

32nd IAA SYMPOSIUM ON SPACE POLICY, REGULATIONS AND ECONOMICS (E3)
Space Economics from Apollo to Tomorrow (3)

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SOCIO-ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT OF PUBLIC PROGRAMMES SUPPORTING SATCOM
INNOVATION

Abstract

Satellite operators active in the telecommunications and broadcasting sectors are currently adapting to the transformational changes occurring in their markets. While the majority has adopted HTS technology which provides them with more bandwidth at a lower cost per bit for telecom traffic, operators' revenues are suffering from overcapacity in several regions as well as strong competition from terrestrial networks, putting high pressure on bandwidth price. With the need to safeguard their historically high profit margin, satcom operators turn to their satellite and launch suppliers for ever more CAPEX efficient satellite systems yet not at the cost of risky technologies. In this challenging market context, the operators and their suppliers, the manufacturers, look for innovative satcom solutions to be validated in-orbit for operational systems. Public investments in satcom development programmes are supporting both manufacturers and operators to design, develop and embark innovative technologies that enable improved satellite performances and new broadband and narrowband communications services. Assessing the socio-economic impact of government funding in satcom activities is a strategic tool to assess the efficiency of the investment in terms of economic growth, employment, the industry's competitiveness and independence, as well as technological and service innovation. The main objectives of this paper are to: 1) Provide examples of large public investment in support of the commercial satcom market; 2) Present methodological approaches to measure the socio-economic impact of such investment along a selection of indicators; 3) Discuss the variety and relevance of methodologies given the scope of the public programme and supported satcom mission.