

IAF BUSINESS INNOVATION SYMPOSIUM (E6)
Entrepreneurship and Innovation: The Practitioners' Perspectives (1)

Author: Dr. Dirk-Roger Schmitt
DLR (German Aerospace Center), Germany

THE DEVELOPEMENT OF AN SME IN THE SPACE BUSINESS

Abstract

New Space and the commercialization of the space business attracts a lot of new spin-up companies, mostly small and medium-sized companies (SMEs). Basically, the private space sector will grow based on private investments. This will allow cheaper access to space driven by commercial needs rather than politics. However, as a founder of a new SME with an innovative concept, it is not easy to obtain the funding to release the necessary investments. The scheme to obtain funding for new SMEs is seen differently in the USA compared to Europe. Even in Europe, each state has an own culture to deal with SMEs, especially also in the space business. Existing policies of different European space agencies for the support of SMEs are analyzed. Also constraints which will slow down innovation for SMEs are discussed. An example is the missing European space law. Instead there are individual laws for each country, which will give a burden for an SME concerning liability and licensing in an international market. This yields to fragmentation and business uncertainty, preventing investments. As an example the development of a German SME is discussed. The SME came along with an innovative idea for new space business to be based in Germany. DLR was collaborating with this company within the frame of a special cooperation agreement. While cooperating, the special assets of the SME as well as those of the big research organisation DLR gave synergetic results for both partners. In the meantime, the company is working successfully with its own business in the space community and DLR participated on the synergies obtained, although the assets of both partners are asymmetric.