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JOURNEY OF A KOREAN SMALL SATELLITE COMPANY: FROM SPACE TECHNOLOGY
RECIPIENT TO DONOR

Abstract

In the age of New Space, the number of small satellites launched is growing rapidly and it is projected up to 7,000 small satellites are to be launched by 2027. Although majority of these satellites are planned to be manufactured in advanced countries, growing number of developing countries are expected to join the wave as well. There have been many advanced countries and companies willing to provide training and technology transfer to new entrants who do not have domestic capability. However, most of emerging countries are still experiencing difficulties in establishing sustainable self-standing capability. This presentation is about the journey of Satrec Initiative (SI), a small satellite company from Korea, spun-off from a university research center which also started as a recipient of space technologies. It is about the lessons learned along the journey, and how SI moved on to become a donor by exporting and transferring space technologies. The early members have acquired the seed technologies from the universities in the UK, US, and Japan. After 30 years, SI has become one of the most important small satellite companies in the world developing wide range of technologies: from world-class Earth observation satellites to state-of-the-art artificial intelligence algorithms for satellite imagery analytics.