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OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR NEW SPACE IN JAPAN

Abstract

New Space evolution and revolution have been changing the landscape in the global space industry as parallel space commercialization drivers. This phenomenon is also happening in Japan, which has adopted policies encouraging commercial space business development. There are now about twenty space venture companies in Japan and several of them have gotten VC funding, including the largest Series A funding anywhere in the world, which is about 100M *for a space resources utilization company*.

In addition to space venture companies, non-space companies have gotten into space business such as Canon and Sony. Furthermore, experts, investors as well as traditional big, middle, small space companies are now becoming active. All have created and broadened a borderless industry blast off for space commerce. The new space business ecosystem in Japan is created under a PPP model. Up to now the space industry ecosystem has been a tier structure with traditional big companies and middle and small suppliers within a government dominated space budget.

Two new laws on space activities and satellite remote sensing have been passed in November, 2016 that are now driving space commercialization in Japan. The third space policy proposal was released by the LDP in April, 2017. Following that the Space Industry Vision 2030 was issued by the Cabinet Office in May, 2017. The third space policy proposal strongly promotes space based data utilization, new spaceports, and commercial space business for space utilization as well as the space infrastructure industry such as H-3 rocket, SSA, MDA, SSPS and on-orbit services. The government is strengthening space strategies such as establishing space think tanks, next-gen technology development and human resources training.

To encourage commercial space business, a SME space business committee, called New Space Committee was formed in August, 2017. Since then, New Space challenges and opportunities have been discussed to provide input to government space policy. There are about fifty members including companies, experts and government people as advisors. New Space and Old Space synergies have been brought into this committee, and several business matchmaking efforts have started. This committee will function as a space policy think tank and commercial space trade association. A report will be issued in May to recommend commercial policy to the government so that more commercial space market share can be captured. This paper will report on the challenges and opportunities for New Space companies and how they are communicating to government space policy makers.