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Growing interest, keeping momentum, managing expectations: PR challenges of communicating on one of the most fascinating science adventures of the 21st century...soon to be...

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Constructing an international large scale facility involves a lot of public money, and requires a constant support from funding agencies, the public, and a number of other stakeholders during a long period of time. It is therefore crucial that tax payers understand the scientific/economic/social benefit of this facility, already in early stages of the project. What kind of information to disseminate? Why to promote a facility under (pre-)construction? How is it different from PR activities of an existing facility? Success stories and failures... When and how to address the different target groups? The Square Kilometre Array (SKA) is an international project to build the world's largest radio telescope. With infrastructure on two separate continents, 20 countries and over 100 organisations involved in its design, and construction set to last over a decade, the SKA is a truly colossal undertaking. The sheer scale of the project and the transformational science it promises to deliver attract lots of attention - and expectations - from the scientific/engineering community, industry, the public, the media and politicians in the countries that are set to benefit from it. But the SKA is still years away from operation. How do you promote a project that is not built yet and manage those high expectations? In this talk we will discuss the challenges and highlight our efforts to engage with these stakeholder groups, explaining why it is important to reach out to them already now.

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