INTERNATIONAL SPACE EXPLORATION COORDINATION GROUP

Terms of Reference

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

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

The ISECG may evolve incrementally, as required, to meet the changing needs of the Participating Agencies.\(^2\)

I. PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF ACTIVITIES OF THE ISECG

I.1. PURPOSE

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

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

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

I.2. SCOPE OF ACTIVITIES

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

Specific objectives and the scope of ISECG activities are defined in the most recent ISECG workplan.

The ISECG will also assist Participating Agencies by identifying (i) the need for and

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\(^1\) Space agencies” refers to government organizations responsible for space activities.

\(^2\) Participating Agencies are defined in paragraph III.1
benefits of establishing further elements of the international coordination mechanism, such as ad hoc working groups or workshops; or (ii) whether an issue should be referred to existing ‘expert’ groups outside of ISECG, for the purposes of providing analysis and advice to the ISECG.

II. PRINCIPLES

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

- **Open and Inclusive**
  - receives inputs from all interested agency participants that invest in and perform activities related to space exploration
  - provides for consultations among all interested agencies with a vested interest in space exploration, and also space agencies or national government agencies without specific related capabilities

- **Flexible and Evolutionary**
  - takes into account and may integrate existing consultation and coordination mechanisms

- **Effective**
  - encourages participating agencies to accept the role of the coordination process and act upon the anticipated results of the coordination mechanism

- **Mutual Interest**
  - contributes to common peaceful goals and benefits all participants
  - respects the national prerogatives of participating agencies
  - allows for optional participation based on the level of each agency’s interest

III. MEMBERSHIP, COMPOSITION AND OPERATING PROCEDURES

III.1. MEMBERSHIP

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

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

III.  ISECG COMPOSITION AND OPERATING PROCEDURES

III.1. ISECG Composition

Each Participating Agency will designate authorized representatives to the ISECG. These representatives are expected to be staff of the designating Participating Agency.

In all cases, conflicts of interests will be avoided.

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

III.2. ISECG Operating Procedures

- The ISECG meets on a regular basis at least once a year or more frequently as necessary.
- Meetings of the ISECG will be scheduled where possible in conjunction with exploration related events.
- The chairmanship of ISECG rotates on average about every 12-18 months. The ISECG Chair, supported by the Secretariat is responsible for issuing the meeting minutes and for ensuring continuity with the next Chair.
- Meetings are hosted by the Participating Agencies on a voluntary basis. Meeting venues will be agreed by the ISECG by consensus, upon proposal by one or more of the Participating Agency(ies). The Participating Agency(ies) proposing to host a meeting will bear local administrative costs associated with holding the meeting.
- ISECG operates by consensus.
- ISECG will establish its annual workplan.
- ISECG products are reviewed and endorsed within Participating Agencies at the appropriate managerial level and then endorsed by consensus at ISECG.

IV. SECRETARIAT

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

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

Terms of Reference detailing functions, form and operating procedures for the Secretariat are defined and maintained by the ISECG.

V. AMENDMENTS

These Terms of Reference may be amended by the ISECG Participating Agencies by
VI. WITHDRAWAL

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

VII. ESTABLISHMENT AND ADOPTION

These Terms of Reference became effective for those Participating Agencies who accepted them on 6 November 2007 at the time of the Berlin Space Exploration Conference.

The ISECG was initially established for a 5-year period. ISECG Participating Agencies agreed to extend ISECG for an additional 10 years, until 6 November 2022.

These Terms of Reference will become effective for other space agencies that elect to adopt the Terms of Reference in accordance with the procedures established herein.

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