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PRIVATE SECTOR'S ROLE IN SHAPING SUSTAINABLE SPACE POLICIES

Abstract

The expanding role of private companies in the space industry is reshaping the landscape, with commercial entities now outnumbering governmental actors. This paradigm shift necessitates a reconsideration of the efforts regarding the implementation of the United Nations Guidelines for the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities (LTS Guidelines), despite their traditional direction towards states. Effective implementation of these guidelines relies on the participation of all space actors, including the private sector.

Remarkably, a considerable part of these guidelines can be effectively put into practice by industry players, through innovation and proactive measures, well in advance of legal obligations taking effect. Acknowledging this issue, national governments are increasingly soliciting input from commercial space players on high-level policy platforms. Moreover, in the international arena, initiatives such as the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) case study program provide a venue for private entities to showcase their technological efforts aligned with the LTS guidelines.

In this realm, the paper underscores the critical intersection of private sector involvement in achieving policy prescriptions. The research investigates the practical methodologies employed by private space companies to adhere to the LTS guidelines, emphasizing technological implementation over mere policy compliance. The author provides a correlation of these methodologies with corresponding LTS guidelines, delivering a comprehensive analysis of the current industry's best practices.

Through this examination, the paper further identifies existing gaps and offers recommendations for industry stakeholders and policymakers. It advocates for collaborative efforts aimed at robust LTS guidelines implementation, highlighting the pivotal role of private sector innovation in achieving sustainable space exploration.