

SACSA Hits the Ground Running Following February Appointment

Pretoria, South Africa – The recently appointed South African Council for Space Affairs (SACSA) has moved swiftly to operationalise its mandate, demonstrating strong momentum since assuming office on 1 February 2026.

Within a short period, the Council has already convened two meetings, including an introductory session and an operational strategic engagement just before the Induction programme. The Council induction programme took place between the 16 -20 March, in the Western Cape, which is home to a concentration of South Africa's leading space industry players.

As part of its induction programme, SACSA, together with its Secretariat, undertook a series of high-level industry engagements and site visits across the satellite and advanced manufacturing value chain. These included visits to Dragonfly Aerospace, a pioneering South African company that developed and launched the country's first commercial satellite in 2023, as well as Simera Sense, a leader in the manufacturing of high-performance optical payloads, cameras and satellite systems.

The Council also visited NewSpace Systems, where members were given a comprehensive tour of its newly built, state-of-the-art facility. The visit highlighted the company's remarkable growth over the past 13 years, reflecting the expanding capabilities and global competitiveness of South Africa's space industry. Members expressed particular appreciation for the visible inclusivity within the company, noting the active participation of women and youth across technical and leadership roles.

Further engagements included visits to NewSpacecraft, PetraWell, and MURA Aerospace, providing the Council with a comprehensive view of the broader aerospace sector, including emerging launch capability programmes within the space ecosystem. The Council gained a clear appreciation of the rapidly evolving industry landscape and the corresponding need for timely and responsive execution of its regulatory mandate. Also, SACSA highlighted transformation as the Government of National Unity (GNU)'s core principle, focusing on policy coordination to drive governance, economic viability and inclusive empowerment.

Within that mandate, SACSA has already approved four company registration renewals, for Dragonfly Aerospace, Simera Sense, Newspace Systems and CubeSPACE RF Satellite Systems...for a period of 3 years expiring in 2029, thus reinforcing its role in encouraging space actors to formally register their capabilities. This process supports improved coordination, oversight and visibility of the national space sector.

Also, working collaboratively with **the dtic**, the Council, has begun strengthening regional and international cooperation function. On the **30–31 March**, it participated in a **Namibian delegation policy and legal benchmarking exercise**, while the Secretariat contributed to a **Tanzanian study tour**, reflecting South Africa's continued leadership in advancing aerospace and defence capabilities across the continent.

During the Namibian benchmarking exercise, the Chairperson emphasised the importance of **capacity building** to support the Namibian team in developing their indigenous space capabilities, particularly as they are at the foundation phase of initiating space law and building national programme. Drawing on South Africa's experience, the Chair shared insights on initiatives such as the **Institute for Satellite and Software Engineering programme** and academic programmes at the **Cape Peninsula University of**

Technology (CPUT), highlighting the critical role of education, skills development, and institutional partnerships in building a sustainable space ecosystem.

Looking ahead, SACSA is set to participate in the **Legal Subcommittee of the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space**, where it will contribute to ongoing global deliberations on international space law and governance, aligned with South Africa's policy imperative, regulation and compliance.

The next induction programme for SACSA is scheduled to take place in KwaZulu-Natal early May, to further strengthen engagements with industry players across the national space ecosystem. The Council will further support **the dtic** in hosting the **Africa Regional Rounds of the Manfred Lachs Space Law Moot Court Competition**, alongside the **African Space Policy and Law Conference**, both scheduled for the last week of May 2026.

These early activities signal a clear commitment to restoring regulatory certainty, strengthening oversight and supporting the continued growth of South Africa's space sector. By engaging directly with industry and international partners, SACSA is positioning itself to play a pivotal role in shaping a modern, competitive and globally aligned space ecosystem, one that supports innovation, industrial development and South Africa's broader socio-economic objectives.