

SPACE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH SYMPOSIUM (E1)

Enabling The Future – Developing the Project Management and the Technical Space Workforce (3)

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DEVELOPING THE ESA WORKFORCE

Abstract**Space workforce in Europe**

The number of staff working for space in Europe is relatively small (less than 40,000 in industry, agencies and other space related institutions). Being so small and specialised, the space domain has to take specific actions in order to ensure that it maintains and develops its critical competences.

Another characteristic of the space domain is that development of the necessary skills takes often place on the job, with many one-company careers and low turnover of staff. Career planning and talent management are of high importance in this environment, especially in a time where a generation of senior staff is about to depart.

Attracting talent

ESA recruits qualified candidates from all over Europe and has to give due consideration to nationality in order to ensure fair representation. In addition to a shortage of competences in some technical domains the Agency faces difficulties to attract candidates from certain Member States. ESA has been active in recruitment marketing for some years with participation in job fairs and promotion tours and a well-established network with selected universities across Europe. Ways to bring in new talents which have proved to be successful in the past are the Young Graduate Trainee Programme, including projects in industry, and national trainee programmes which have been established together with Member States.

Preparing the next generation of project managers

Career development and training are crucial elements of HR policy in all activity domains. For a project-driven organisation like ESA it is however of particular importance to prepare the next generation of project managers. In addition to its current training programmes the Agency has therefore started to develop a specific ESA Project Manager Training Course.

Becoming a good project manager is largely achieved by on the job experience, and having a senior position in a project will already expose staff below the level of project manager to many of the aspects of the PM role. There is however a significant difference between such positions and the full range of PM responsibilities, covering all technical, programmatic and political aspects of the projects.

In addition to project management skills related to areas such as decision making, risk management or team management the training will address competences related to external interfaces. This comprises relationship with industry, Member States and user communities as well as collaboration with other Agencies in the national and international context.