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PERSPECTIVES ON ESA'S COMMERCIALISATION ACTIVITIES: ACCELERATION AND
SCALING-UP

Abstract

Upon its appointment as new Director General of the European Space Agency, Josef Aschbacher outlined five key priorities for the Agency as part of Agenda 2025. The commercialization of the space sector, being one of the priorities, has been first concretized with the establishment in September 2021 of a new Directorate on Commercialisation, Industry and Procurement. It has been tasked to gather, coordinate and streamline existing activities within the agency as well as with external stakeholder. In particular, the commercialization department is driven by three main lines: talent, access to capital and fast innovation, forming the basis of the Agency's vision for competitiveness.

This paper is a concrete action implemented as part of the department's endeavors to sustain and promote a European pool of "talents". Building on several Business Projects launched with students from different universities around Europe, this paper analyses challenges and trends on different aspects of the commercialisation of the space sector.

The analysis covers elements throughout the entire investment cycle of a company, looking in particular at:

1. space relevant accelerators across Europe and their interaction with start-ups from the ESA BIC network with the aim of identifying whether there is a new business opportunity for ESA to create an acceleration programme or to better partner with existing acceleration programmes;
2. current state of the European Space start-up ecosystem and recommendations for the public sector;
3. European private and public financial and start-up support programs (including investors, funds, etc.) with the goal to allow the European Space Agency to establish consolidated business relations and to further stimulate private investments in the European space sector;

4. best practices of how to stimulate disruptive innovation (financial, procurement, technical, ...) and draw recommendations for ESA in how to adapt appropriate measures;
5. Scale-Up and Commercialisation activities and public support worldwide in relevant non-space sectors and transposition/recommendations to the European Space Case;
6. challenges faced by companies to scale up by helping ESA to connect, interact and gather feedbacks from strategic investors and actors;
7. requirements for developing an ESA accelerator bootcamp to match venture capital organisations to space-spaced scale-up companies.

Ultimately, the goal of this paper will be to aggregate the above reflections and provide a consolidated and sound overview of the challenges raised and a set of recommendations for ESA and the European Space Ecosystem.