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SPACE APPLICATIONS IN SUB SAHARA AFRICA: AN OVERVIEW OF PROJECT SUCCESSES
AND LESSONS LEARNED.

Abstract

Space remains mostly the domain of developed economies and rich 1st world countries; deep pockets seem to be a pre-requisite for any significant, meaningful and sustainable participation in the space business. Leadership belongs to those with resources, and it is only after low hanging fruits have been reaped, that developing nations (like those countries in sub-Sahara Africa) can play a role. Is this true? We will do an overview of some of the projects initiated on behalf of and by countries in Sub-Sahara Africa, and analyse the strategies employed, review challenges and successes and postulate some of the underlying factors for the level of success and/or failure. The purpose of the analysis is to identify and uncover those factors which lead to success and sustainability. The development of the South African Space program since the 1980s and spin-off opportunities will be considered. The role South Africa played in regional development through its satellite reception facility and the availability of satellite imagery over many decades will be included. The role of governmental institutions (both local and international) will be discussed; the importance of private initiatives capitalizing on opportunities will be analyzed. One of the objectives of this analysis is to create debate. Some understanding is required on how the changing landscape in terms of the SSA's economic maturity and growth and relative attractiveness in terms of investment has influenced these factors which influence success or failure. Can one short-list some parameters for an objective analysis of new projects and improve success probability? This presentation will summarise lessons learned by using the typical approach implemented for larger projects (PMBOK, ISO 10006). This methodology ensures that a standard approach is followed and provides comparative results. It can be concluded that the challenge of projects to create sustainable results is strongly linked to local participation and local content. A local champion with the ability to create joint ventures with value to all participating parties forms the golden thread. This and other observations which can add value to decision makers will create a platform for debate and learning.