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## **INTERNATIONAL SPACE EXPLORATION COORDINATION GROUP**

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### **Terms of Reference**

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5 In 2006, 14 space agencies<sup>1</sup> began a series of discussions on global interests in space  
6 exploration. Together they took the unprecedented step of elaborating a vision for  
7 peaceful robotic and human space exploration, focusing on destinations within the Solar  
8 System where humans may one day live and work, and developed a common set of key  
9 space exploration themes. This vision was articulated in ‘The Global Exploration  
10 Strategy: The Framework for Coordination,’ hereinafter referred to as the ‘Framework  
11 Document,’ which was released on May 31, 2007. A key finding of the Framework  
12 Document is the need to establish a voluntary, non-binding international coordination  
13 mechanism through which individual agencies may exchange information regarding  
14 interests, objectives, and plans in space exploration with the goal of strengthening both  
15 individual exploration programs as well as the collective effort.

16 These Terms of Reference establishing the International Space Exploration  
17 Coordination Group (ISECG) are intended to meet this need.

18 The ISECG may evolve incrementally, as required, to meet the changing needs of the  
19 Participating Agencies.<sup>2</sup>

## **20 I. PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF ACTIVITIES OF THE ISECG**

### **21 I.1. PURPOSE**

22 The purpose of the ISECG will be to work collectively towards the further development  
23 and implementation of the global exploration strategy set out in the Framework  
24 Document, in its entire scope, by:

- 25 • providing a forum for participants to discuss their interests, objectives and plans  
26 in space exploration; and
- 27 • promoting interest and engagement in space exploration activities throughout  
28 society worldwide.

29 The expected benefits of establishing the ISECG are to increase robustness, safety and  
30 cost effectiveness of individual and collective exploration goals, and to facilitate the  
31 ability of Participating Agencies to engage in productive bilateral or multilateral  
32 discussions, while preserving their autonomy. This will contribute to strengthening the  
33 sustainability of global space exploration.

### **34 I.2. SCOPE OF ACTIVITIES**

35 The scope of the ISECG activities will be broad and strategic. The ISECG will focus on  
36 developing non-binding findings, recommendations and other outputs as necessary for  
37 use by Participating Agencies.

38 Areas for initial consideration for the ISECG activities include:

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<sup>1</sup> Space agencies” refers to government organizations responsible for space activities.

<sup>2</sup> Participating Agencies are defined in paragraph III.1

## ISECG ToR

- 39 – identification of standards to promote interoperability;
- 40 – methods for sharing scientific data and related analyses;
- 41 – identification of common services, allowing for the development of shared
- 42 infrastructures;
- 43 – mechanism(s) to allow the provision of payload opportunities;
- 44 – ways and means to include broader future participation in the planning and
- 45 coordination process;
- 46 – assessment of the requirement for any relevant international legal agreements;
- 47 and.
- 48 – the development of a common international exploration coordination tool to
- 49 enhance the implementation of the coordination process

50 Other objectives may be identified as necessary in the ISECG workplan.

51 The ISECG will also assist Participating Agencies by identifying (i) the need for and  
52 benefits of establishing further elements of the international coordination mechanism,  
53 such as ad hoc working groups or workshops; or (ii) whether an issue should be referred  
54 to existing ‘expert’ groups, for the purposes of providing analysis and advice to the  
55 ISECG.

## 56 II. PRINCIPLES

57 The following key principles for international coordination for sustainable space  
58 exploration, and examples of resulting requirements for each of the principles, were  
59 identified in the Framework Document as applicable to the ISECG:

- 60 • Open and Inclusive
  - 61 – receives inputs from all interested agency participants that invest in and
  - 62 perform activities related to space exploration
  - 63 – provides for consultations among all interested agencies with a vested
  - 64 interest in space exploration, and also space agencies or national government
  - 65 agencies without specific related capabilities
- 66 • Flexible and Evolutionary
  - 67 – takes into account and may integrate existing consultation and coordination
  - 68 mechanisms
- 69 • Effective
  - 70 – encourages participating agencies to accept the role of the coordination
  - 71 process and act upon the anticipated results of the coordination
  - 72 mechanism
- 73 • Mutual Interest
  - 74 – contributes to common peaceful goals and benefits all participants
  - 75 – respects the national prerogatives of participating agencies
  - 76 – allows for optional participation based on the level of each agency’s

77 interest

### 78 **III. MEMBERSHIP, COMPOSITION AND OPERATING PROCEDURES**

#### 79 **III.1. MEMBERSHIP**

80 Membership of the ISECG is open to space agencies which have or are developing  
81 space exploration capabilities for peaceful purposes, and which have a vested interest to  
82 participate in the strategic coordination process for space exploration.

83 The space agencies that have contributed to the development of the Framework  
84 Document are automatically invited to be Participating Agencies to the ISECG and can  
85 join at any time through an official acceptance of these Terms of Reference. Other  
86 space agencies that wish to join the ISECG should submit an executive level written  
87 request to the ISECG Secretariat who will inform the ISECG Chair and Participating  
88 Agencies, stating their sharing of the principles and objectives contained in the  
89 Framework Document, their acceptance of these Terms of Reference and a brief  
90 description of their stated objectives for becoming ISECG Participating Agencies. Such  
91 requests will be approved upon consensus of the Participating Agencies.

#### 92 **III.2. ISECG COMPOSITION AND OPERATING PROCEDURES**

##### 93 ***III.2.1. ISECG Composition***

94 Each Participating Agency will designate authorised representatives to the ISECG.  
95 These representatives are expected to be staff of the designating Participating Agency.  
96 In all cases, conflicts of interests will be avoided.

97 Any ISECG Participating Agency may request by invitation the presence at an ISECG  
98 meeting of appropriate experts to provide advice and guidance, or to help resolve a  
99 particular issue. In all cases such advisors will be considered part of the delegation that  
100 issued the invitation, for the duration of the meeting. Delegations intending to invite an  
101 advisor will notify the ISECG Secretariat in a timely fashion.

##### 102 ***III.2.2. ISECG Operating Procedures***

- 103 • The ISECG meets on a regular basis at least once a year or more  
104 frequently as necessary
- 105 • Meetings of the ISECG will be scheduled where possible in conjunction  
106 with exploration related events
- 107 • ISECG is chaired by the meeting host country until the following  
108 meeting, and can be co-chaired by two agencies if desired by the hosting  
109 country. The ISECG Chair, supported by the Secretariat is responsible  
110 for issuing the meeting minutes and for ensuring continuity with the next  
111 Chair
- 112 • Meetings are hosted by the Participating Agencies on a voluntary basis.  
113 Meeting venues will be agreed by the ISECG by consensus, upon  
114 proposal by one or more of the Participating Agency(ies). The  
115 Participating Agency(ies) proposing to host a meeting will bear local  
116 administrative costs associated with holding the meeting
- 117 • ISECG operates by consensus
- 118 • ISECG will establish its annual workplan

119 **IV. SECRETARIAT**

120 The ISECG will be supported by a Secretariat, whose main tasks include administrative  
121 support to meetings and other work as decided by the ISECG.

122 The Secretariat will consist of staff proposed by ISECG Participating Agencies on a  
123 voluntary basis without exchange of funds.

124 Terms of Reference detailing functions, form and operating procedures for the  
125 Secretariat will be defined by the ISECG.

126 **V. AMENDMENTS**

127 These Terms of Reference may be amended by the ISECG Participating Agencies by  
128 consensus.

129 **VI. WITHDRAWAL**

130 Any Participating Agency may withdraw at any time from the ISECG by providing  
131 written notification to the ISECG Secretariat.

132 **VII. ESTABLISHMENT, REVIEW AND ADOPTION**

133 Upon acceptance in writing of these Terms of Reference by at least eight space agencies  
134 that contributed to the development of the Framework Document, these Terms of  
135 Reference will become effective for those Participating Agencies on 6 November 2007  
136 at the time of the Berlin Space Exploration Conference. Thereafter, they will become  
137 effective for other space agencies that elect to adopt the Terms of Reference in  
138 accordance with the procedures established herein.

139 The ISECG is established for a 5-year period. It may be continued for additional 5-year  
140 periods thereafter with an evaluation at the end of the third year to revisit its needs and  
141 assess its progress.

142 The adoption of these Terms of Reference will not create any legal obligations on the  
143 part of the ISECG Participating Agencies.