

Press Release

7 June 2019

PR085-2019

Saint Petersburg International Economic Forum Space cooperation between government and the private sector

Friday 7 June, Jean-Pascal Le Franc, CNES's Director of Planning, International Relations and Quality, was at the Saint Petersburg International Economic Forum to take part in the roundtable session on 'The Potential for Public-Private Partnership in Commercializing Space', organized by the Russian federal space agency Roscosmos. On this occasion, he underlined CNES's role in this constantly evolving ecosystem and the actions it is pursuing to develop the private sector.

With the arrival on the scene of new government and private players and the ongoing transformation of the space sector, public agencies will have to reposition themselves. This is a source of stimulation fuelling development of new technologies and concepts. Nations must also be able to tap into initiatives and potential brought by new commercial players, even if they will continue to play a key role providing momentum, adapting to new markets and coordinating between the public and private sectors.

To strengthen the ties between these two sectors, CNES is developing a range of partnership tools. The agency launched its Connect-by-CNES programme in 2017 to nurture ties with innovation communities and make space technologies and solutions central to businesses of all sizes. It has also partnered with French Tech Seed, a €400-million investment fund designed to provide seed funding of €100,000 to €1 million for space start-ups. Each year, following a rigorous selection process, the aim is to select 15 French start-ups. CNES is leading the consortium helping these start-ups to secure funding from investors, working with French Tech Seed to fuel space's contribution to economic development. And lastly, CosmiCapital is the first French investment fund dedicated to space operating across Europe. CNES launched this innovation fund in 2018 to secure investment in the activities and applications of the European space industry and thereby accelerate the growth of NewSpace. The fund aims to secure €100 million to support European start-ups. Six themes have been defined: launcher manufacturing, systems and technologies, satellite manufacturing, ground services and logistics, data exploitation and applications, and space-related activities.

To adapt to this constantly shifting context, agencies must innovate by leveraging new technologies and burgeoning space applications. Space systems are becoming increasingly modular, flexible and diverse, but innovation should not be viewed solely from a technological perspective, as the multiculturalism afforded by international cooperation and new players encourages new ways of seeing, thinking and imagining the future of space.

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