

CSIRO lets major antenna contract for ASKAP

CSIRO is pleased to announce that it has let the major contract for the antennas of its Australian SKA Pathfinder (ASKAP) radio telescope to the 54th Research Institute of China Electronics Technology Group Corporation (known as CETC54). CETC54 will supply thirty-six 12-m antennas for A\$10 million, meeting a key cost target of \$300,000 per delivered antenna.

An Australian company, LEAP Pty Ltd, will sub-contract to CETC54 providing a range of services including local coordination. The award of the contract follows a rigorous tender process which followed the Commonwealth Procurement Guidelines, including the requirements for full and fair considerations of bids and due attention to cost, technical considerations and suitability for purpose.

The antenna project is the first of a number of procurements CSIRO will be making as part of the A\$100 million ASKAP telescope project. ASKAP is a collaboration between Australia, Canada, and the Netherlands, with its main site being in the Mid-West region of Western Australia, about 315 km north-east of Geraldton,

ASKAP will be the world's fastest radio telescope for surveying the sky and will demonstrate technologies for the larger radio telescope, the A\$2 billion international Square Kilometre Array (SKA), which Australia is seeking to host.

Other ASKAP supply opportunities are outlined in the *ASKAP Industry Opportunities Register*, which was launched on 25 September 2008 by Senator the Hon Kim Carr, Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research. Forthcoming opportunities include site infrastructure, focal plane arrays, optical fibre links, digital data transport and computer hardware and software for signal processing. The expected value of these contracts is around A\$60 million, with individual contracts ranging in size from \$0.5 million up to \$20 million.

CSIRO is working closely with the Australian Government and the Government of Western Australia to maximise opportunities for Australian businesses to participate in the ASKAP project.

The two governments are supporting the *Australian SKA Capabilities Directory*, the Australian SKA Industry Consortium and other activities to inform Australian companies about supply opportunities within the ASKAP project and those that might be associated with the SKA.

Background on CETC54

CETC54 is a state-owned institution established in 1952. It has undertaken thousands of government and commercial projects in satellite communication, tracking, telemetry and control, and has designed and built the 50-m Miyun radio telescope for receiving data from China's Chang'E1 satellite. The institute is headquartered in Shijiazhuang, in Hebei province, about 200 km south of Beijing.

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