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Author: Ms. Becca Browder
Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), United States

CASE STUDY OF SPACEPORT AMERICA: OPERATIONS, MOTIVATIONS AND IMPACT

Abstract

Despite an overcapacity of launch sites in comparison to demand, there are 10 existing commercial spaceports in the United States and at least another six under consideration. While a spaceport can bring economic growth and STEM development to a region, it requires significant and sustained investments of public funding in an uncertain and volatile market. This paper analyzes Spaceport America, the second in a multiple-case study that researches how commercial spaceports operate, why people want them, and how they affect local communities. This research employs a multidisciplinary approach, incorporating policy, economic and business analysis to help policymakers, regulators and the general public understand the operations and impact of commercial spaceports in order to enhance stakeholders' decision-making about proposed spaceports. Ultimately, an improved understanding of commercial spaceports will allow this network of ground infrastructure to support continued innovation and growth in the commercial space sector.