The enthusiasm, flexibility and innovative capabilities of high technology small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are of great value to Europe’s space industry.

ESA actively encourages this industrial group to become involved in its space programmes.

**SME Policy**

The Agency’s SME policy is targeted both at newcomers to the space business who need general ESA support as well as at experienced SMEs who have a validated technology or product and have to insert themselves into industrial consortia to gain operational experience.

To encourage involvement in space sector activities, support measures in four areas are being implemented in the framework of the SME Initiative Programme.

[www.esa.int/sme](http://www.esa.int/sme)
The SME Initiative

Dedicated SME programme set up to:

- help SMEs to be positioned in activities of the Agency and/or the commercial market;
- propose measures to help SMEs and monitor their implementation;
- train SMEs and support them technically when needed/requested;
- fund, co-fund or incentivise activities in favour of SMEs.

The activities of the SME Initiative Programme are carried out by the ESA SME Office.

The SME Office

ESA’s contact point for all requests coming from SMEs, with a dedicated helpdesk: sme-office@esa.int

- Key contact point for information regarding programmatic aspects of ESA programmes and activities
- Implementing general support measures in the areas of:
  - Training for SMEs
  - Networking and visibility events
  - Coaching and assistance to SMEs
  - Raising awareness of ESA business opportunities

SME Portal

The SME Office maintains the ESA SME Portal which offers a wide range of resources for SMEs, including updates about upcoming training courses as well as information about new business opportunities and access to ESA facilities.
WHAT IS AN SME?

ESAs applies the European Commissions SME Definition.

Small and medium-sized enterprises are defined as enterprises which:
- employ fewer than 250 persons, and
- have an annual turnover not exceeding €50 million, and/or
- an annual balance sheet total not exceeding €43 million.

However, in determining whether or not an enterprise is an SME, the enterprises size (employees, turnover and balance sheet total) is not the only factor that is taken into account. In fact, an enterprise can be very small in these terms, but if it has access to significant additional resources (e.g. because it is owned by, linked to or partnered with a larger enterprise) it might not be eligible for SME status.

Registering as an SME with ESA

ESAs online System for Tendering And Registration, esa-star, is the default electronic tendering interface for ESA and its external partners.

Registration with esa-star is mandatory for all entities that wish to do business with ESA.

During the registration process a questionnaire has to be filled in and potential bidders can claim SME status. Validated SMEs can benefit from special SME tendering and payment conditions (when so defined).

DOING BUSINESS WITH ESA

How to ensure your participation in ESA programmes

- Register as an SME with ESA
- Review EMITS Intended and Open Invitations to Tender (ITTs) regularly and identify activities of interest
- Via EMITS, communicate your interest in participating in the corresponding ITT
- Contact potential partners identified via EMITS
- Respond to ITTs

In addition:

- Regularly check the ESA SME Portal for announcements, training opportunities and other SME-related news
- Acquire and maintain an up-to-date knowledge of ESA’s programmes, activities, organisation and methods of operations

EMITS

http://emits.sso.esa.int

EMITS (Electronic Mail Invitation to Tender System) is the system used by the Agency for publishing open and intended ITTs and information about the ESA procurement process.

R&D Calls for Proposals and Announcements of Opportunity (AOs)

As well as offering Invitations to Tender (ITT) through its EMITS procurement system, ESA has a number of opportunities for firms to present proposals for new R&D. These include periodic and permanent Calls for Proposals and Announcements of Opportunity (AOs) across a range of ESA programmes.
SUPPORT FOR SME

Training & Technical Assistance
- Organisation of dedicated training courses for SMEs in areas such as proposal writing, ECSS standardisation, IPR, procurement rules and many more
- Facilitating access to ESA laboratories

Networking & Visibility
- Facilitating cooperation between SMEs, ESA and other key partners and customers
- Organisation of dedicated forums to encourage business with SMEs such as the ESA Industry Space Days (ISD)
- Organisation of national workshops with large system integrators, equipment suppliers and delegations

Raising Awareness about SME Capabilities
- Maintenance and development of the SME Database with information about SME capabilities: [http://smed.esa.int](http://smed.esa.int)
- Regular updates to ESA SME Portal
- Communication activities targeted at SMEs and other industrial partners such as mail shots with SME news, training opportunities, etc.

SME Helpdesk
- [sme-office@esa.int](mailto:sme-office@esa.int): helpdesk for all requests coming from SMEs
INDUSTRY SPACE DAYS

ESA Business-to-Business event for SMEs

Every two years, the SME Office organises ESA’s Industry Space Days (ISD) at ESTEC, the Agency’s technical heart in Noordwijk, The Netherlands. The event is an opportunity for SMEs and other space companies to meet and discuss prospective business with new contacts, attend conferences and workshops, and showcase technologies to potential partners. The ISD is comprised of three main elements which help to facilitate business among space companies, with a special emphasis on increasing the involvement of SMEs in space activities.

B2B meetings:
Pre-arranged, face-to-face meetings between companies are the major focus of the ISD

Exhibition:
More than 100 exhibition booths for companies to present their products and services

Conferences:
Talks on space perspectives and market trends complemented by presentations about business opportunities provided by large groups and institutional organisations, including ESA

Did you know?
In 2016 more than 1200 participants from 760 companies and 35 countries attended the ISD and participated in 11,000 pre-arranged meetings.

Registration details and more information about the next ISD are available here
Connect with us

www.esa.int/sme
sme-office@esa.int
@esaforsme