountabilities and Duties

The SKAO is seeking to appoint experienced and motivated radio astronomers to plan and execute the scientific commissioning of the SKA-Low Telescope array. The postholders will join a small established group of commissioning astronomers based in Perth, WA. The primary tasks of the group are:

* Take responsibility for science commissioning, i.e. planning, execution and analysis of test observations on the array. The group works closely with the System Science Group based at GHQ (UK), which has oversight of commissioning of the SKA-Low Telescope.
* Close collaboration with engineering (hardware and software) groups involved in construction to verify aspects of the system and to identify and correct faults. There will be a particularly close interaction with the Assembly, Integration and Verification (AIV) Group based in Perth and Geraldton, WA.
* Support the AIV Group to verify the top-level engineering requirements of the array.
* Maintain a close interaction with the Science Operations Group, in particular to support Science Verification.

## Mandatory Knowledge, Skills and Experience

The appointees will be active radio astronomers with the following qualifications, skills and experience:

* PhD in astronomy or physics, with substantial experience in observational radio astronomy.
* Strong understanding of radio astronomical techniques, including interferometry, and demonstrated ability to reduce and interpret data from radio telescopes.
* A good understanding of the science enabled by the SKA.
* Experience of working effectively in a team, contributing constructively to an inclusive and high performing team culture.

Applicants are encouraged to address each of these points explicitly in their application materials.

## Desirable Knowledge, Skills and Experience

* Experience of working in one or more of the construction, commissioning or operation of a radio observatory.
* Proven track record in commissioning of radio telescopes (hardware or software), including test, scripting and debugging experience, and ability to analyse complex, system-level problems.
* Background in low-frequency interferometry and/or non-imaging (beam-forming) applications such as pulsar search and timing. Experience in direction-dependent calibration methods would be a particular advantage.
* Experience of remote working with teams across multiple time zones.
* Proficiency in written documentation, particularly test and problem reporting.

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