



Managing Director

Contract: 5 Years, renewable

Job Level: Executive

Work Location: Cape Town, Western Cape

The National Research Foundation (NRF) supports and promotes research and human capital development through funding, the provision of National Research Facilities and science outreach platforms and programmes to the broader community in all fields of science and technology, including natural sciences, engineering, social sciences and humanities.

The South African Radio Astronomy Observatory (SARAO) spearheads South Africa's activities in the Square Kilometre Array Radio Telescope, commonly known as the SKA, in engineering, science and construction. SARAO is a National Facility managed by the National Research Foundation and incorporates radio astronomy instruments and programmes such as the MeerKAT telescope in the Karoo, the Hartebeesthoek Radio Astronomy Observatory (HarRAO) in Gauteng, the African Very Long Baseline Interferometry (AVN) programme in nine African countries as well as the associated human capital development and commercialisation endeavours.

Purpose: The Managing Director directs and manages SARAO in all its dimensions, including MeerKAT and Hartebeesthoek operations, and leads fulfillment of South Africa's obligations as a host country for the SKA, and upholds SARAO integration as a business unit of the NRF.

Key Responsibilities:

- Strategically positioning South Africa within the international SKA project.
- Establish globally competitive radio astronomy infrastructure and research capacity in South Africa.
- Optimise the local and national socio-economic benefits arising from investment in radio astronomy infrastructure and research
- Lead and manage SARAO operations, maintenance and its further scientific & technical development,
- Oversee South Africa's leadership of the African VLBI Network (AVN) and optimizes the relationship with African SKA partner countries
- Provides leadership of SKA construction in SA, and the future integration of MeerKAT into the SKA Observatory (SKAO),
- Oversee teams and activities under the partnership agreement between SARAO and the SKAO,
- Driving transformation, human capital development and knowledge generation for radio astronomy in South Africa.
- Leads management of key stakeholder relationships with higher education, national & provincial government, industry and the local community adjacent to SARAO operations

Key Requirements:

Qualification:

PhD or equivalent (Astronomy or physics or a closely related field) or a Masters degree (Engineering discipline)

Experience:

- At least 8 to 10 years in a scientific, technical and managerial environment, with a minimum of 5 years in senior or top management role.
- Operation of large-scale (national scale) astronomical, physics, engineering or space science facilities;
- If an Astronomer, Research experience at higher than postdoctoral level and holding an academic leadership position;
- Has been a high level executive;
- If an engineer, with related industry experience;
- Experience in international science diplomacy will be an added advantage.

Knowledge and competences:

- **Teamwork and Collaboration:** Creates and fosters an environment in which there is a high level of cooperation within and between teams. Facilitates positive team relationships to build interactions across the NRF and with other organisations.
- **Influence and Communication:** Uses complex influencing strategies, for example, assembling strategic coalitions, building behind the scenes support and the tactical use of information to gain support.
- **Resource Management/Leadership:** Contributes to or defines SARAO, NRF and even national policy directions in relevant areas, directs strategic planning and operationalises the vision for staff and gains commitment to the direction chosen.
- **Judgement and Problem Solving:** Resolves major conceptual, scientific, technical, commercial, management, governance or reputational problems, which may have a significant impact upon SARAO itself, the NRF, the DSI or even South Africa as a whole. Situations faced may have little or no precedent and require original concepts and approaches.
- **Independence:** Commits significant resources in the face of uncertainty and takes calculated risks to improve performance and achieve challenging goals. Uses personal energy to drive change strategies. Formulates and implements contingency plans to minimise the impact of potential risks. Accepts personal responsibility for the outcomes of decisions/risks taken.
- **Adaptability:** Is flexible in response to external change or when faced with external constraints. Identifies and promotes the opportunities arising as a result of change.

Information:

The website www.nrf.ac.za provides more information on the NRF initiatives and activities.

Applications:

Applicants should submit a comprehensive CVs to **Tuesday Consulting**, email nonto@tuesday.co.za. Applications should be accompanied by a letter of motivation indicating the applicant's suitability for the position. The names and contact details of at least three referees should be provided.

Enquiries: Any queries, please make contact with Tsholo/Nonto on +27 (0)11 325 2802

Closing date: 15 April 2022

The NRF is committed to employment equity and redress and the appointment to the position will be made in line with the NRF Employment Equity Plan