

1                   **INTERNATIONAL SPACE EXPLORATION COORDINATION GROUP**

2                                   **Terms of Reference**

3  
4    In 2006, 14 space agencies<sup>1</sup> began a series of discussions on global interests in space  
5    exploration. Together they took the unprecedented step of elaborating a vision for  
6    peaceful robotic and human space exploration, focusing on destinations within the Solar  
7    System where humans may one day live and work, and developed a common set of key  
8    space exploration themes. This vision was articulated in ‘The Global Exploration  
9    Strategy: The Framework for Coordination,’ hereinafter referred to as the ‘Framework  
10   Document,’ which was released on May 31, 2007. A key finding of the Framework  
11   Document is the need to establish a voluntary, non-binding international coordination  
12   mechanism through which individual agencies may exchange information regarding  
13   interests, objectives, and plans in space exploration with the goal of strengthening both  
14   individual exploration programs as well as the collective effort.

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

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

19   **I. PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF ACTIVITIES OF THE ISECG**

20   **I.1. PURPOSE**

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

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

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

33   **I.2. SCOPE OF ACTIVITIES**

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

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

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

---

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

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

40 benefits of establishing further elements of the international coordination mechanism,  
41 such as ad hoc working groups or workshops; or (ii) whether an issue should be referred  
42 to existing 'expert' groups outside of ISECG, for the purposes of providing analysis and  
43 advice to the ISECG.

## 44 **II. PRINCIPLES**

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

### 48 • Open and Inclusive

49 – receives inputs from all interested agency participants that invest in and  
50 perform activities related to space exploration

51 – provides for consultations among all interested agencies with a vested  
52 interest in space exploration, and also space agencies or national government  
53 agencies without specific related capabilities

### 54 • Flexible and Evolutionary

55 – takes into account and may integrate existing consultation and coordination  
56 mechanisms

### 57 • Effective

58 – encourages participating agencies to accept the role of the coordination  
59 process and act upon the anticipated results of the coordination  
60 mechanism

### 61 • Mutual Interest

62 – contributes to common peaceful goals and benefits all participants

63 – respects the national prerogatives of participating agencies

64 – allows for optional participation based on the level of each agency's  
65 interest

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

### 67 **III.1. MEMBERSHIP**

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

71 The space agencies that have contributed to the development of the Framework  
72 Document are automatically invited to be Participating Agencies to the ISECG and can  
73 join at any time through an official acceptance of these Terms of Reference. Other  
74 space agencies that wish to join the ISECG should submit an executive level written  
75 request to the ISECG Secretariat who will inform the ISECG Chair and Participating  
76 Agencies, stating their sharing of the principles and objectives contained in the  
77 Framework Document, their acceptance of these Terms of Reference and a brief

78 description of their stated objectives for becoming ISECG Participating Agencies. Such  
79 requests will be approved upon consensus of the Participating Agencies.

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

### 81 ***III.2.1. ISECG Composition***

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

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

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

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

## 109 **IV. SECRETARIAT**

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

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

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

## 116 **V. AMENDMENTS**

117 These Terms of Reference may be amended by the ISECG Participating Agencies by

118 consensus.

119 **VI. WITHDRAWAL**

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

122 **VII. ESTABLISHMENT AND ADOPTION**

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

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

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

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