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ITALIAN SPACE SMES AND ASI POLICY TO INCREASE THEIR GROWTH AND  
DEVELOPMENT

**Abstract**

This paper offers an overview of the policy that the Italian Space Agency (ASI) has been implementing towards space SMEs, that are a strategic portion of space industry in Italy. In 2010 ASI adopted a three-year cooperation agreement with the national Space Industry Associations (namely AIAD, AIPAS and ASAS), with the aim of promoting an effective industrial policy for the development and growth of Italian space SMEs. The framework of reference of this cooperation agreement is wide and ranges from the periodical issue of thematic ITTs (according to a co-funding pattern) specifically reserved to SMEs to a detailed analysis of the population of space SMEs in Italy: competences, geographical distribution, organization in clusters (namely Space Technology Districts, an evolution of the more traditional experience of Industrial Districts), international cooperation, etc. This paper analyses the results of this three-year cooperation agreement at the end of the second year (February 2012): more in detail it analyses the main figures of the first two ITTs (materials, components and sensors and Earth Observation), mainly through the identification of quantitative and qualitative indicators and describes future initiatives. In order to create a coherent national system aiming to support the growth and development of Italian Space SMEs and to strengthen the benefits for the SMEs, this ASI-Associations platform is strongly engaged also in the involvement of the Large System Integrators community, the Italian Government (specifically the Presidenza del Consiglio) and the local communities (Technology Districts, Regions and Municipalities).