

IISL COLLOQUIUM ON THE LAW OF OUTER SPACE (E7)  
Space Mining: National Authority? International Authority? Both? (5)

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AN EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL ‘GOLD RUSH’: A FRAMEWORK BASED ON NATIONAL LAWS,  
INTERNATIONAL LEGAL DEVELOPMENTS AND A DOSE OF FUTURES IMAGINATION

**Abstract**

The desire for and use of mineral resources throughout time have played a huge role in shaping history. Without it the Industrial Revolution would not have been possible, and the space industry would not have existed. Now humankind has achieved the technological prowess to reach for those extra-terrestrial celestial bodies filled with mineral resources that are only dreamt of by earthly miners. The question is what shape this new ‘gold rush’ can take and how it is to be regulated, if at all. This question is interrogated by comparing the various important national mining regimes globally with each other, and with international regulation, accounting also for international law in similar fields like oil and gas regulation in international waters. A futures framework based on the physical spaces and stages of mining – from earth to space-mine and back - will be designed and the insights gleaned from the legal regime comparisons assessed for application in the framework to create a first version holistic legal regime framework for space mineral exploration and mining. The framework will also allow for various futures scenarios and choices for adaptation as the new mining history unfolds.