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A COMPARATIVE HISTORY OF THE NATIONAL SPACE PROGRAMS OF THE ARABIAN GULF  
COUNTRIES

**Abstract**

The Arabian Gulf Countries comprise the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), Kingdom of Bahrain, State of Qatar, State of Kuwait and the Sultanate of Oman, all located in Western Asia. The first three countries have established and recognized space agencies and whilst the remaining three do not, they have at least undertaken space related activities by the private sector. The UAE was the first Arab country to establish a national space agency in 2014, although KSA was the first Arab country to fly an astronaut into space in 1985 through an agreement with NASA. Similarly, despite not having a national space agency, the Syrian Arab Republic sent an astronaut to the Mir space station in 1987 through an agreement with the Soviet Union. This paper sets out the origins, motives and developmental history of the national space programs of the Arabian Gulf Countries and where relevant, the notable space related achievements of other Arab countries in Western Asia. The paper will therefore provide a resource beneficial for educational purposes and a basis for further academic research, especially in the context of understanding national objectives and goals in space for Arab countries.