National Research Foundation | Astronomy sub-Agency

South African SALT Task Team Report
SALT Board Meeting, May 2015

1. The South African SALT Task Team has revised its terms of reference, see Appendix. The new membership is as follows: Darragh, O'Donoghue, Val Munsami, Ted Williams, Yunus Manjoo, David Gilbank, Matt Hilton, Chris Coetzee, Petri Vaisanen, Ismail Osman, and Lizette Labuschagne.
2. The action items from the SALT Risk Register need to be systematically addressed. The TT recommends that the SALT Risk Committee, chaired by DoD, should be given the authority to follow up on those responsible for the various action items on behalf of the Board. The SALT Risk Committee should manage the implementation of the risk action items and provide oversight. It is recommended that a formal report be tabled by the Chair of the Risk Committee at each Board Meeting.
3. The SALT Annual Report should be produced timeously on an annual basis, and should address our principals' interests and speak to potential new investors in SALT.
4. We need a clear understanding of the status of the various partner contributions to the Development Fund. If there are no payments by May 2016, then we need to begin asking the question 'what then?'
5. We are hopeful that the SALT Board will be able to secure a buyer of SALT time and/or a new shareholder in SALT. This has become an urgent matter.
6. The CEO of the NRF has written to the Chair of the SALT Board outlining South Africa's challenges in meeting its operations levies. The SALT Board has been encouraged to find new partners as well as embark on a drive to sell observing time in the short term. Should these initiatives fail, then the annual budget should be trimmed accordingly as South Africa is unwilling to absorb any additional costs arising from partners' defaults.
7. The TT proposes that there should be a roadshow to partners who need to re-confirm their commitment to SALT; this roadshow to be led by the Chair of the SALT Board and TW, and that a DST representative should also join the team. The roadshow should commence with Canterbury and Gottingen.
8. Prof Brian Chaboyer's recent letter on SALT funding indicates that we need to begin moving towards a more stringent budgetary situation in the coming years. We need to begin asking the tough questions: what can we afford and what can we not? However, the TT is mindful that SALT has now moved to a fully operational state and that the quality of science and the need for technological upgrades should not be compromised.
9. The SALT Board needs to put in place mechanisms to support high impact science with SALT. More collaborations amongst our partners will help. We

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need to use SALT more optimally. The current productivity of SALT is relatively low as evidenced by the current rate of completed projects approved by the TACs being between 15%-20%. This is extremely poor relative to the completion rate at the telescope of around 80%.

10. The Astronomy sub-Agency is in the process of motivating for a South African SALT Research Chair to help drive South Africa's research interests in SALT within a multi-wavelength context.
11. There are an increasing number of MeerKAT-related projects that have been allocated time on SALT; this should be encouraged to grow.
12. NRF has finalized its IP policy; this could be helpful in the development of a SALT IP policy.
13. The DST will soon release the *National Strategy for Multiwavelength Astronomy,* and also the *Bibiliometric analysis of Astronomy Research Outputs* in South Africa.
14. Negotiations are still on-going on the Pan-African University; South Africa will be the lead country within BRICS for Astronomy & Space Science development.

Nithaya Chetty
Chair South African SALT Task Team

APPENDIX: South African SALT Task Team

Composition

Two South African Board Directors
DST Representative
NRF Representative
Director SAAO
Chair SALT TAC
Senior University Representative
Manager SALT Operations
Head SALT Science Operations
SALT Business manager
SALT CFO

Terms of Reference

1. To forge South Africa's leading role in SALT.
2. To advise the South African SALT Board Directors on any matter that is the business of the SALT Board.
3. To support the South African SALT Board Directors in making proposals to the SALT Board.
4. To play an oversight role for the South African SALT Time Allocation Committee.
5. To strategically drive the quality of the South African SALT Science outputs.