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READY FOR TAKE-OFF: SPACE SECTOR SURVEY ON PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

Abstract

In the effort to end the monopsonistic space industry model of the Cold War era, the United States government made the strategic choice to develop the industry to operate as a competitive market, with national space policies designed to support the entrepreneurial spirits of private enterprises. A key method to support the development of a commercial sector is the usage of public-private partnerships (PPPs). The concept of PPPs has been explored and studied extensively in many infrastructure sectors. However, the exploration has been limited in the space sector, despite the government's effort to push PPPs as a policy agenda. This paper presents the results of a survey that was conducted across various parts of the space community. The research revealed that there exist variations in the understanding of what constitutes PPPs. Although the consensus is that PPPs are useful for the space sector, majority of the participants responded that they do not know the definition of space sector specific PPPs nor any related typology. A such confusion creates limitations in effectively assessing, procuring, and engaging in space sector PPPs. A prime example is when a program is called a PPP while the details of the program exhibit the characteristics of conventional procurements without the spirit of equal partnership. Furthermore, the research analyzed how these results differ across various parts and occupations within the space sector. Lastly, as an effort to close the gap in the literature, the research presents a space PPP typology developed from a typological framework that closely resembles those used in other sectors. This research contributes to the ongoing effort to improve space sector procurement mechanisms and various contracting methods to develop a robust and competitive space industry.