

SPACE PROPULSION SYMPOSIUM (C4)
Electric Propulsion (4)

Author: Ms. Nina Sarah Mühlich
Justus-Liebig Universität Giessen, Germany

Mr. Waldemar Gärtner
Justus-Liebig Universität Giessen, Germany

Dr. Kristof Holste
Justus-Liebig Universität Giessen, Germany

Prof.Dr. Slobodan Mitic
Justus-Liebig Universität Giessen, Germany

Prof. Peter Klar
Justus-Liebig Universität Giessen, Germany

OPERATING THE ALTERNATIVE PROPELLANT IODINE IN RADIO FREQUENCY ION
THRUSTERS**Abstract**

Radio frequency ion thrusters (RIT) are based on the ionization and electrostatic acceleration of propellant. The propellant should satisfy the following requirements: low ionisation potential, and easy transfer into the gaseous state. Iodine represents a promising candidate as a propellant in RIT, which is currently analyzed at the I. Physical Institute of Justus-Liebig-University of Giessen. We present optical emission spectra data of inductively and capacitively coupled iodine plasmas in dependency of the neutral gas density and the performance that is coupled into the plasma for diagnosis of ion thrusters. These spectra will be compared with theoretical models to determine the relevant plasma parameters, degree of ionization and electron density, for the RIT. Finally we will show the performance results of the RIT operating iodine.