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LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE ISS ENABLING FUTURE SPACEFLIGHT COLLABORATION
FOR US AND RUSSIA**Abstract**

The International Space Station (ISS) has seen Russians and Americans actively work hand in hand over the past decade. Scheduled to be deorbited in 2024, the future of US/Russia spaceflight collaboration after its end remains uncertain. This paper inspects the lessons learned from the joint ISS program applied to both the engineering and legal partnership within the context of future space station programs and, in so doing, explores how such activities could strengthen US-Russian ties and enhance the existing framework. A review of the new dynamics in the space sector suggests further improving the current model by establishing US/Russia collaboration in the public-private domain, and jointly opening ways towards a new key collaborator: China.

Although the ideas discussed could apply to any future space station architecture, this paper focuses on the case study of a recently proposed concept by the ISS partners for what could be called the “new” international station: the Deep Space Gateway. The paper aims to motivate policy makers and key players within NASA and Roscosmos to trigger the proper mechanisms early in the program, which would preserve existing ties relying on the ISS, and further extend them beyond its current retirement plans. Moving beyond the proximity of the Earth, where the ISS currently operates, and doing so together, would set the example on the achievements possible through collaboration, while setting a precursor for further exploration of Deep Space.