

New Business Models for Space Exploration (14)
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UNITED SPACE ALLIANCE FOR NEOSPACE EXPLORATION.

Abstract

In terms of current day launch systems and vehicles, we in the space arena already operate at the boundary of what is theoretically possible. Over the past few decades there have been countless interviews and papers that propose low cost space travel for all, and most of them falsely believe that this can and will only be achieved by an active and healthy private sector, for a number of reasons this is unrealistic. The private sector has taken a few steps towards commercialising space and providing cheaper access, but overall costs are still roughly the same as the public sector. Private sector enterprises working in the space arena are often able to do so due to government grants, national procurement of products and heavily subsidised loans and facilities. To say that the private sector can do better than the government in the space arena is a false premise, it is also wrong to assume that government sponsored projects are the way forward. What is required is a new approach to public-private partnership that will allow both government and private enterprise to work towards a common goal.

Whilst the United States is the largest investor in the space arena, the current economic climate has put its spending under some constraints. To top it off, the OMB has asked NASA to make cuts between 5-10% across the board, whilst external consultants state that funding reserves for programs like SLS are not sufficient.

Bearing in mind the impact the United States has on the space arena this paper will discuss, how the U.S could initiate a program such as the United Space Alliance – a proposed inter-governmental agency consisting of a group of vetted and vested nations along with a select partnership from industry and research institutions, that not only promotes private-public partnership but helps foster cooperation and collaboration. The international community should build on the lessons learnt from current international partnership programs such as the ISS and the Atlantic Treaty amongst others, and define a framework that follows a bottom-up approach to R&D and appropriation of funds for large scale civil and commercial space projects