

New Business Models for Space Exploration (14)

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COMMERCIAL EXPLORATION INDUSTRY INDICATORS, 2006-2011

Abstract

The paper provides quantitative measures of the scope of commercial exploration activities by revenue; the amount of investment raised and spent; the relative percentage of investment sources; facility space devoted to these activities; and overall employment.

The source data derives from an iterative study conducted by The Tauri Group with the cooperation of the Commercial Spaceflight Federation (CSF) and its member companies. Data from non-member companies was also obtained for a broader and more global depiction. The purpose of the study is to provide an accurate picture of the commercial exploration activities that is useful to investors, entrepreneurs, regulators, media, and industry analysts. The methodology of the study included:

- Collecting primary source data obtained through interviews with commercial spaceflight companies, augmented with open-source research.
- Characterization by appropriate industry metrics such as traditional financial metrics (revenue, investment), as well as specialized metrics that yield insight on a small, emerging industry (facility space, sources of funding).
- Aggregating company-level data and analyzing industry-level results.

The cooperation of CSF, and the protection of individual organization data through aggregation and other measures, makes this measurement of the industry uniquely accurate. Results show cumulative investment levels committed to exploration, and relevant revenue to commercial spaceflight for hardware, hardware development, and support services.

Since The Tauri Group and CSF have been tracking the commercial spaceflight industry in 2006, the industry has transitioned from one dominated by development activities funded by investors and governments to an industry realizing meaningful revenues from commercial sources. Revenue from government remains important, and in some cases the government revenue is now coming from programs specifically designed to support this industry. This paper uses a unique proprietary dataset. While the source dataset contains authoritative information on all commercial space providers, this paper will, for the first time, present an analysis of those activities that apply specifically to exploration missions.