

# MeerKAT telescope team honoured with prestigious Royal Astronomical Society Award



The Royal Astronomical Society (RAS) has awarded its 2023 Group Achievement Award to the MeerKAT team. In its citation, the RAS recognised the MeerKAT team “for a series of spectacular observations in radio astronomy, the highlight being the images of the Galactic Centre region and the spectacular radio bubbles. In addition, the MeerKAT team has supported the development of science and technology in Africa and stress-tested technology for the Square Kilometre Array (SKA).”

On behalf of the team of scientists, engineers and technicians that developed the MeerKAT telescope from an ambitious notion into a tangible scientific instrument delivering extraordinary early science results, the South African Radio Astronomy Observatory (SARAO) expresses gratitude to the RAS for the generous recognition of the technical and scientific achievement associated with this Group Achievement Award.

The MeerKAT project derived from the aspiration to have a South African SKA precursor telescope that would be a powerful instrument in its own right. This award is accepted with pride because it confirms the successful rendition of this aspiration into physical reality on African soil.

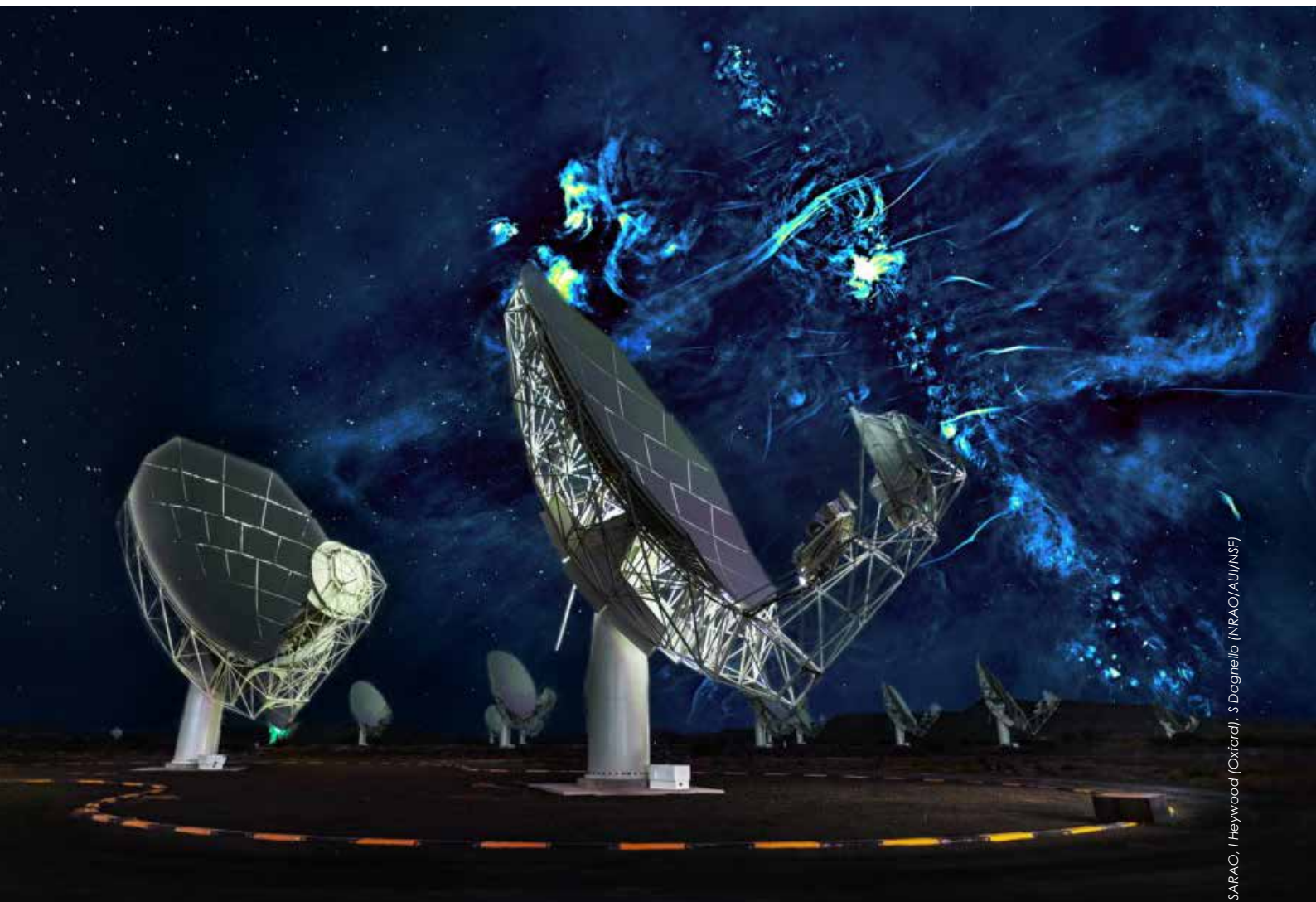
The greater MeerKAT team extends beyond SARAO, as indicated by the diversity of institutions recognized through the award. Colleagues and partner institutions from around the world have expressed their confidence in MeerKAT by providing instrumentation, software and know-how to enhance the telescope capabilities, and in turn the scientific exploitation of the telescope capabilities has involved collegial international partnerships.

Looking to the future, the success of MeerKAT demonstrates that the scientific and technological prerequisites for the SKA telescope in South Africa (known



as SKA-Mid) are in place. We are excited by the scientific opportunities and discoveries that will derive from the

progression from MeerKAT to SKA-Mid, via the MeerKAT extension project currently underway. – SARAO



SARAO, I Heywood (Oxford), S Dagnello (NRAO/AUI/NSF)

The core of the MeerKAT array telescope, in the Northern Cape province of South Africa, with a radio image of the Milky Way showing the previously unknown 'MeerKAT bubbles' (from top right towards lower left) surrounding the black hole at the centre of our galaxy.

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