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CREATING AN AEROSPATIAL SPACE ECONOMY: THE CASE OF RIO GRANDE DO NORTE – BRAZIL

Abstract

This research paper presents the methodology to create a regional aerospatial innovation ecosystem operating in the Rio Grande do Norte (RN) State – Brazil. RN State is one of the most important launching and tracking rocket infrastructure in Brazil such is the case of Centro de Lançamento da Barreira do Inferno-CLBI located in Natal, the capital of RN State. Throughout its 53 years of existence, CLBI has established itself as the main Brazilian field of testing and launching of high performance autonomous aerospace systems. More than 3,000 launches made to date have fulfilled a wide range of missions, namely: earth sciences, geophysics, space physics, microgravity and development of space systems. Natal is home of institutions in the aerospace domain such as National Space Research Institute-INPE, Brazilian Space Agency-AEB and Training of Aeronautical pilots through the Aeronautics Command-ComAer. Additionally a significant number of research and education organizations are also centers of specialized aerospace related knowledge such as: Federal University of RN-UFRN, Federal Institute of Education Science and Technology of RN-IFRN and State University-UERN in the metropolitan region of Natal. In 2018 Aerospace Norteriograndense Forum was created and operationalized leading to the co-creation of the Aerospace Norteriograndense Program to be operationalized in 2019. The Aerospace Norteriograndense Program contemplates the survey of research and innovation actions in the aerospace RN area. The program's challenge is to support and invest in RN research and innovation projects and promotes business opportunities in the aerospace domain. The ultimate objective is the integration and reinforcement of an aerospace cluster taking advantage of existing scientific and technological competences to advance the aerospace knowledge and innovate solutions. The program will contribute to the aerospace industry awareness namely helping to discover and attract new talents. Methodological aspects were considered to evaluate how Aerospace Norteriograndense Program had been operationalized: 1. Program planning; 2. Survey of research projects in development in educational institutions, government and companies, characterizing the degree of technological maturity of each one; 3. Evaluation of the data collected; 4. Elaboration of strategies and definition of the project portfolio; 5. Presentations to different possible supporters; 6. Evaluation of the Aerospace Norteriograndense Program in the end of a cycle; 7. Planning to launch a new program cycle.

It is considered strategies to development of new skills; efforts to obtain funding for projects and prospect possible business incubation/acceleration programs that could assist the transformation research to innovation.