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CHINA SPACE ENTREPRENEURSHIP ECOSYSTEM DESIGN AND ANALYSIS

Abstract

Compared to the sweeping global landscape of space commercialisation, China still heavily relies on the efforts of state-owned enterprises in its space economy. The nascent emergence of Chinese space startups heralds that entrepreneurs in China are indeed inclined to enter the global NewSpace arena. An ecosystem for space entrepreneurship is of an essence to foster and underpin such entrepreneurial activities in China. This paper proposed an ecosystem design for Chinese space entrepreneurship with an analysis of feasibility for its implementation. The designing process started with identifying stakeholders in China's overall space sector, followed by redefining their new functions in the proposed space entrepreneurship ecosystem. A preliminary ecosystem model was developed in reference to the model of Area 2071 under Dubai Future Foundation—worlds' first innovation ecosystem cluster. The mechanism of different stakeholders within the ecosystem was orchestrated based on both qualitative and quantitatively research data to optimise their collaboration flows between one and the other. The model was also validated on its feasibility for implementation in comparison with three leading commercialised space ecosystems—United States, European Union and Australia. The deliverable results included a structural design for the ecosystem with the definition of five stakeholders' function and their operation flows. The feasibility validation indicated the success of implementation depended on how such ecosystem could fit in the realm of national policy and strategy. An integration proposal was hence incorporated to advise how to implement such ecosystem in China's space sector. The ecosystem was not designed as Chinese exclusive initiative; it should also be perceived as a new portal for China to extend international collaborative partnerships with other countries around the world. With China's 'Military and Civil Integration' policy and its 'One belt, One Road' initiative, its national space capacity is playing a vital role to support those efforts. The global trend of the space industry is moving towards to commercialisation, and it starts breeding space entrepreneurship. If China wants to take strategic advantage of such trend, the only way is to shift its focus from state-owned enterprises to private sectors gradually. A space entrepreneurship ecosystem is a starting point.