

61st IISL COLLOQUIUM ON THE LAW OF OUTER SPACE (E7)  
Interactive Presentations - 61st IISL COLLOQUIUM ON THE LAW OF OUTER SPACE (IP)

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THE ITALIAN SPACE AGENCY PROCUREMENT POLICY FOR SMALL AND MEDIUM  
ENTERPRISES (SMES)

**Abstract**

The paper aims to show the procurement policy implemented by the Italian Space Agency (ASI) and reserved for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in particular to face the pre-competitive development of products and services and to develop and promote the activities and development of companies operating in the space sector.. The analysis will show the results of a process that has involved over 200 SMEs and their projects evaluated by a specific commission nominated by ASI. The criteria used for the assessment and for definition of the structure of competitive tenders will be scrutinized. The paper will also present the structural differences between the first invitation to tender, focused on the upstream sector (Material Components and Sensor) and the second tender, focused on the downstream (Earth Observation), in order to highlight the different results achieved and the different policy measures, in particular with regard to the commercial effects. Finally, the paper will take into account a remark about the possibility of encouraging the growth of the competitiveness of SMEs through different funding opportunities, (i.e. through the issuing of funding opportunities, PPP or involvement of regions) or by encouraging their entry into the entire value chain establishing a more strong relationship between small and large companies.