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Regional cooperation in space: policies, governance and legal tools (1)

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REGIONAL COOPERATION IN SPACE ACTIVITIES FOR EMERGING COUNTRIES: THE
CENTRAL AMERICAN CASE

Abstract

The Central American Association for Aeronautics and Space (ACAE, in Spanish) is a non-profit organization (NGO), which leads the efforts to introduce the Central American region in the world's technological paradigm of aerospace development. Its vision is to inspire the Central American talent to participate in the development of the aerospace field. ACAE is working with the private sector, the governments and academic institutions of the region, through initiatives such the development of the aerospace related law framework, promotion of research, generation of innovative projects and promotion and diffusion of knowledge in the aerospace field. In July 2010, led by the initiative of the Central American Association for Aeronautics and Space, the former Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Costa Rica, Dr. René Castro-Salazar, and the Secretariat of Central American Integration (SICA), the ministers of foreign affairs of the region gathered in the "*launching of the program of aerospace development of Costa Rica and integration of the Central American region in the generation of new technologies*", hosted in the City of Liberia, Province of Guanacaste, Costa Rica. In the event, it was presented a proposal of multinational collaboration, which started the creation of branches of ACAE in the participating countries. As a result of this initiative, ACAE has two formal offices, one located in Costa Rica, other one in Guatemala, and an upcoming branch in El Salvador. In the last four years, several discussions of the potential collaboration scheme in the region have been made, with specific results for the cases of Costa Rica and Guatemala. This paper will explain the process of integration of the governments of the Central American region in space activities, from the perspective and role of a catalyzer-NGO from the civil society (ACAE), as well the challenges in terms of identify financial support (contributions from public funds from each country and international collaboration opportunities), resources for develop the administrative structure, and the required international legal framework between the participating countries.