

The Future of Space Law: Operationalizing Space Governance

WEBINAR SUMMARY

12 May 2026

Background

The Centre for Space Futures (CSF) convened a webinar on the practical implementation of space governance following the publication of its [The Future of Space Law White Paper series](#). The session explored how foundational legal principles under existing international space law frameworks can be translated into effective operational practices that support the growth of civil and commercial space activities.

The webinar brought together legal, policy, regulatory, technical, and commercial experts to discuss governance challenges arising from the rapid expansion of space activities and the increasing operationalization of the global space economy. Discussions drew on comparative insights from shared domains to identify transferable mechanisms capable of strengthening coordination, interoperability, implementation, and scalability across the space sector.

The session also served as a platform to test assumptions, gather expert feedback, and refine CSF's proposed Multi-Tiered SARP framework for operationalizing space governance through coordinated legal, technical, and institutional approaches.

Webinar Summary

Participants broadly agreed that the main challenge is not the absence of foundational legal principles, but rather the difficulty of translating those principles into practical, predictable, and operationally implementable mechanisms.

Experts noted that increasing congestion, commercialization, and the diversification of actors are placing growing pressure on governance systems originally designed for a significantly less complex operating environment. The discussion, therefore, focused on moving beyond high-level legal interpretation toward frameworks that improve coordination, reduce operational uncertainty, and support scalable implementation across jurisdictions.

Participants identified useful reference points from aviation, maritime, and telecommunications governance, particularly in relation to standardization, interoperability, licensing, risk allocation, coordination structures, and implementation guidance. They also emphasized that effective governance requires stronger institutional coordination across legal, technical, commercial, and operational communities.

Core Governance Theme

Participants focused on several interconnected governance priorities expected to shape the next phase of space sector development:

- **Operationalizing existing legal principles:** Translating established treaty obligations into practical implementation frameworks, operational procedures, and scalable governance mechanisms.
- **Regulatory harmonization and interoperability:** Reducing fragmentation across national regulatory frameworks to improve predictability, scalability, and cross-border operational coordination.
- **Operational standards and technical guidance:** Developing clearer implementation pathways, shared operational practices, and standardized approaches capable of supporting increasingly complex activities.
- **Risk allocation and responsibility frameworks:** Addressing liability, authorization, supervision, and operational accountability in an evolving commercial environment.
- **Institutional coordination:** Strengthening collaboration across governments, regulators, industry, technical operators, and international organizations.
- **Commercial scalability and investment confidence:** Supporting stable operational environments capable of reducing uncertainty and enabling long-term investment.

Live Poll Insights

Interactive polling throughout the webinar reinforced several core themes emerging from the expert discussions.

Participants identified **greater regulatory harmonization** and **clear implementation mechanisms** as the most important factors for effectively operationalizing the Outer Space Treaty.

Most respondents further indicated that the lack of operational clarity either significantly or moderately increases the cost of doing business, reinforcing the direct relationship between governance predictability and commercial scalability.

When assessing investment priorities, respondents emphasized the importance of:

- Regulatory clarity
- Operational risk predictability
- Transparency
- Market access

Participants also highlighted that differences between national regulatory frameworks frequently create operational inefficiencies.

Across multiple polling questions, respondents consistently emphasized the value of:

- Regulatory consistency
- Shared operational practices
- Clear technical standards
- Predictable operational procedures
- Coordinated international implementation approaches

Notably, a strong majority of participants agreed that clearer global operational practices would create a competitive advantage for organizations operating across jurisdictions.

Cross-Cutting Insights

The discussion emphasized that future progress in space governance will depend less on renegotiating foundational legal principles and more on building implementation-layer mechanisms. These mechanisms should help translate obligations into practical tools for coordination, oversight, and operational decision-making

Participants repeatedly emphasized that governance effectiveness increasingly requires:

- Institutional interoperability
- Operational coordination
- Standardization mechanisms
- Shared technical practices
- Predictable implementation pathways
- Cross-sector governance learning

Comparative governance models from the aviation, maritime, and telecommunications sectors were consistently identified as valuable reference points for designing scalable coordination and operationalization frameworks.

A recurring theme throughout the discussion was that governance should increasingly be understood as an enabling infrastructure for the space economy rather than solely as a compliance function. In this context, operational clarity, interoperability, and predictability were framed as strategic enablers of commercial growth, investment confidence, and long-term sustainability.

Key Questions

- How can existing space law principles be translated into operationally implementable practices?

- What forms of regulatory harmonization are most urgently needed to support commercial scalability?
- How can governance frameworks better balance flexibility, innovation, safety, and predictability?
- What role should technical standards, operational procedures, and institutional coordination mechanisms play in future space governance?

Participating Experts and Attendance

The webinar convened 50+ participants, primarily from **Saudi Arabia**, with international registrants from **Australia, Bangladesh, Brazil, Canada, China, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Maldives, Morocco, Netherlands, Serbia, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States, and Zimbabwe**. Participants represented a diverse cross-section of the international space law, governance, regulatory, technical, and commercial communities.

Participating expert speakers included:

Dr. Olga Volynskaya – Assistant Professor of Law and International Space Lawyer at Prince Sultan University

Mr. Nobuo Yoshii – Space Insurance Underwriter at Tokio Marine & Nichido Fire Insurance Co., Ltd

Mr. Hamza Hameed – Head of Space & Development at Access Partnership

Participating organizations included **CSF** as the hosting organization, **WEF**, the **Saudi Space Agency**, **APSCO**, **Saudi Air Navigation Services**, **SASREF**, **ispace**, **Group Investment**, **MEB Space**, **LUISS Guido Carli**, the **University of Adelaide**, the **American University in the Emirates**, the **Centre for Air and Space Policy**, **Losier González PLLC**, **Belron Italia**, and others.

The session formed part of CSF's ongoing efforts to advance practical and future-oriented approaches to space governance capable of supporting the evolving operational realities of the global space economy.

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