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BRIDGING THE GAP OF SPACE INFRASTRUCTURAL DEFICIT IN AFRICA THROUGH PRIVATE FINANCE INITIATIVES

Abstract

Private Finance Initiative (PFI) or Public Private Partnership (PPP) as it is known in some countries has become the 'silver bullet' with which governments across the globe solve their infrastructural deficit. In Africa, the space expenditure has risen to over USD 400 Million in the last decades despite the availability of a handful of indigenous space agencies developing their own space capacity within the region. However, looking forward to the future 5-10 years, the African region through its existing indigenous space agencies as well as the African Space Agency which was recently approved to be hosted in Egypt could be addressing issues ranging from telemedicine, agriculture, telecommunication, disaster management/monitoring, security and climate change with possible investments of almost USD 5 Billion or more. This raises an important question – does the existing indigenous space agencies in Africa have the infrastructural capacity to tackle this issues and or will the proposed African Space Agency meet up the infrastructural requirement of such a space growth? What are the impediments to a fully operational Africa Space System? What are the direct benefits of PFI's to emerging space states and developing nations? This paper sought to answer this questions in two phases; The first phase developed an understanding of space infrastructure deficit within the African continent by examining space assets in Egypt, Nigeria and South Africa. The second phase determined the suitability of PFI's in order to improve space assets in those African countries mentioned while considering same from a policy perspective. The doctrinal method of research was adopted in which books, journals, articles and internet sourced materials were used. The finding of this paper which includes amongst others the urgent need to develop a comprehensive work plan for Public Finance Initiative in the Africa Space Sector to make investments more beneficial and lucrative to both the private sector and the indigenous space agencies. It was also proposed and recommended that all the emerging space states in Africa should develop their own policy framework for PFI's while taking into consideration the region's collective interest for space development within the purview of the AU Agenda 2063.