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Space Entrepreneurship and Investment: The Practitioners' Perspectives (1)

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PROPOSAL FOR AN AEROSPACE INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM: STRATEGIC INTEGRATION OF STARTUPS AND RESEARCH CENTERS OF THE NATIONAL ENGINEERING UNIVERSITY OF PERU TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE PIURA SPACEPORT

Abstract

The National University of Engineering (UNI) in Peru, through its Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, has launched the first Aerospace Engineering degree program offered at national universities in the country. aligning with the construction of the Piura Space Port in northern Peru, a strategic project poised to position the nation as a regional aerospace hub. This paper emphasizes the urgent need for UNI to establish interdisciplinary research centers and student-driven StartUps to capitalize on emerging opportunities in this field. Despite Peru's growing infrastructure, the absence of localized innovation ecosystems risks dependency on foreign technology and limits the professional development of graduates. By integrating project-based learning, industry partnerships, and entrepreneurial training, UNI can bridge academic knowledge with practical applications, directly addressing the Piura Space Port's operational demands in areas such as satellite development, propulsion systems, and space logistics. This study analyzes global models where academia-industry collaboration has driven aerospace innovation, proposing adaptable strategies for UNI, including curriculum modernization, incubation programs, and policy advocacy for funding. Such initiatives would enhance graduate employability, stimulate high-impact research, and foster technological sovereignty, reducing talent drain by creating local career opportunities. The paper underscores that delayed action may hinder Peru's ability to leverage the Piura Space Port effectively, urging UNI to lead in transforming this infrastructure into a catalyst for national economic and technological growth.