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Author: Ms. Lulekwa Makapela  
South Africa, lulu@space.gov.za

SOUTH AFRICA'S INITIATIVES TO ENHANCE GROWTH OF THE SPACE INDUSTRY FOR  
SOCIO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Abstract**

Authors: Lulekwa Makapela and Nomfuneko Majaja (South African Department of Trade Industry)

The government of South Africa encourages involvement of the private actors in space activities through public-private partnerships in order to develop national commercial capabilities. The development and launch of the South African remote sensing micro satellite demonstrated the required cooperation between public and private sector. However, investment in space activities has not been optimally realized as space activities in the past have been disjointed without the mandatory accountability for the development and leadership of a coherent national space programme. According to the National Space Policy, the domestic industry is encouraged to pursue appropriate strategic international industrial partnerships, as one of the means of enhancing industrial competitiveness

A number of government initiatives and programmes that are intended to leverage economic benefits and support the development of the South African industry have been established. These include the Aerospace Industry Support Initiative (AISI), National Industrial Participation Programme (NIPP) and Support Programme for Industrial Innovation (SPII). There is a need for a focused approach to streamline these initiatives and utilise them effectively and efficiently.

South Africa constitutes a variety of institutions and programmes with diverse space activities, however the industry is very small and there is less documented information about the size and growth of the space sector than other sectors of the economy. This is due to the reasons that the economic data on many components of the space sector are normally combined with related industries such as Aerospace and Defense and the industry is characterized by dual-use products and services. Consequently, even though there has been a research on the space sector, this research does not define space as a separate industry.

In order for South Africa to reach its vision in terms of the National Space Strategy, which is to be among the leading nations in the innovative utilisation of space science and technology that enhances economic growth and sustainable development in order to improve the quality of life for all, there is a need for better utilisation of the government initiatives for industry growth.

The purpose of this paper is to analyse of South Africa's Space activities and how they impact on economic growth and development. The paper will also analyse the government's initiatives in support of the industry and how these initiatives could be utilised effectively in order enhance innovation and technology towards knowledge economy.