

Statement for a Responsible Space Sector Ways of Working

Approved on the 30 November 2024

GLOSSARY

Statement	The formal agreement of shared vision, principles, and values to a responsible space sector.
Entity	An academic group or institution, national or international agency, Large System Integrator (LSI), Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) or any other organisation having its core business connected to space products, services, or applications.
Signatory	Any Entity that has signed the Statement.
Community	The group of all Signatories of the Statement committed to the Statement's vision, principles, and values.
Plenary	The annual meeting of Signatories to review progress, propose adjustments, and make decisions about Statement activities.
Chair	The elected entity that organises Plenary meetings, oversees Statement activities, and implements decisions for a three-year maximum voluntary term.
Secretariat	The administrative body provided by ESA that supports the Chair and maintains the Statement's activities and communications.
Working Group	Task-focused group of Signatory-appointed experts which addresses specific topics within the Statement's scope.

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's evolving space landscape, collaboration has been identified as essential by many stakeholders of the global space ecosystem to address the complex challenges of sustainability and responsibility in space activities. Recognising this, space ecosystem actors have repeatedly committed to working together, reinforcing a shared goal of a sustainable space sector that positively contributes to society.

In 2022, a group of like-minded Entities came together to develop and sign a Statement establishing shared objectives, principles and values, to form a unified Community of Signatories. Since then, joint initiatives have begun among interested entities, targeting specific priority areas such as responsible procurement and life cycle assessment for space products.

To further advance these efforts, it is essential that all Signatories continue to collaborate, leveraging their collective expertise, resources, and innovation. The Signatories are encouraged to work together towards the shared vision of a responsible space sector to raise awareness on the complex challenges faced and ensure that space activities not only benefit society but also preserve the Earth environment, Earth's Orbit and beyond.

This document is intended to serve as a framework for collaboration and mutual understanding among the Signatories and does not represent a legally binding agreement.

2. COMMUNITY ORGANISATION AND STRUCTURE

2.1. Chairing entity

The Chair is a voluntary, rotating role held by one of the Signatories for a one-year term. Any Signatory may apply to serve as Chair. Candidacies can be submitted up to two weeks before the Plenary. If multiple Signatories express interest, an open voting process will take place at the end of the Plenary to elect the Chairing Entity for the coming year. To ensure continuity while encouraging diverse leadership, a Signatory may be re-elected as Chair for one additional term, serving a maximum of two consecutive years.

2.1.1. Role of the Chair

The Chairing Entity should guide the Community in advancing the purpose outlined in the Statement. Specifically, the Chair should:

- Organise the Plenary(ies) during its mandate, including overseeing related communication (e.g. distributing minutes) with support of the Secretariat;
- Coordinate the development and implementation of Plenary decisions; and
- Seek input from the Signatories during the Plenary regarding the outcome of the Statement activities, such as guidelines developed by working groups.

2.2. Secretariat

The Secretariat is provided by ESA.

2.2.1. Role of the Secretariat

The Secretariat should support activities of the Chairing Entity. In particular, the Secretariat should:

- Develop a draft yearly activity roadmap based on the Plenary outcomes for Signatories to plan activities for the year ahead;
- Facilitate the implementation of activities when required;
- Maintain and update the Statement's website with material provided by the Signatories;
- Serve as the depository of the Statement;
- Monitor the activities of the Signatories in relation to the Statement;
- Keep an up-to-date list of Signatories and their representatives; and
- Support the Chair, as needed, in preparing for the Plenary.

2.3. Statement Plenaries

Signatories will meet once a year at the Plenary, or more frequently if necessary. The Chair will endeavour to determine the date of the next Plenary at the end of each meeting. Each Plenary will be hosted by the current Chair of the Statement.

The proceedings of each Plenary will be documented by the Secretariat, who will circulate the meeting minutes to the Signatory Representatives. Invitations, draft agendas and supporting documents will be issued at least one week prior to the Plenary and made available to all Signatories.

The purpose of the Plenary will be to:

- Welcome new Signatories;
- Provide updates on current activities to the Community;
- Explore, discuss and prioritise new activities to be implemented by all or some Signatories during the year ahead;
- Discuss the needs and expectations of the Signatories;

- Renew the Signatories commitment to the Statement;
- Propose adjustments to the Statement or related documents such as the Ways of Working;

If a Signatory cannot attend the Plenary, they may provide a statement renewing their commitment via email to the Secretariat. In extraordinary circumstances, the Chair may call for an emergency meeting, providing two days' notice to all Signatory Representatives.

2.3.1. Community Decision Making

The Community should strive to make decisions by consensus at Plenaries. If consensus cannot be reached, decisions should be made by a three quarters majority of the Signatory Representatives present and voting by show of hands. For urgent matters requiring immediate action, the Chair may initiate a written vote. Decisions are intended to guide collaboration but are not legally binding on the Signatories.

3. SIGNATORIES ENGAGEMENT

3.1. Becoming a Signatory

Any Entity within the space sector that agrees with and aims to further the purpose outlined in the Statement is invited to become a Signatory. Interested Entities can express their intent to sign the Statement through the form present on the Statement's [website](#). In this application, Entities are invited to explain their motivation for joining, and outline how they aspire to contribute to the objectives of the Statement. Applications will then be reviewed by the Secretariat, and Entities will be notified upon approval.

3.2. Contribution to the Statement

To maximise their participation in the Statement, each Signatory should:

- Appoint two Signatory Representatives;
- Attend the Statement Plenary meeting annually, either in person or online;
- Actively engage in the Statement activities, such as:
 - Contributing to activities, either by participating directly or by providing material and research support;
 - Submitting news and articles for publication on the website to showcase activities in alignment with the principles and values of the Statement; and
 - Promoting the Statement and its objectives.

3.3. Disqualification of a Signatory

If a Signatory's actions or behaviour are found to be inconsistent with the values outlined in the Statement, they may face disqualification from the Statement. Grounds for disqualification include involvement in a public incident such as ecocide, corruption or bribery, human right violation, etc. In the event of a serious reputational incident, reputational breach, misconduct, or incident that significantly undermines public trust, the signatory will face immediate disqualification.

4. COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

Signatories may propose activities through the dedicated form on the Statement's website or during a Plenary. These activities, aligned with the purpose of the Statement, may include developing roadmaps and guidelines, launching communication campaigns, hosting workshops, webinars and networking events, conducting joint research projects, or setting up knowledge sharing programs, amongst others. The Chatham House Rule may apply to the various activities as and when the Signatories see fit.

4.1. Working Groups

Activities may be initiated through the formation of a Working Group and can be showcased on the Statement website. A Working Group is created to study and evaluate specific topics within a limited timeframe. Experts nominated by the Signatories to join Working Groups, along with the terms of reference, will be approved by the Signatories at the following Plenary. The progress of the Working Group should be presented at each Plenary along with tangible outcomes (e.g. guidelines, recommendations or methodologies).

4.2. Community knowledge sharing

Signatories are encouraged to foster knowledge exchange through organised events focused on various aspects of a responsible space sector. The goal of this type of activity is to bridge knowledge between Signatories and further engage within the Community.

These events may involve topic experts, academic researchers, and industry practitioners to address pressing challenges and share best practices. Additionally, the Community may collaborate with the academic sector to identify gaps in scientific understanding and research related to responsibility in space.

4.3. Statement website contribution

Signatories are encouraged to contribute to the Statement website by submitting articles. These may include, but are not limited to, updates on Signatory activities, news on Sustainability and Space, events related to Statement activities (such as workshops conducted within a Working Group), or features

highlighting the sustainable initiatives of a Signatory. Articles may be sent to the Secretariat (Statement.Secretariat@esa.int) for editorial review and publication to the website.

5. RESOURCES

The Signatories are encouraged to collaborate in alignment with the principles outlined in the Statement on a voluntary basis, without involving any financial transactions.

- Signatories are encouraged to support the activities of the Statement by designating experts who should participate equitably in accordance with the principles and values of the Statement;
- Each Signatory should cover the costs of their designated experts, including travel and mission-related expenses when necessary;
- Participants in working groups may agree among themselves to contribute equitably to ad hoc studies, or other activities that support the purpose of the Statement.

6. LANGUAGE

English will serve as the official language for all activities conducted in relation to the Statement.

7. ENTRY INTO FORCE AND TERMINATION OF THE WAYS OF WORKING

The Ways of Working for the Statement will take effect upon their approval at the Plenary or using the written procedure in case no agreement is reached at the Plenary. For them to be approved, there must be a three-quarters' majority vote. The final approved document describing the Ways of Working will then be distributed to all Signatories.

Signatories may propose modifications to the Ways of Working document by submitting suggestions to the Secretariat. The Secretariat will compile all proposed changes into a document to be shared with the Signatories ahead of the following Plenary. If necessary, a working group may be established to review and revise these modifications.

8. TERMINATION OF THE STATEMENT AND RELATED ACTIVITIES

The Chair may suggest any time to terminate the Statement activities by a three-quarters' majority of the Signatories. In case of termination of the Statement, the Chair will adopt by unanimity the arrangements for the winding-down of its activities.

STATEMENT FOR A RESPONSIBLE SPACE SECTOR



Planet Earth is unique. It is ours.

And it is a gift, vibrant and full of life that we must cherish.

Pushed by our human nature to explore the far boundaries of our Universe, we realise, looking back at Earth, just how fragile our world is and finite are its resources. There is only one planet that we may call home, and we must take care of it. Living within the limits of our planet is a global challenge that requires humankind to act as one in order to preserve our home for generations to come.

As such, our objective is to provide for a foundation for the sustainable, long-term economic development of the space sector and to increase the contribution of space activities to the sustainable development of society¹.

We resolve to ensure that the principles and values put forward in this Statement guide our actions and activities, thus contributing and leading to sustainable development of society while protecting the natural environment and life on Earth and preserving the environment of outer space.



¹The Statement refers to Sustainable Development as defined through ISO 26000.