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ADAPTING ESA'S INDUSTRIAL POLICY TO THE NEWSPACE CONTEXT

Abstract

NewSpace, in the USA or in Europe, is characterised by the emergence of private actors in a world once dominated by public actors and large industries, motivated by market pull rather than technology push, and with a focus on cost efficiency and lowering production costs rather than just highest scientific and technological excellence. This new context for space, emphasising data and services, requires a new approach also for "traditional" space activities. This leads ESA to reflect on an evolution of its industrial policy, towards more flexibility, more responsiveness and new procurement tools such as grants. It also requires a different risk-sharing approach and a greater acceptance of potential failures. This evolved industrial policy will lead to new ways of procuring space systems, setting new standards, and more generally a new culture. Space has now fully entered the socio economic dimension; we shall soon move forward towards the Moon again and extend our economic sphere towards greater availability of space-based resources. Such evolution will not be done with the current procurement and industrial policies, but with evolved tools which will give access to larger numbers of actors and new perspectives of entrepreneurship in space. Many existing activities or policies are already in place which can support a European NewSpace at ESA, such as the BIC's, the technology transfer programme, the Grand Challenge initiative and the newly strengthened SME Policy. This paper describes how ESA intends to further evolve its industrial policy to make it even more relevant and effective for the new context in which ESA and all European space actors are working today.