

IAF SPACE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH SYMPOSIUM (E1)  
Enabling the Future - Developing the Space Workforce (5)

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REVISITING APPRENTICESHIP AS A TOOL FOR THE WORKFORCE AND BUSINESS  
DEVELOPMENT IN THE EMERGING SPACE ECOSYSTEMS

**Abstract**

Attracting new workforces for established companies or emerging businesses and startups is crucial for the growth of every national space ecosystem. Some national space-related policies are providing tailor-made education, business incubation, or financial incentives, and some, with limited resources, are carefully assessing and identifying the existing and future potential within already established players. Slovakia has recently launched its first-ever space business incubation programme inspired by the apprenticeship principle. The main objective of this apprentice approach is to build a network connecting emerging startups and promising young talents with research institutions, companies, accelerators, and VC funds active or supportive of space technologies and innovations. Within the framework of the apprentice incubation, the promising teams and individuals have the opportunity, above all, to incubate their business and innovative ideas by accessing and using space-based experience and expert mentoring of established players and facilities. The focus of this research paper is on the description of the apprentice-incubation mechanism, and the assessment of the first two rounds of the incubation programme in Slovakia between 2021 and 2022. Data analysis will include surveys, lessons learned, and recommendations confronted with the narrative about the theories of business incubation and acceleration.