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An overview of INAF's cooperation with South Africa: context, programmes and opportunities

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South Africa is one of Italy's particularly relevant scientific partners in Africa, due to the strong involvement of a few Departments of the Italian National Institute for Astrophysics - along with other national research and higher education institutions - into the development of the Square Kilometre Array project and its precursors, in cooperation with the South African Radio Astronomy Observatory and several South African universities. Indeed, radio astronomy represents the core of the scientific cooperation between Italy and South Africa, as the SKA project benefits of the largest financial contribution of the Italian government in scientific activities developed in Sub Saharan Africa.

The cooperation has been supported by several funding schemes promoted by INAF itself, the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, and by other funding sources, such as the PNRR. Particularly, this latter has allowed the allocation of a significant financial support for the development of a new joint research programme and a mobility scheme between the two countries.

The success of international scientific collaborations (both in bilateral and multilateral contexts) is certainly boosted by a strong political commitment and a close cooperation between the relevant research and government institutions. On a national level these entities must work together to maximize the benefits that the scientific partnerships can realize in science, technology, and innovation, as well as their positive long-term impact on society, industry, infrastructure, and human capacity development.

A clear vision of the context in which international collaborations are developed and evolve, knowing the different stakeholders and precisely understanding their role, the optimal and coordinated use of resources and the dissemination of opportunities and information are key elements of successful scientific partnerships.

This presentation will review the Italy-South Africa bilateral scientific partnership in a science diplomacy perspective, focussing on the cooperation in radio astronomy, the Square Kilometre Array and the ongoing and future programmes and opportunities.

Research area

Other

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