# Head of Procurement Services and Insurance

**Job Location**

Cheshire, UK (Head Office)

**Area / Department**

Business Support

**Contract Type**

Permanent

**Salary**

£80,000 - 90,000 depending on experience plus excellent benefits

**Closing Date**

09/06/2025

**Ref No**

10355

At the SKAO we are coordinating a global effort to deliver one of the largest science facilities on the planet. The SKAO telescopes will be next-generation instruments that will help to answer key questions in astrophysics, drive technological innovation and support human capital development.

More than a dozen partner countries and over a thousand scientists and engineers around the world are already on board, making the SKA project an international collaboration like no other, and one of the most ambitious science and engineering endeavours of the 21st century.

Headquartered in the UK, with telescope sites in Australia and South Africa, the SKAO will be one observatory operating two telescopes, an endeavour spanning three continents. Multinational by design, in early 2021 the SKAO became an intergovernmental organisation, one of only a select handful of science infrastructures to do so worldwide.

Our Global HQ is located near the buzzing city of Manchester at the historic Jodrell Bank Observatory, a UNESCO World Heritage site located in the Cheshire countryside. It is home to a rapidly expanding international team of more than a hundred, working in a highly collaborative and inclusive way, in coordination with SKAO teams in Australia and South Africa as part of a global astronomy and engineering community.

Being part of Team SKA means contributing to something extraordinary: a uniquely exciting project to advance human knowledge that will last for decades. In return, we offer a diverse multicultural working environment, 30 days annual leave plus public holidays, a generous pension scheme, visa and support with relocation (if applicable), regular social events, a family-friendly environment and much more. Come and join us!

SKA Observatory is looking for an experienced procurement and insurance professional to further develop its procurement strategy and lead the team through the transition from a focus on high-value, complex construction and engineering contracts towards a high-volume transactional procurement environment. Reporting directly to the Chief Finance Officer (CFO), the ideal candidate will have experience within procurement for large-scale science or research infrastructure projects, or significant international engineering or construction projects involving government funding.

## The Role

Reporting directly to the Chief Finance Officer (CFO), the Head of Procurement Services and Insurance is a senior manager role at SKAO, acting as the functional lead for all matters relating to procurement and insurance. With teams based in the UK, Australia and South Africa, this role is responsible for ensuring best practice in procurement and insurance is embedded globally across the SKAO locations, and for ensuring SKAO’s senior management team are well supported with all key procurement actions. The role requires strategic leadership and is expected to drive forward broader procurement initiatives that help to champion SKAO’s values, such as sustainable supply chains and community engagement projects.

The Head of Procurement Services and Insurance is a visible and active role within SKAO’s governance meetings, being the SKAO’s lead contact for all matters that require the attention of the Procurement Subcommittee such as contract awards, deviations and waivers. The role holder will also support the CFO with papers and presenting at the Finance Committee and Council meetings as required, including in relation to future strategic plans to expand SKAO. The role plays a key part in managing SKAO’s external stakeholders, with key contact points being the SKAO Member countries’ Industry Liaison Officers, government departments and major government funded research bodies. Stakeholder management is often complex, as SKAO’s procurement practices must take into account the social and economic return to its Member countries.  The ideal candidate would therefore have experience within procurement for large-scale science or research infrastructure projects, or significant international engineering or construction projects involving government funding.

Since the SKAO’s inception in 2021, the key focus of Procurement Services has been the procurement of high-value, complex construction and engineering contracts, to support the telescope construction programme. However, with most of these contracts now awarded, the focus for procurement services is shifting as there is a greater need to develop solutions to further support the transactional procurement activities as they increase in volume in both Australia and South Africa. SKAO is about to implement Proactis as its sourcing, supplier relationship management and contract management software, to enable greater efficiency of low-value, high-volume procurement actions.

The role also encompasses the responsibility for the management of SKAO’s global insurance portfolio, with the support of external insurance brokers.  As SKAO moves towards the completion of construction of the telescopes, the insurance strategy must also change, and the Head of Procurement Services and Insurance is responsible for implementing the new insurance strategy while maintaining the existing required coverage.

## Key Responsibilities, Accountabilities and Duties

* Global leader of SKAO’s procurement and insurance team, responsible for overall team performance and development, with direct line management of up to 5 staff;
* Continue to develop and implement the procurement strategy aligned to SKAO’s evolving needs and to deliver broader procurement initiatives that support SKAO’s values in safety and sustainability;
* Utilise the resources available within the procurement team and liaison with internal stakeholders to draft, negotiate, coordinate and manage all procurement contracts and framework contracts, including complex, high-value, long-term construction contracts and agreements, some of which are provided as in-kind contributions;
* Prepare and present contract award recommendation papers to SKAO’s Procurement Subcommittee and Finance Committee as required;
* Establish and maintain strong relationships with key stakeholders such as major suppliers, SKAO Member Industry Liaison Officers, and insurance brokers;
* Identify and lead opportunities for cost reduction and better value-for-money across SKAO’s supply chain;
* Maintain and improve existing procurement policies and processes to align to industry best practice, and input to cross-functional projects to support the development and integration of processes within other functions of SKAO, in particular for finance, ERP, legal, IT, programmes and operations;
* Responsible for development and maintenance of SKAO’s e-procurement tool, Proactis;
* Provide training to staff in relation to procurement policies and processes, to improve compliance and ultimately achieve greater value-for-money for SKAO;
* Act as the key liaison point for internal audit in relation to all procurement matters, and ensure that audit recommendations in relation to procurement are acted upon;
* Create and enhance existing procurement reporting for internal and external stakeholders as required;
* Develop and implement SKAO’s long-term insurance strategy;
* Manage the SKAO’s insurance portfolio, including policy renewals and overseeing claims;
* Review SKAO’s risk register to identify and propose additional insurable risks;
* Undertake any other reasonable duties as directed by the CFO or any other member of SKAO’s Executive Group;
* Be willing to travel, nationally and internationally. International travel is expected to be 2-3 times per year for up to 2 weeks at a time;
* Working outside of normal business hours may be required, especially for early morning meetings given the SKAO’s presence in Western Australia and the need to liaise with colleagues located overseas.

## Mandatory Knowledge, Skills and Experience

* MCIPS or university degree in Business Administration, Economics and Law or related discipline with specific studies in contracts and procurement, or equivalent experience;
* Experience leading and developing a high-performing procurement and/or insurance function through a period of change, with ability to think strategically and provide clear direction;
* Experience of working in procurement in an international engineering or scientific environment involving a variety of cultures;
* Ability to negotiate, influence and communicate in a clear and concise manner both in writing and verbally, tailoring communication effectively to the audience;
* Ability to build strong and effective links within SKAO and the wider SKA project;
* Effective decision maker with a track record of resolving complex contractual issues and providing pragmatic solutions for implementation;
* Experience writing papers and delivering presentations to formal governance bodies;
* Excellent English oral and written communication skills;
* Problem solver with ability to manage conflicting priorities and work to deadlines, self-managing projects through to completion;
* A self-motivated team player who is flexible and adaptable to change.

## Desirable Knowledge, Skills and Experience

* Knowledge and experience of using the NEC suite of contracts, in particular NEC4;
* Hands on experience developing or being a superuser of e-sourcing/e-procurement software, particularly Proactis and/or Unit4 ERP;
* Experience working in a scale-up or transformational environment, with evolving procurement requirements;
* Experience managing a complex insurance portfolio such as a multi-site OCIP or large-scale infrastructure insurance policy etc;
* Experience managing or co-ordinating with remote teams working in different time zones and different cultures;
* Experience working with public sector organisations such as research bodies, or with international organisations.

**Equality Diversity and Inclusion Statement**

SKA Observatory recognises that our diversity is a strength. We aim to create a welcoming and inclusive environment where everyone feels they belong, and diverse perspectives and ideas thrive. As such, Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion are at the core of SKA Observatory’s agenda.

Our aim is to recruit and retain the most talented individuals, regardless of gender, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, marital status, religion, nationality or background.

Women have traditionally been under-represented in the fields of science and engineering; SKA Observatory welcomes and encourages female applicants.

Where applicants with a disability need facilities or adjustments to enable them to participate in the recruitment process, these will be provided.

SKA Observatory welcome all candidates, especially those from member countries.

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# Project Controls Manager

**Job Location**

Cheshire, UK (Head Office)

**Area / Department**

Project Management

**Contract Type**

Fixed Term Contract

**Salary**

£72,000 - £77,000 depending on experience plus excellent benefits

**Closing Date**

06/06/2025

**Ref No**

10356

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At SKAO we're one observatory building 2 radio telescopes that will transform our understanding of the Universe.  We
have people based in the UK, Australia and South Africa and collaborate with partners and contractors based all over
the world.  The Project Controls Manager helps us make sense of our project control data, enabling us to make sound and timely decisions as we continue the rollout of the 2 telescopes.

## The Role

The SKAO Project Management Group holds the project management and control expertise within the Observatory.  This team comprises 30 staff and contractors spread across the SKAO's 3 countries and is responsible for delivery of the SKA-Mid and SKA-Low Telescope facilities.  The Project Controls Manager and the Senior Project Managers report into the Head of Project Management, and each line manages a number of staff.

The Project Controls Manager leads the project control function and team, providing and further developing an effective governance and control environment to ensure the SKA programme and its (complex) projects can be executed to deliver their benefits.

**This is a fixed term position with a duration of 3.5 years and is based** **at the SKAO Headquarters at Jodrell Bank, Cheshire, UK.**

## Key Responsibilities, Accountabilities and Duties

* Manage and further develop the Project Management Control System, including scheduling, budgeting, earned value management, risk, reporting, contingency, cost and change control, ensuring that data integrity is maintained and taking corrective actions when needed.
* Line manage the Project Control team of analysts and administration staff, leading, coaching and developing this team and any associated contractors to provide a high-quality service.
* Co-ordinate the production of the Construction programme’s monthly report and dashboard and Council papers 3 times per year, integrating the inputs from the analysts, PMs and senior managers into a coherent whole.
* Manage data quality reviews, both regular and at specific contract milestones, in order to identify, assess and take action to mitigate risks to project success.
* Provide specialist advice to senior management (ad-hoc and via formal meetings).
* Help develop procedures for project teams to use in the management of suppliers and contractors.
* Review and interpret programme and project management related functional policies or processes, develop and recommend changes and provide advice to colleagues to ensure their effective implementation.
* Influence internal and external stakeholders/customers to gain buy-in, influence and change behaviour and support effective collaboration.

## Mandatory Knowledge, Skills and Experience

* Degree qualified or equivalent experience supported by a relevant professional project or programme management qualification (e.g. PMI’s PMP or APM’s PPQ or ChPP), with deep understanding of the theoretical principles which apply to project and programme management.
* Significant proven experience of managing delivery and/or controls within a complex project environment.
* Deep domain knowledge of budgeting and cost control, schedule management, risk management, contract management and change control, with the ability to agree and develop standards and processes to a particular project environment.
* Experience working with a diverse range of stakeholders such as agencies, contractors, consultants and member states and working with them to sell a vision for project outcomes.
* Proven ability to provide team leadership for a geographically dispersed, diverse and multi-cultural team working across several time-zones.
* Able to seek out and examine a range of information to identify patterns, trends and options, to solve multifaceted and complex problems, and apply this with due consideration to the specific operating context.
* Proficient user of web-based tools and services used in the delivery of complex projects, including scheduling, financial, configuration, collaboration and risk tools.

## Desirable Knowledge, Skills and Experience

* Post-graduate qualification in management, engineering or physical sciences
* Full membership of a project management or engineering professional body
* Experience in managing delivery and/or controls in multi-disciplinary, multi-national projects
* Industry experience and/or a track record in successful collaboration with industry
* Experience in using the NEC4 contract suite
* Experience in using CEMAR, Primavera P6, Confluence, Google Drive and Jira
* Experience with Business Intelligence software (e.g. Google Looker Studio, Power BI)
* Experience of delivery and/or controls using predictive and iterative methods

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