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Knowledge management for space activities in the digital era (2)

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THE EUROPEAN COOPERATION FOR SPACE STANDARDIZATION - A UNIQUE APPROACH TO
STANDARDIZATION - PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

Abstract

The European Cooperation for Space Standardization (ECSS) is an initiative established by the European Space Agencies and the European Space Industries to develop a coherent, single set of documents (Standards and Handbooks) for use in all European space contracts, to cover all types of space products and missions, including those suitable for proposed use on international space contracts. A first set of ECSS documents, organized into three branches (Space Project Management, Engineering and Product Assurance), was developed and released in the 1990s and enhanced in subsequent years (in particular by adding a fourth branch, Space Sustainability). Having reached a mature development stage, the ECSS is currently reassessing its activities, organization, processes and products to better focus on the changing nature of the space business. This paper addresses the ECSS organisation's objectives, its history and development, its use in contracts for space projects and the measures being taken by the ECSS, based on lessons learned during previous development phases, in order to move towards a better structured system for the management of new space challenges. The paper will also address the ECSS's potential to facilitate international cooperation and its relationship with other Standards Developing Organizations (SDOs).