



COSPAR to sign Memorandum of Understanding with Asia-Pacific Space Cooperation Organisation

27 August 2024

The Committee on Space Research (COSPAR) is pleased to announce that a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Asia-Pacific Space Cooperation Organisation (APSCO) is planned to be signed this autumn. This landmark agreement reflects the shared commitment of both organizations to promote international collaboration in space science and strengthen their respective global impacts.

Shared vision

The MoU was agreed after a visit to APSCO headquarters in Beijing, China, in July 2024. COSPAR President Prof. Pascale Ehrenfreund and COSPAR General Counsel Mr. Niklas Hedman met with Ms. Aisha Jagirani, the APSCO Director General of External Relations and Legal Affairs Department, who represented APSCO Secretary-General. This partnership is rooted in the organizations' mutual dedication to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and their active roles as observers in the UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS). Both COSPAR and APSCO share a vision of fostering cooperation in space science and facilitating dialogue among global space stakeholders.

Fruitful Discussions and Collaborative Initiatives

During their meeting, the COSPAR and APSCO delegations engaged in productive discussions on shared interests and goals, such as capacity building, education, and the use of small satellites for space science. Ms. Jagirani provided an in-depth presentation on APSCO's mission and activities, while Mr. Xu Yansong, Director General of APSCO's Education and Training Department, highlighted APSCO's educational projects and initiatives aimed at supporting APSCO Member States' capacity building efforts.

Prof. Ehrenfreund introduced COSPAR's broad spectrum of activities and emphasized the organization's pivotal role in fostering international collaboration in space research. Mr. Hedman elaborated on COSPAR's historical contributions, particularly in Planetary Protection, and outlined the work of COSPAR's various panels, including those focused on education, capacity building, and planetary protection.

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The meeting concluded with both parties agreeing to jointly organize international events on interdisciplinary space topics, collaborate on education and training initiatives, particularly the “Train the Trainers” program, and enhance capacity building and small satellite development. Additionally, they plan to explore cooperation in planetary protection, ionospheric research, space debris monitoring and mitigation, with COSPAR also engaging with the APSCO Space Law Alliance.

In expressing the shared enthusiasm for this partnership, Prof. Ehrenfreund commented, “We look forward to embarking on this new journey of cooperation with APSCO. By combining our strengths, aligned goals and shared vision, we will progress space science and technology advancements for the greater good.”

Ms. Aisha Jagirani echoed this sentiment, stating, “This collaboration marks a significant stride towards our common objectives of advancing space science and fostering cross-border collaboration. The future opportunities arising from this partnership are truly exciting.”

The Memorandum of Understanding will be signed in the coming months and a second meeting will take place in the autumn to move forward with the plans for cooperation. COSPAR will be present at the APSCO/UOS/AUASS International Symposium, 5-7 November 2024, Sharjah, UAE.

Issued by COSPAR Communications, Ms Leigh FERGUS

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Note to Editors

COSPAR, the largest international scientific society dedicated to promoting global cooperation in space research, was established in 1958. It serves as a neutral platform for scientific dialogue among scientists from around the world. Today, COSPAR comprises 46 national scientific institutions and 13 international scientific unions, with 13,000 space scientists actively participating in its activities, including attending assemblies, contributing to panels and roadmaps, and publishing in its journals.

COSPAR’s core mission is to facilitate dialogue and encourage international collaboration among space stakeholders across the globe. It operates through scientific commissions, panels and task groups that encompass all disciplines of space science, from Earth and atmospheric sciences to planetary science, astrophysics, solar and space plasma physics, and life and microgravity sciences.



A recent focus has been on strengthening ties between science and industry. This was achieved by forming the Committee on Industry Relations, which includes 18 leading aerospace companies worldwide. The Committee advises COSPAR on integrating industry capabilities into its activities, ensuring mutual benefits for both science and industry.

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About APSCO

The Asia-Pacific Space Cooperation Organization (APSCO) was established on 16 December 2008, as a not-for-profit, international, inter-governmental organization with full international legal status, having the 'Convention of APSCO' registered with the United Nations. APSCO currently has 14 Member States, including eight Full Member: Bangladesh, China, Iran, Mongolia, Pakistan, Peru, Thailand, Türkiye, one Signatory Member: Indonesia (ratification in process), one Associate Member: Egypt (ratification in process) and Four Observers: Mexico, Inter-Islamic network on Space Science and Technology (ISNET), Arab Union for Astronomy and Space Science (AUASS) and Venezuela. China is the host country for APSCO, and the Headquarters of APSCO is located in Beijing, China.

APSCO provides a platform for cooperative activities and capacity building in Member States in the field of space science, technology, and its applications. APSCO also contributes to building capacity in the field of space law and policy and has been biennially organizing international symposiums since 2009 as part of its knowledge exchange platform. These events provide a unique knowledge-sharing opportunity for the executives at the national space agencies and space authorities in the Member States of APSCO.

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