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Author: Ms. Mami Sasamura
Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA), Japan, sasamura.mami@jaxa.jp

EXPANDING REGIONAL SPACE COOPERATION IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION UTILIZING
THE FRAMEWORK OF THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGIONAL SPACE AGENCY FORUM (APRSAF)

Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this paper is to examine and propose how to expand regional space cooperation utilizing the existing cooperation framework of the Asia-pacific Regional Space Agency Forum (APRSAF).

Methodology: Analyzing the history, current structure and operation, participants, programs and projects of APRSAF based on the public information and interviews to APRSAF secretariat.

Results: APRSAF was established in 1993. Over the past 20 years, ten different countries in the Asia-Pacific region hosted annual sessions of APRSAF, and the number of participants has grown 7 times, gathering people from various countries and entities in order to promote and enhance space activities in the region.

APRSAF organizes four working groups to meet regional space cooperation needs. Based on discussions in these four working groups, APRSAF also supports the establishment of international projects, as known as "Initiatives." APRSAF balances between common regional objectives through using the framework of these working groups and actual projects.

In 2013, the Executive Committee (ExCom) of APRSAF was established based on the recommendations agreed at the end of APRSAF-19, to shape the agenda and help achieve objectives and implement decision of APRSAF. It consists of up to five members from the immediate past, present and confirmed future co-organizers of APRSAF and a representative of each working group. The establishment of the ExCom indicates that not only Japan but other countries who lead APRSAF or each working group can take a leadership on operating APRSAF.

APRSAF is not an international organization. It is a forum and open to all people who share the same principles to promote and expand peaceful uses of space for socio-economic development in the region. It is currently considered to collect registration fees, but so far it is free of charge to participate. Therefore, co-organizers cover all the cost for operating APRSAF annual sessions every year.

Conclusion: APRSAF is a unique cooperation framework in the Asia-Pacific region. Every country has a chance to take a leadership utilizing the framework of APRSAF. Although it is necessary to improve it to a more efficient system to coordinate new cooperation and avoid overlap of similar projects, it is still useful.