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READY FOR TAKE-OFF: SURVEY OF SPACE PROFESSIONALS REGARDING PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS IN THE SPACE SECTOR.

Abstract

This paper presents the results of a survey conducted with more than 100 professionals regarding the depth of awareness and perception of public-private partnerships (PPPs) in the space sector. Following the results, the paper presents a space PPP typology developed using a PPP typological framework from PPP literature and PPP industry guides. In the effort to end the monopsonist 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 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. From the survey responses, the research revealed that there exists a lack of understanding of PPPs. This result is attributable to the lack of space PPP typology in literature and practice. While the consensus is that PPPs are useful for the space sector, the confusion around what PPPs are creates limitations in effectively assessing, procuring, and engaging in space sector PPPs. The vagueness of what constitutes as PPPs allows for misuse of the term, and even manipulation to fulfill individual incentives. Lastly, as an effort to close the gap in the literature, the research presents a space PPP typology that the sector can adopt to foster uniform and consistent discussion PPPs as a procurement method. This research contributes to the ongoing effort to improve mechanisms, innovations, and various contracting methods to develop a robust, competitive, and entrepreneurial space industry.