

IVS Memorandum 2006-014v01

20 March 2006

**“Some Notes on Broad-band Dual-
Polarization Feeds”**

Rüdiger Haas, Per-Simon Kildal

Some notes from the discussion with Per-Simon Kildal in March 2006 on broad-band dual-polarization feeds for a potential use for VLBI2010:

- A model for a dual polarized feed for 1 to 13 GHz does exist (Olsson *et al.*, 2005)
- Other feeds based on the same design exist for 150 to 1700 MHz (Olsson *et al.*, 2006)
- The design has been developed for the US-SKA proposal.
- Per-Simon Kildal has a pending patent on the design.
- The feeds have two linear polarizations.
- The feeds have a wide opening angle of about 53 degrees.
- Due to their wide opening angle they are very well suited for a prime focus use.
- However, in principle they could also be used with secondary focus.
- The feeds can be built in into dewars.
- Per-Simon Kildal is optimistic that the frequency range could be extended to 15 GHz.
- Per-Simon Kildal said that a combination with an additional feed covering up to 32 GHz should be possible, too.
- Per-Simon would be very interested in a collaboration project to develop a new feed for the VLBI2010 telescopes.

References:

Olsson R., Kildal P.S., Weinreb S.:

Measurement of a 1 to 13 GHz Model of a Dual Polarized Low-profile Log-periodic Feed for US-SKA.

Proc. IEEE AP-S Int. Symp. in Washington, 700–703, 2005.

Olsson R., Kildal, P.-S., Weinreb S.:

The Eleven Antenna: A Compact Low-Profile Decade Bandwidth Dual Polarized Feed for Reflector Antennas.

IEEE Trans. Antennas Propag., 54(2), 368–375, 2006.

Attachments:

- Olsson *et al.*, 2005
- Olsson *et al.*, 2006
- Pictures of the feed

Rüdiger Haas, 2006-03-20

Measurements of a 1 to 13 GHz Model of a Dual Polarized Low-profile Log-periodic Feed for US-SKA

Rikard Olsson¹, Per-Simon Kildal² and Sander Weinreb³
^{1,2}Chalmers University of Technology, Göteborg, Sweden
³California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, California

¹E-mail: rikard.olsson@elmagn.chalmers.se

²E-mail: simon@elmagn.chalmers.se

³E-mail: sweinreb@caltech.edu

Abstract

We present measured results for a dual polarized 1 to 13 GHz laboratory model of a feed for use in reflector antennas. The main goals of the laboratory model were achieved: it provides dual polarization and can provide more than a decade bandwidth. The aperture efficiency in a primary fed reflector system is greater than 56% over the entire band, and the input reflection coefficient of the feed is better than -5.5 dB. The results agree well with computed values.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Square Kilometer Array (SKA) [1] has been proposed as a major new instrument in radio astronomy. As the name indicates the radio telescope will have a staggering total aperture area of about 1 square kilometer. This huge radio telescope will provide two orders of magnitude increase in sensitivity compared to existing radio telescopes. In order to achieve this large total area, a large array of small antennas has been proposed to reduce total cost and to allow phased-array imaging of the entire beam area of the small antenna. There are many different suggestions for antenna elements, ranging from a few tens of very large single reflectors to very large numbers of small, fixed antennas with near-hemispherical field of view. The US proposal, for which the present feed has been designed, makes use of an array of 4550 symmetric parabolic reflectors with 16 m diameter. The feed described in the present paper will be placed in such a way that the subtended half angle towards the sub reflector is 53 deg. One of the advantages with the US proposal is that it makes use of reflector antennas, representing a well known and well understood technology which has been used in radio astronomy during several decades. The system is very wide band; the goal is to cover 100 MHz to 25 GHz. In order to cover this much bandwidth with a minimum number of receivers on each of the 4550 elements very wideband feeds and receivers are required; three decade-bandwidth feeds are sufficient to cover a range which would require eight octave-bandwidth feeds. In this paper we describe initial experimental results on a decade-plus bandwidth feed which can be scaled to any frequency range.

Traditionally end-fire style log-periodic dipole arrays [2] have been used in ultra wide band antenna design to achieve medium gain antennas for use in both antenna measurements and EMC (ElectroMagnetic Compatibility) studies. Log-periodic antennas are not common as reflector feeds because the phase center varies strongly with frequency [3]. The phase center variation can be reduced to acceptable levels, such as e.g. in the log-periodic feed for the Allen Telescope Array (ATA) [4]. However, the ATA feed is large and there are significant losses due to phase center variation [5]. During the last year we have been developing a log-periodic folded dipole feed first described in [6] which has no phase center variation and constant beam width over a decade bandwidth. In the present paper we present measured results for the first decade bandwidth dual-polarized laboratory model of this feed.

To characterize the feed performance we use the aperture efficiency of a rotationally symmetric Cassagrain antenna when the effects of center blockage and subreflector diffraction are

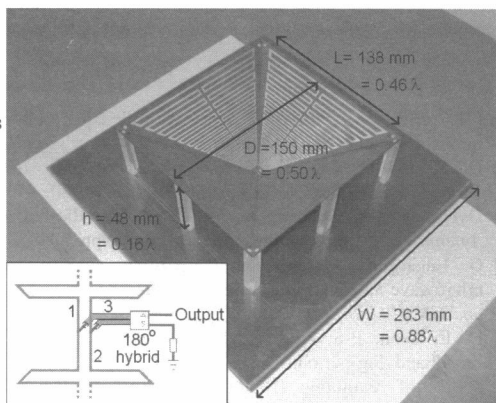
neglected. It includes losses due to spill-over, higher order ϕ -variation in the radiation pattern, cross-polarization, non-uniform aperture distribution and phase errors [7, section 8.4]. The work presented in this paper was supported by California Institute of Technology and Cornell University under a contract with ASTRON in connection with the US SKA proposal. The present feed is protected by the patent application in [8].

II. DESCRIPTION OF FEED

The experimental feed model presented in this paper has been designed to cover 1 to 13 GHz and to be used for dual linear polarization. To achieve this, the lowest geometrical frequency of the feed was chosen to be 1 GHz and the highest geometrical frequency to be 15.6 GHz. The lowest (highest) geometrical frequency corresponds to the frequency at which the longest (shortest) dipole spacing corresponds to 0.5 wavelengths. Figure shows 1 a photograph of the feed described in the present memo with key dimensions indicated. The dimensions of the dipoles such as length L , separation D , height above ground plane h , and strip width, are scaled with frequency to provide the log-periodic shape. The scaling factor k is 1.1161. The described feed contains no balun, but it is intended to be integrated with an active 180 deg balun and low noise receiver. The reported measurements have been done with a broadband commercial 180 deg hybrid power divider [9] replacing the balun. Each of the two parallel strip lines are fed by a separate coaxial cable. Each coaxial cable is, on the back side of the ground plane, connected to the commercial 180 deg hybrid. All measurements are corrected for the loss and reflection coefficients of the hybrid. The inset in figure 2 shows a sketch of the exciting structure.

The effect of the finite ground plane is included in the numerical analysis of the feed. However, to save time the dielectric support has been neglected in the calculations.

Fig 1. Photograph of the Manufactured 1 to 13 GHz lab model with key dimensions indicated. The largest of dimensions are given in mm. These sizes are also given in terms of the lowest geometrical frequency. The inset shows the central part of the feed and illustrates how each of the two transmission lines (1 and 2) are fed by a separate coaxial line (3) and connected to the hybrid on the back side of the ground plane.



III. RESULTS

In table 1 we see a summary of measured and calculated efficiencies when the feed is used in a reflector of 53 deg subtended half angle. We see that there is fairly good agreement at least in terms of average levels with somewhat greater variation from the average than calculated. In figure 2 we see the computed and measured far-field pattern in the 45 degree plane at 6 different frequencies. In order to quantify the difference in computed and measured patterns we show the

corresponding aperture efficiency as a function of frequency in figure 3. As shown in figure 4 the measured reflection efficiency below 6 GHz are better than computed; above 6 GHz the variations are predicted though with some discrepancy in frequency structure. The reflection efficiency is better than -1.45 dB at all frequencies corresponding to an input reflection coefficient better than -5.5 dB. It should be noted that at frequencies as low as 100 MHz the figure of merit of a radio astronomy antenna, area divided by system temperature, is not reduced by feed reflections because the sky noise is much higher than receiver noise. Furthermore at higher frequencies, remotely controlled tuners can be used to correct for small reflections without significant loss.

TABLE I
SUMMARY OF MEASURED AND CALCULATED SUB EFFICIENCIES FROM 1 TO 13 GHz

Cause of efficiency	BEST	BEST MEASURED	WORST	WORST
	CALCULATED [dB]	[dB]	CALCULATED [dB]	MEASURED [dB]
Spill-over, e_{sp}	-0.20	-0.20	-0.76	-1.37
Illumination, e_{ill}	-0.43	-0.31	-1.13	-1.25
Polarization, e_{pol}	-0.00	-0.08	-0.18	-0.54
Phase, e_{ϕ}	-0.00	N/A	-0.22	N/A
Aperture, e_{ap}	-1.15	-1.03	-2.25	-2.54
Reflections, e_{refl}	-0.06	-0.02	-1.44	-1.45
Total, e_{tot}	-1.29	-1.25	-3.05	-3.39

IV. CONCLUSION

A 1 to 13 GHz feed has been designed and manufactured for use in dual linear polarization. The measured results agree well with the computed and the aperture efficiency is better than -2.54 dB over the entire band. Also, the reflection efficiency is well predicted and better than -1.45 dB at all frequencies. Work is ongoing to improve impedance matching.

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- [7] P-S Kildal, *Foundations of antennas – A unified approach*, Lund, Sweden: Studentlitteratur, 2000
- [8] Per-Simon Kildal, "Broadband multi-dipole antenna with frequency-independent radiation characteristics", in *Patent application PCT/SE2004/001178*
- [9] Krytar 180 deg hybrid coupler model no. 4010180, <http://www.krytar.com>

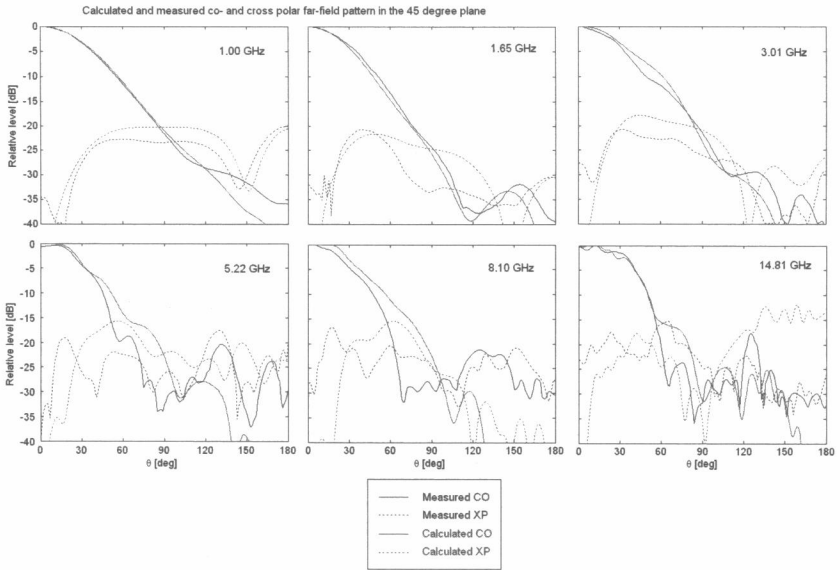


Fig. 2. Calculated and Measured Co- and cross-polar 45 degree plane relative far-field patterns at 6 different frequencies.

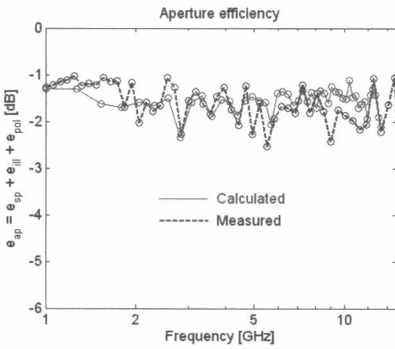


Fig. 3. Measured and calculated aperture efficiency for 53 degree subtended half angle.

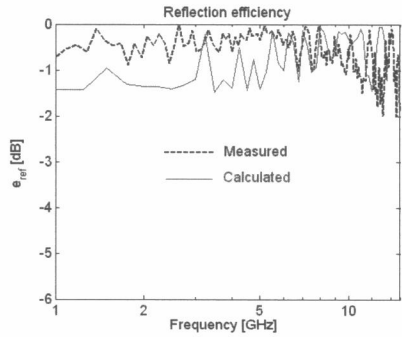


Fig. 4. Calculated and measured reflection efficiency. The effects of the cables and hybrid have been removed by appropriate calibration.

The Eleven Antenna: A Compact Low-Profile Decade Bandwidth Dual Polarized Feed for Reflector Antennas

Rikard Olsson, *Student Member, IEEE*, Per-Simon Kildal, *Fellow, IEEE*, and Sander Weinreb, *Life Fellow, IEEE*

Abstract—A novel dual polarized ultrawide-band (UWB) feed with a decade bandwidth is presented for use in both single and dual reflector antennas. The feed has nearly constant beam width and 11 dBi directivity over at least a decade bandwidth. The feed gives an aperture efficiency of the reflector of 66% or better over a decade bandwidth when the subtended angle toward the sub or main reflector is about 53° , and an overall efficiency better than 47% including mismatch. The return loss is better than 5 dB over a decade bandwidth. The calculated results have been verified with measurements on a linearly polarized lab model. The feed has no balun as it is intended to be integrated with an active 180° balun and receiver. The feed is referred to as the Eleven antenna because its basic configuration is two parallel dipoles 0.5 wavelengths apart and because it can be used over more than a decade bandwidth with 11 dBi directivity. We also believe that 11 dB return loss is achievable in the near future.

Index Terms—Log-periodic antenna, multifunction, reflector antenna, reflector antenna feed, square kilometer array (SKA), ultrawide-band (UWB).

I. INTRODUCTION

RECENTLY, there has been a growing interest in reducing the number of antennas on different platforms by combining several functions in the same antenna. To achieve this, the multifunction antenna needs to be either very broadband or multiband to cover the frequencies of all functions. There is also an increasing interest in antennas with extremely large bandwidth in connection with proposed scientific systems such as e.g., the so-called square kilometer array (SKA) radio telescope covering frequencies from 100 MHz to 25 GHz. The term ultrawide-band (UWB) is often used in connection with new broadband technology. The present paper deals with the development of a decade bandwidth feed for the dual reflector antennas proposed to be used for SKA in the US proposal.

Reflector antennas have existed since the beginning of wireless communication. Heinrich Hertz used a cylindrical reflector with dipole feed when he experimentally discovered electromagnetic waves in 1888. When the radar was developed during the second world war, the most common feeds were resonant

halfwave dipoles and small open-ended waveguides or horn antennas [1], [2]. The halfwave dipole got improved efficiency by locating it on a circular disk, but still the radiation pattern was very different in E- and H-planes. This caused low efficiency, and high spillover and cross polarization; the latter being detrimental in dual polarized systems. There exist two easy ways of compensating for these deficiencies, either by using two parallel dipoles with half wavelength spacing [3], or by locating a metal ring of about one wavelength diameter above the dipole [4], [5]. The feed described in the present paper is a log-periodic version of the dual dipole feed in [3].

The horn feeds became very popular during the eighties. In particular, corrugated horns were used to produce very good performance in terms of symmetry of the main lobe and cross polarization. They were and still are popular as feeds for dual reflector antennas, and they can have octave bandwidth [6], [7]. Corrugated horns are expensive and heavy, so simpler dielectric alternatives have been proposed [8]. Dielectric loading can also enable larger bandwidth [9], [10]. The quad-ridge horn is even more broadband, but unfortunately the efficiency and cross polarization is poor [11], [12]. A major problem with all the above mentioned horns in wide band applications is that the beam width varies strongly with frequency, unless the horn is made very large. The first compact horn feed with constant beam width and low cross polarization over almost an octave bandwidth was published in [13]. There exist also self-supported feeds for prime-focus reflectors, mounted to the center of the main reflector with an axial tube containing the feed waveguide or cables. Such feeds are, e.g., the Clavin [14] feed and the hat feed mentioned in [15], but their bandwidths are typically 10% or smaller.

The feed in the present paper is in comparison to all of the above mentioned feeds very light weight and compact. The beamwidth is constant, and the cross-polar sidelobes are reasonably low over a decade bandwidth. It can be used for both single and dual reflector antennas, although the large beam width makes it better suited for prime-focus reflectors.

The square kilometer array (SKA) is an international project that will be the next big step in radio astronomy, if fully funded. As the name indicates the radio telescope will have a staggering total aperture area of about 1 square kilometer. This huge radio telescope will provide two orders of magnitude increase in sensitivity compared to existing radio telescopes. In order to achieve such a large aperture an array of antennas with smaller aperture has to be used. There are many different suggestions for antennas, ranging from a few tens of very large single

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R. Olsson and P.-S. Kildal are with the Antenna group at Chalmers University of Technology, Goteborg, S-412 96, Sweden (e-mail: rikard.olsson@elmagn.chalmers.se; simon@elmagn.chalmers.se).

S. Weinreb is with the Department of Electrical Engineering, California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, CA 91125 USA (e-mail: sweinreb@caltech.edu).

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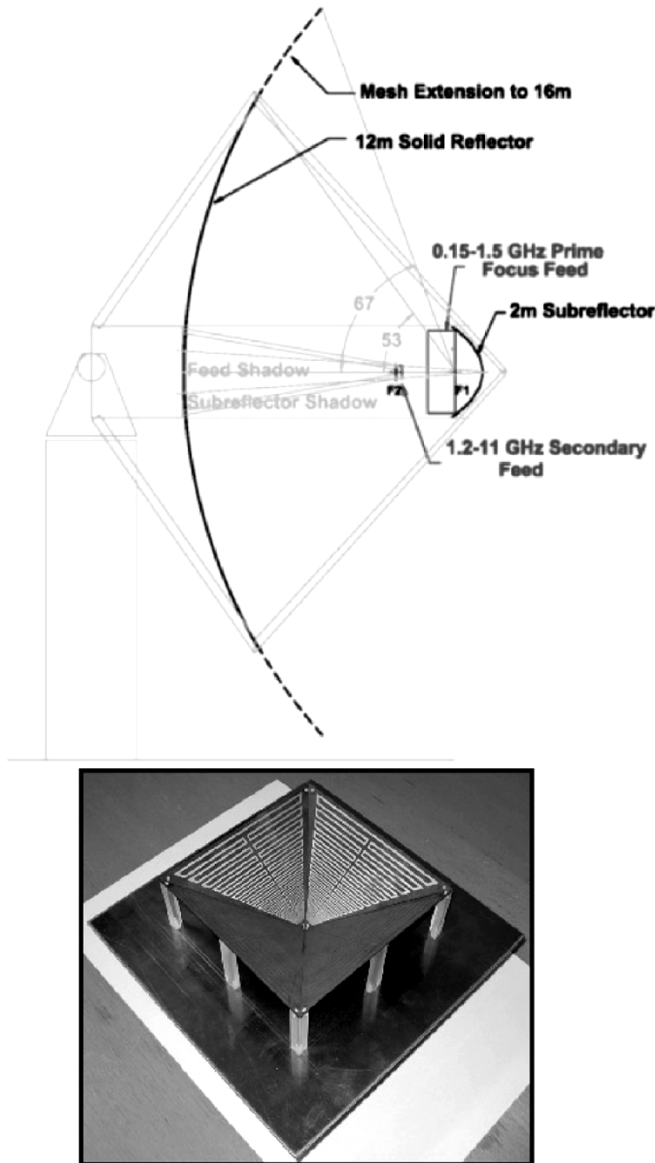


Fig. 1. Drawing of the SKA 12 m/16 m symmetric antenna concept having a 12-m parabolic (focal length is 6 m) main reflector with a mesh extension to 16 m and a 2-m diameter subreflector, and photograph of dual polarized laboratory model of the proposed feed described in this paper. A patent is pending [23].

reflectors to large arrays of Vivaldi antennas and Luneberg lenses. The US proposal makes use of an array of around 5000 symmetric parabolic reflectors with 16 m diameter. In Fig. 1 a sketch of the proposed symmetric reflector of US-SKA is shown as well as a photograph of a laboratory model of the proposed feed described in the present paper. Note that the outer 4 m circumferential part of the reflector is a wire mesh. One of the advantages with the US proposal is that it makes use of reflector antennas that represent a well known technology which has been used in radio astronomy during several decades. The system is very wide band; the goal is to cover 100 MHz to 25 GHz. There are many benefits from this bandwidth. The main advantage is that the same radio telescope may be used to perform several functions and thus support many different kinds of research. Key science projects for SKA include studies of the evolution of galaxies and cosmic large structures, studies

on the first black holes and stars, strong field tests of gravity, the search for Earth like planets and much more [16]. The number of antennas and the bandwidth of the system have triggered a need for development of cheap ultrawide-band components. One of the more challenging components is the feed.

End-fire style log-periodic dipole arrays have since they were invented [17] been used in ultra wide band antenna design to achieve medium gain antennas for use in both antenna and electromagnetic compatibility (EMC) measurements. Log-periodic antennas are not common as reflector feeds because their phase centers vary strongly with frequency [18], [19]. The phase center variation can be reduced to acceptable levels, such as e.g., in the log-periodic feed for the Allen Telescope Array (ATA) [20]. This is a radio telescope currently under construction which uses many of the same ideas as the U.S. SKA proposal, but for an array of 350 reflectors of 6 m diameter. Still, the ATA feed is large and there are significant losses due to phase center variation [21], so better feeds are desirable. The purpose of the present paper is to describe a compact feed with almost no phase center variation and almost constant beam width over a decade bandwidth. The described feed contains no balun as it is intended to be integrated with an active 180° balun and receiver. An important advantage of the described feed is that due to its compact size it facilitates cryogenic cooling. The measurements reported in the present paper have been done with a broadband commercial 180° hybrid power divider replacing the balun. Some initial work on the feed was reported briefly in [22], and a patent is pending [23]. The feed has been named the Eleven antenna because its basic configuration is two parallel dipoles 0.5 wavelengths apart and because it can be used over more than a decade bandwidth with 11-dBi directivity. We also believe that 11-dB return loss is achievable in the near future.

II. CHARACTERIZATION OF FEEDS

The antenna to be presented has been designed to feed a reflector, more particularly the reflector depicted in Fig. 1. Therefore, it is important to characterize its performance in the reflector system. This is done by the aperture efficiency in the reflector and its subefficiencies, and by spillover, input reflection coefficient, and figure of merit, as explained later.

A. Subefficiencies

The realized gain G_0 and directivity D_0 of a reflector are related by

$$G_0 = e_{\text{ant}} D_0; \quad e_{\text{ant}} = e_{\text{rad}} e_{\text{ap}} \quad (1)$$

where e_{ant} is the antenna efficiency, e_{ap} is the aperture efficiency and

$$e_{\text{rad}} = e_{\text{reff}} e_{\text{diss}}; \quad e_{\text{reff}} = 1 - |r|^2 \quad (2)$$

is the total radiation efficiency. e_{reff} accounts for the input reflection coefficient r , i.e., impedance mismatch, and e_{diss} for the dissipation losses. When we calculate the reflection coefficient r we will assume 50Ω input feed line impedance.

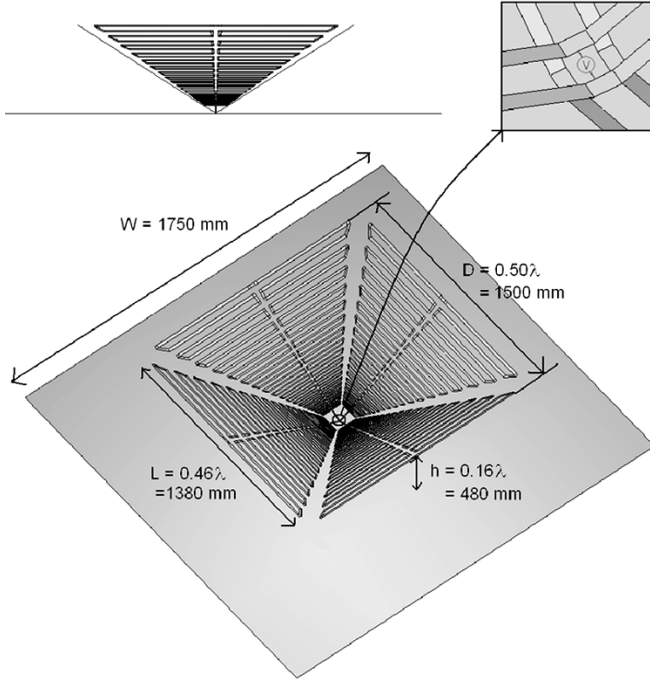


Fig. 2. Illustration of a 0.15 to 1.5 GHz dual polarized model of the feed with key dimensions indicated. The largest value of each dimension is given in mm. [26]. These sizes are also given in terms of the wavelength at 100 MHz. The lowest frequency of operation is 150 MHz. A side view is shown on the top left, and on the top right a more detailed view of the central part of the feed is shown.

The aperture efficiency e_{ap} is a measure of how efficiently the feed illuminates the reflector aperture, and it becomes unity for a uniform aperture illumination with constant phase and no spillover. The aperture efficiency can for classical symmetric reflector shapes like the SKA reflector in Fig. 1 be expressed in closed form in terms of the radiation field function of the feed. To characterize different properties of the feed we will separate the aperture efficiency in different subefficiencies, see ([24, Sec. 8.4]) and [25]. According to

$$e_{ap} = e_{BOR_1} e_{sp} e_{po} e_{ill} e_{\phi} \quad (3)$$

where each of the subefficiencies are explained below. The body of revolution $_1$ (BOR) efficiency e_{BOR} measures how closely the far-field resembles that of a BOR $_1$ antenna ([24, Sec. 2.4]) and [26]. The far-field of a BOR $_1$ antenna has only first-order variation in φ and can be expressed as

$$G_y(\theta, \varphi) = G_E(\theta) \sin \varphi \hat{\theta} + G_H(\theta) \cos \theta \hat{\phi} \quad (4)$$

for the y-polarized case. The BOR $_1$ efficiency accounts for the power radiated in higher order φ -variations in the pattern, which cannot contribute to the gain of a symmetrical reflector antenna and thus represents a power loss. The spillover efficiency e_{sp} is the fraction of the radiated power that actually hits the reflector. The power lost in the cross-polar part of the field is accounted for by the polarization efficiency e_{po} . The illumination efficiency e_{ill} is a measure of the loss that arises from the actual tapered illumination of the reflector, and finally the phase efficiency e_{ϕ} accounts for loss due to phase errors in the copolar aperture field. This efficiency is the only efficiency that depends on the

TABLE I
COSMIC SKY NOISE TOWARD THE GALACTIC POLE

Frequency [GHz]	T_s [K]	Frequency [GHz]	T_s [K]
0.01	40000	0.60	9.0
0.02	60000	0.80	6.0
0.03	20000	1.00	4.5
0.06	2800	3.00	2.8
0.08	1000	6.00	2.8
0.10	245	8.00	2.7
0.30	30	10.00	2.7

location of the feed relative to the focal point of the reflector. The feed location that maximizes the phase efficiency defines the phase center, see ([24, Sec. 2.3]). When calculating the phase efficiency below we have used the center of the ground plane as phase reference point.

B. Figure of Merit

For radio telescopes, such as SKA, the figure of merit for the overall system performance is effective area over the total system noise temperature T given in m^2/K , i.e.,

$$A/T = \frac{e_{rad} e_{ap} A_{geom}}{T} \quad (5)$$

where $A_{geom} = \pi D^2/4$ is the geometrical aperture area of the reflector, and T is the system noise temperature. For a receiver with an isolator at temperature, T_{iso} at its input the system temperature can be expressed as

$$T = T_R + e_{rad} p_g T_a + e_{rad} (1 - p_g) T_{sky} + T_{ISO} \frac{(1 - e_{rad})}{e_{rad}} \quad (6)$$

with $T_R = 15$ K a typical receiver noise temperature, $T_a = 290$ K the ambient temperature causing ground radiation, and T_{sky} the cosmic sky noise. The feed will be located inside a Dewar cooled to 15 K which is assumed in (6). For the same reason the ohmic loss in the feed is neglected in this paper, so $e_{rad} = 1 - |r|^2$. p_g is the fraction of the radiated power in the radiation pattern of the feed which illuminates the ground. For prime focus case and when we assume that the antenna is pointed vertically, it can be calculated as

$$p_g = p_{gr} + t_{mesh} p_{mesh} \quad (7)$$

where p_{gr} is the relative power between $\theta = 67$ and $\theta = 90^\circ$, and p_{mesh} is the relative power between 53° and 67° , hitting the mesh reflector. t_{mesh} is the transmission coefficient of the mesh. We will assume that the mesh is the same as the mesh in [27, Section IV], only scaled down in frequency by a factor 10. The transmission coefficient is then about 1% at 500 and increases to 5% at 1.5 GHz, but we have assumed that it remains constant at 5% over the entire 0.15- to 1.5-GHz band. The cosmic sky noise toward the galactic center is found from [28, Fig. 2]. We approximate this by the values in Table I, with linear interpolation in $\log(T)$ versus $\log(f)$ between the values. For other pointing directions the spillover hitting the ground is modified, see, e.g., the formulas in [5], but we will not include such analysis here.

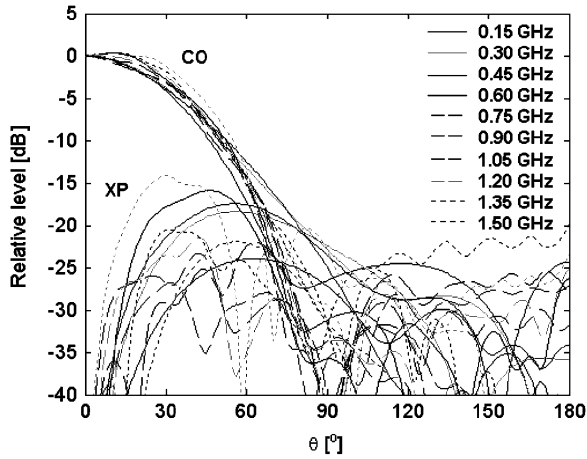


Fig. 3. Computed co- and cross-polar far-field patterns in the 45° plane of the antenna in Fig. 2. BOR₁-components only.

III. NUMERICAL DESIGN

We started by considering a simple feed consisting of two parallel halfwave dipoles separated by a half wavelength and located above a ground plane. This is as explained in the introduction an old feed which gives a pattern with equal E- and H-planes and with phase center in the ground plane [3]. Our idea was then to replace each single dipole by log-periodic series-fed dipoles, with a logarithmically varying dipole length, spacing and height above the ground plane, see Fig. 2. The initial studies were made with wire dipoles, and we soon found out that the dipoles needed to be folded and mounted together in such a way that the feed gap of each folded dipole is connected to a gap in the normally connected folded part of the previous dipole. The studies were later concentrated more on strip models of the dipoles to enable printing on a normal dielectric circuit board.

To calculate impedance characteristics and radiation patterns of the feed we have mainly used the method of moments (MoM) as implemented in the commercial code WIPL-D [29], but we also used the in-house MoM code described in [30] for some initial studies and validation.

Here we will present numerical results obtained for the feed in Fig. 2 operating from 0.15 to 1.5 GHz, thereby covering a decade bandwidth. Note that we believe that, in principle, there exists no theoretical limit to the bandwidth of the log-periodic Eleven antenna, but our objective in the SKA application is to design decade bandwidth feeds. In practice the bandwidth is naturally limited by the size of the feed at low frequencies and by the diameter of the feeding cables at higher frequencies. Fig. 2 shows the most important longest dimensions of the feed. These sizes are also given in terms of the wavelength at 100 MHz. All the dimensions of the dipoles such as length L , separation D , height above ground plane h , and strip width, are scaled with frequency to provide the log-periodic shape. The scaling factor k is 1.1161. The feed is excited with a delta voltage source between the two strips of the split transmission line originating in the center, and the dielectric support is neglected. Furthermore the initial simulations were done for one linear polarization to reduce computational effort. The finite ground plane is included in the analysis. Fig. 3 shows typical far-field patterns in the 45° plane between 0.15 and 1.5 GHz similar to the patterns shown

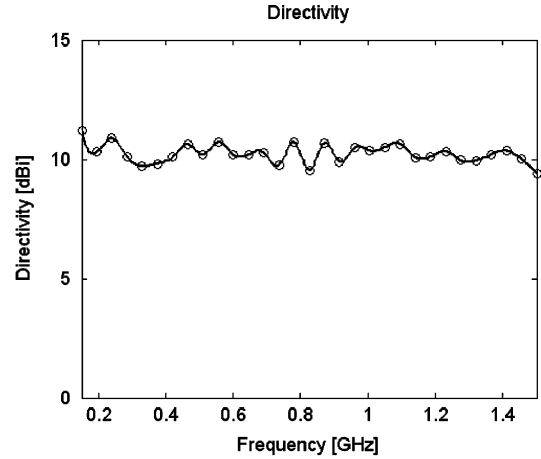


Fig. 4. Computed directivity of the antenna in Fig. 2.

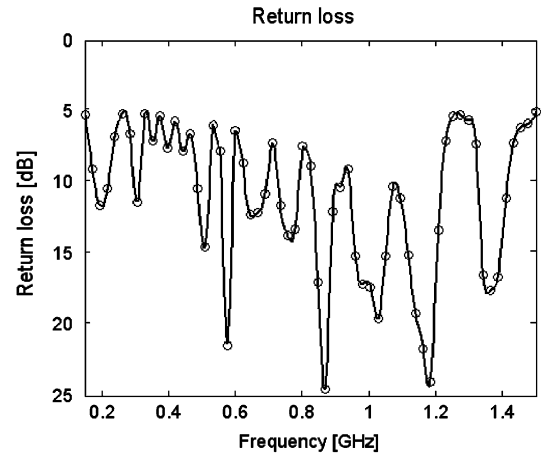


Fig. 5. Computed return loss of the antenna in Fig. 2.

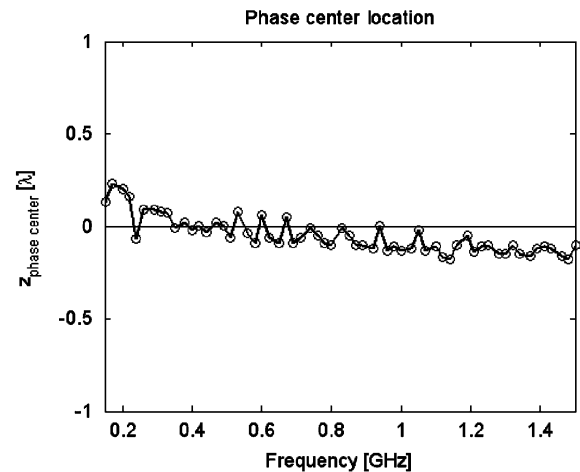


Fig. 6. Computed phase center location of the antenna in Fig. 2.

in [22] for an eleven antenna covering 1 to 12 GHz. Fig. 4 shows the directivity of the feed as a function of frequency. In Fig. 5 we see the return loss of the feed at the feed point. This constitutes the main drawback of the feed. The return loss is not better than 5.0 dB at the worst frequencies, but we are confident it can be improved. One of the major advantages of the feed is shown in Fig. 6 which presents the phase center location as a function

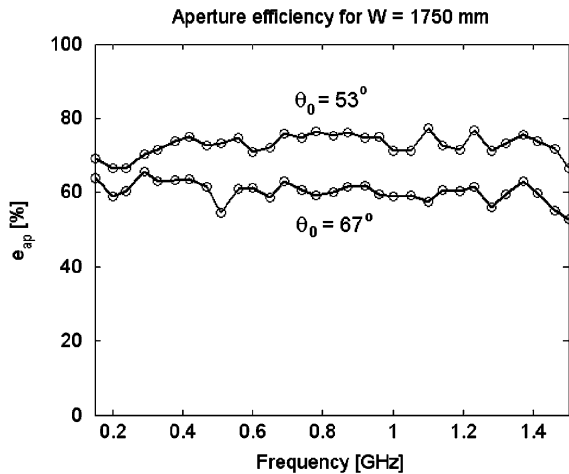


Fig. 7. Computed aperture efficiency when the antenna in Fig. 2 is used to feed a reflector with subtended angle of 53° and 67° .

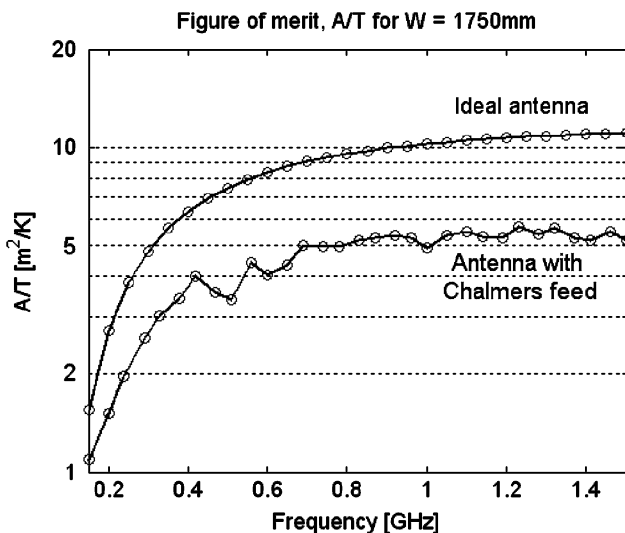


Fig. 8. Computed A/T of the reflector in Fig. 1 fed by the feed in Fig. 2. The ground plane size is 1750 mm or 0.88 wavelengths at 150 MHz, the lowest frequency of operation.

of frequency. We see that the phase center deviates by less than 0.2 wavelengths from the ground plane at $z = 0$. Figs. 7 and 8 show the aperture efficiency and figure of merit in the reflector system, respectively. Fig. 7 shows that the subtended half angle influences the aperture efficiency quite significantly. In [22], the effect of the subtended half angle on the aperture efficiency was, therefore, studied and the optimum angle was shown to be close to 50° . A rather large range of subtended angles, from 40° to 60° , can however be used and still remain very close to the maximum efficiency. The strong reduction of A/T at low frequencies is not an effect of the feed but an effect of an increase in sky noise, see Table I. The A/T in Fig. 8 is compared to the theoretical maximum that would be achieved with an antenna with unity aperture efficiency and no spillover over the entire band.

Table II shows a summary of the different efficiencies of the feed. Worth noting here is that the phase efficiency is very high over the entire band, which was one of the main goals and indicates that the phase center location is fixed to the ground plane for all frequencies.

TABLE II
SUMMARY OF EFFICIENCIES OVER THE 0.15- TO 1.5-GHz BAND FOR THE FEED IN FIG. 3 FOR A SUBTENDED HALF ANGLE OF 53°

Cause of efficiency	Best[dB]	Worst[dB]	Best [%]	Worst [%]
Spill-over, e_{sp}	-0.26	-0.69	94	85
Illumination, e_{ill}	-0.41	-0.74	91	84
Polarization, e_{pol}	-0.01	-0.15	100	97
Phase, e_ϕ	-0.00	-0.17	100	96
Aperture, e_{ap}	-1.12	-1.78	77	66
Reflections, e_{refl}	-0.02	-1.44	100	72
Total, e_{tot}	-2.05	-3.31	62	47

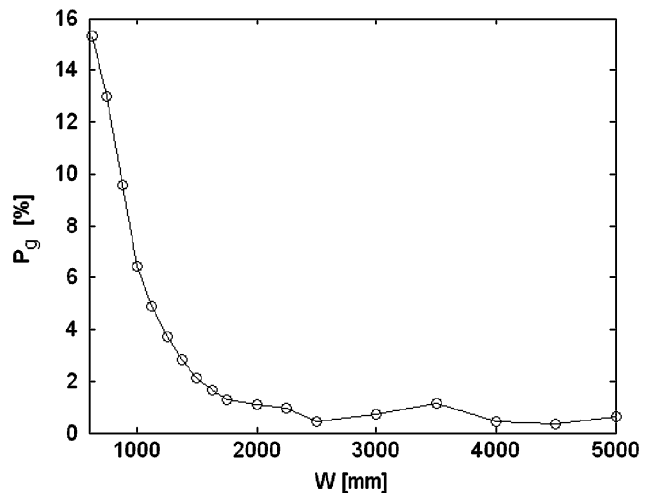


Fig. 9. Relative spillover at 150 MHz hitting ground as defined by (7) versus ground plane size, computed for of the antenna in Fig. 2 when it is feeding the reflector in Fig. 1.

The far-out sidelobes and spillover can be reduced by increasing the size of the ground plane. This can of course only be done if practical size constraints allow it and if the increase in blockage is acceptable. Fig. 9 shows the percentage of the total radiated power which misses the reflector and hits the ground when the reflector is pointed normal to the ground. We refer to this quantity as relative power hitting the ground and its definition is stated in (7). We see that the spillover decreases significantly when the ground plane size increases, up to a ground plane size of around 1750 mm after which there is very little reduction of the spillover. This motivates the choice of ground plane size in the previous paragraph. This improvement in spillover should be traded off against the increased blockage loss, which we have not considered yet.

IV. LAB MODEL AND MEASUREMENT

The first experimental feed was linearly polarized and designed to cover 1 to 6 GHz. It is shown in Fig. 10. Fig. 11 shows a photograph of the central part. We see the soldering points where the inner conductor of the two feeding coaxial cables are connected to the strip lines. These cables come up through the ground plane via a centrally located hole and the shields of the cables are soldered to the ground plane. Each of the two parallel strip lines are fed by separate coaxial cable. Each coaxial cable

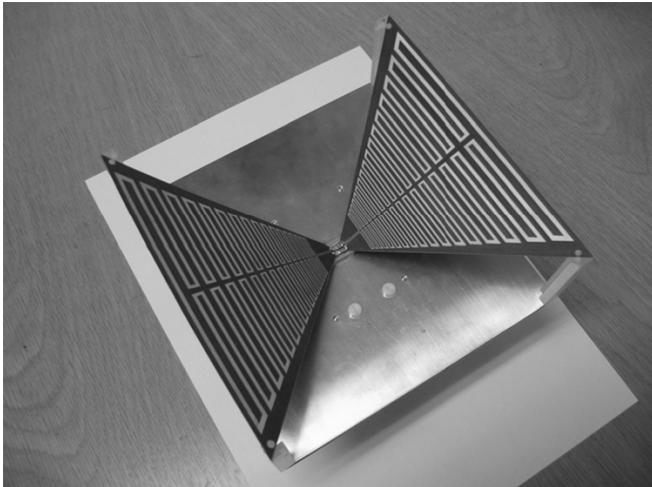


Fig. 10. Photograph of the 1- to 6-GHz lab model [23].

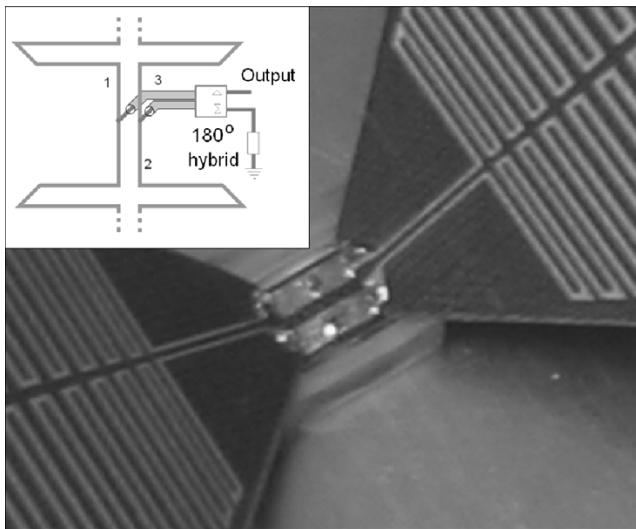


Fig. 11. Photograph of the central part of the 1- to 6-GHz lab model [23]. The inset shows a sketch of the feeding structure. Each of the two transmission lines, 1 and 2, are fed by a separate coaxial line, 3.

is, on the back side of the ground plane, connected to a commercial 180° hybrid. The inset in the photograph shows a more illustrative sketch of the exciting structure.

The main features of the theoretical far-field patterns are well reproduced in the measurements. To illustrate this we plot two of the most important pattern parameters in Fig. 12: The 10-dB beam width and the highest cross-polar sidelobe. Both values are on average in agreement with simulations using the same model as described in Section III. The differences we see at certain frequencies probably arise from measurement inaccuracies, in particular when it comes to the cross polar levels, and from the fact that the excitation is not modeled with sufficient detail in the computations.

In Fig. 13, we compare typical measured and calculated far-field patterns at four frequencies. We see that the agreement is fairly good. The computed and measured reflection efficiencies are shown in Fig. 14. The effect of the feed cables and the 180° hybrid have been removed by appropriate calibration. We see

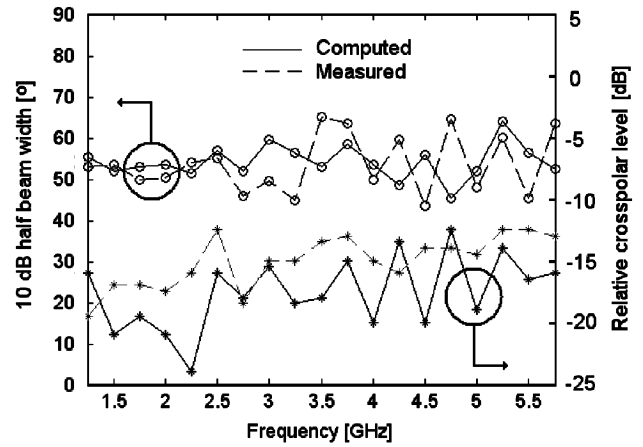


Fig. 12. Measured and computed 10 dB half beam width and highest cross-polar side lobe level in the 45° plane for the 1 to 6 GHz lab model.

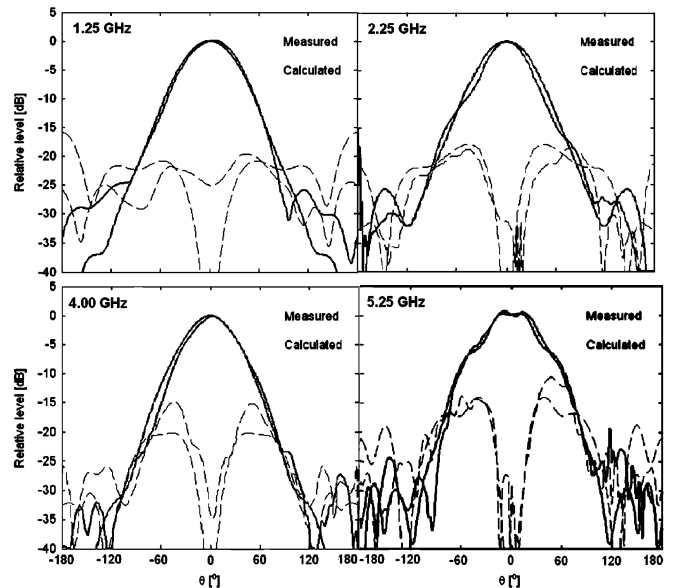


Fig. 13. Measured and computed co- and cross-polar far-field patterns in the 45° plane at four frequencies.

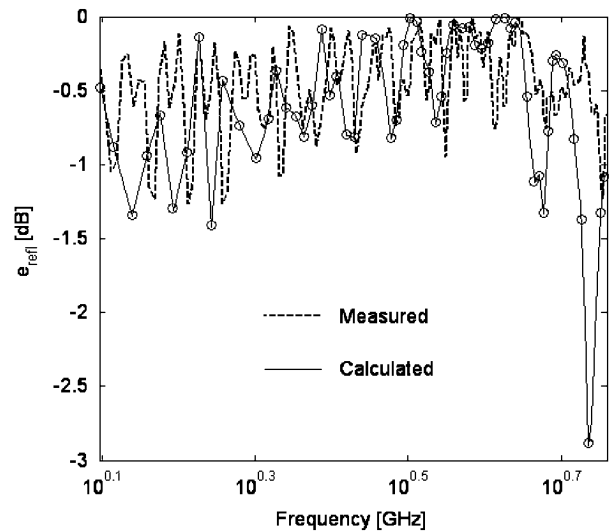


Fig. 14. Computed and measured reflection efficiency for the 1 to 6 GHz lab model plotted against logarithmic scale in frequency.

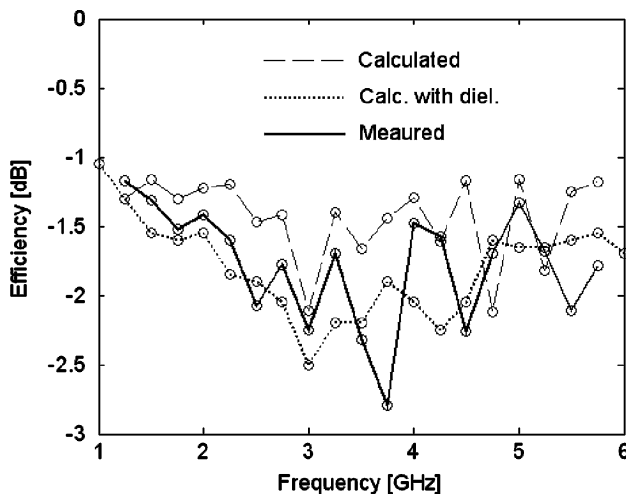


Fig. 15. Measured and computed product of polarization-illumination- and spillover efficiency for a subtended angle of 53° .

that the lowest level of the reflection efficiency is well predicted, but the more detailed behavior of the reflection efficiency is only approximately predicted by the simulations. We note that the measured reflections at the input cause up to 1.3 dB loss. The prediction of the pattern and the reflection efficiency shows that our numerical feed model provides useful and fairly accurate results.

We saw in the previous paragraph that the measured and calculated far-field patterns are similar. To quantify their similarity we have computed the efficiency of the feed in the SKA reflector, by using both the computed and simulated feed far-field patterns. Fig. 15 shows the product of the polarization-, illumination-, and spillover efficiencies. This product corresponds to the aperture efficiency, since the phase- and BOR₁-efficiencies are close to 0 dB. In this figure, we have also included results of simulations when the dielectric support boards are included. Then, the simulations predict the aperture efficiency more accurately. The reasons for the discrepancies are the simplified excitation model, an imbalanced feeding due to imperfections of the hybrid, and measurement inaccuracies. However, the aperture efficiency is overall well predicted.

V. CONCLUSION

A novel UWB feed called the Eleven antenna has been designed and manufactured. The feed provides nearly constant beam width and directivity over at least a decade bandwidth. It is also shown to give constant aperture efficiency of around 66% or better in the reflector system suggested for US-SKA over the same decade bandwidth and an A/T which is around 55% of that of an ideal antenna with 100% aperture efficiency and no spillover. It has been shown that the spillover efficiency can be controlled by changing the size of the ground plane. We have also shown that the feed can be used in dual linear polarization with little degradation of performance.

There are many things that still can be done to improve this feed. One of the key issues is to improve impedance matching and ongoing work shows promising results. Another issue is to study the losses introduced by the dielectric substrate and the finite conductivity of the metal parts.

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Rikard Olsson (M'04) was born in Umea, Sweden, in 1979. He received the Masters degree in engineering physics from Chalmers University of Technology, Goteborg, Sweden, in 2003.

He is currently pursuing the Ph.D. degree at Chalmers University of Technology.



Per-Simon Kildal (M'82–SM'84–F'95) was born in Molde, Norway, on July 4, 1951. He received the M.S.E.E., Ph.D., and Doctor Technicae degrees from the Norwegian Institute of Technology (NTH), Trondheim, Norway, in 1976, 1982, and 1990, respectively.

From 1979 to 1989, he was with the ELAB and SINTEF, research institutes in Trondheim, Norway. Since 1989, he has been a Professor at Chalmers University of Technology, Gothenburg, Sweden, where he has educated 15 antenna doctors. He has done the

electrical design and analysis of two very large antennas. The first was the 120-m long and 40-m wide cylindrical parabolic reflector antenna of the European Incoherent Scatter Scientific Association (EISCAT), located in North Norway. The second was the Gregorian dual-reflector feed of the 300-m diameter radio telescope in Arecibo, on a contract for Cornell University. He is presently involved in the design of feeds for the U.S. proposal of the Square Kilometer Array (SKA). He holds many granted patents and patents pending, and based on these he has founded two companies: COMHAT AB (www.comhat.se) and Bluetest AB (www.bluetest.se). He has authored or coauthored more than 190 papers in IEEE TRANSACTIONS or IEE journals and conferences, concerning antenna theory, analysis, design and measurement. He gives short courses and organizes special sessions at conferences, and he has given invited lectures in plenary sessions at several conferences. His textbook *Foundations of Antennas—A Unified Approach* (Lund, Sweden: Studentlitteratur, 2000) (www.studentlitteratur.se/antennas) has been well received.

Prof. Kildal received an award from ELAB in 1984. He received the R. W. P. King Award in 1984 and the S.A. Schelkunoff Transactions Prize Paper Award in 1990 from the IEEE TRANSACTIONS ON ANTENNAS AND PROPAGATION. From 1995 to 1998, he served as an Associate Editor of the IEEE TRANSACTIONS ON ANTENNAS AND PROPAGATION and was Co-Guest Editor of the 2005 IEEE TRANSACTIONS ON ANTENNAS AND PROPAGATION Special Issue on Artificial Magnetic Conductors, Soft/Hard Surfaces, and Other Complex Surfaces. He has made many contributions to the IEEE Antennas and Propagation Society including being an elected member of the Administration Committee during 1995–1997 and distinguished lecturer from 1991 to 1994

Sander Weinreb (LF'02) received the B.S.E.E. and Ph.D. degrees from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Cambridge, in 1958 and 1963, respectively.

He is presently a Principal Scientist at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) and a Faculty Associate at the California Institute of Technology (Caltech). His present area of interest is large microwave arrays for space communications and radio astronomy. He is active in research and development of very low-noise microwave and millimeter wave integrated circuits (MMICs). Prior to joining JPL, he was a Research Professor with the Department of Physics and Astronomy at the University of Massachusetts (1996–1999). He was Principal Scientist and Leader of the Millimeter-Wave Design and Test Group at Martin Marietta Laboratories where he led the design of millimeter-wave MMICs and prototype radar and radiometer systems (1989–1996). Prior to this, he was Head of the Electronics Division (1965–1985) and Assistant Director (1985–1988) at National Radio Astronomy Observatory, where was responsible for the design, construction, operation, and maintenance of radio astronomy receivers at the Green Bank, WV, and Kitt Peak, AZ observatories. At NRAO, he led the group which was responsible for the design of the electronics system for the Very Large Array. He is the author of over 120 publications in the areas of digital correlation techniques, radio astronomy observations, array receivers, and low-noise amplifiers.

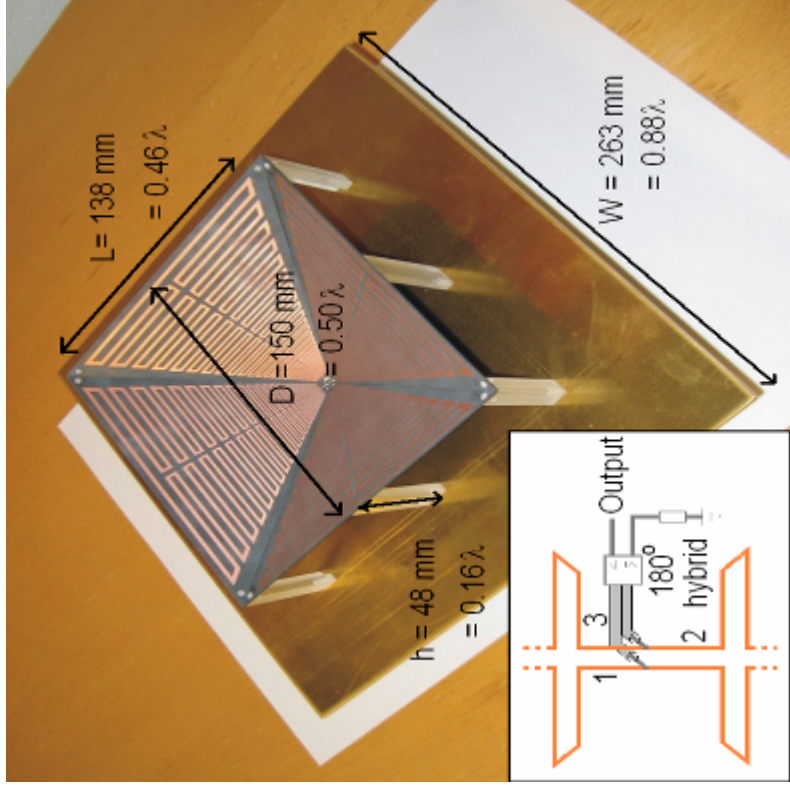
Mounting of 150-2000 MHz Eleven feed for Green Bank telescope in workshop at Chalmers, May 2005. Developed for Caltech and MIT Lincoln lab.



1-13 GHz Eleven feed for SKA inside Dewar at Caltech, May 2005.



1-13 GHz model of Eleven feed for US SKA



- Balun replaced by commercial 180 deg hybrid.