

Electric Propulsion activities at ESA

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Overview



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1. Introduction

2. Mission Applications

- Telecommunications
- Scientific Missions: Earth Observation & Space Science
- Exploration
- Cubesats

3. EP Capabilities in Europe

4. EU H2020 PSA: EPIC (*Electric Propulsion Innovation & Competitiveness*)

5. ESA Capabilities

- ESA Technology Programmes for Technology Developments
- ESA Propulsion Lab

3. Conclusions

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Introduction: Electric Propulsion



- In general, Electric Propulsion (EP) encompasses any propulsion technology in which electricity is used to produce thrust.
- Electrical energy is used to **ionize the propellant** (gas, liquid, solid) and **accelerate the resulting ions/plasma to very high exhaust velocities (10-40km/s)**
- Electric Propulsion is very fuel efficient, but much lower thrust levels achievable than for chemical propulsion.
- Depending on the process used to accelerate the propellant, electric propulsion thrusters fall into three main categories.

- **Electrothermal**

- **Resistojets***
- **Arcjets***



- **Electrostatic**

- **Gridded Ion Engines (GIE)***
- **Colloid**
- **Field Emission Electric Propulsion (FEEP)**



- **Electromagnetic**

- **Hall Effect Thruster (HET)***
- **High Efficiency Multistage Plasma Thruster (HEMPT)***
- **Pulsed Plasma Thrusters**
- **Magneto Plasma Dynamic Thrusters**



***Applicable for GEO satellite propulsion**

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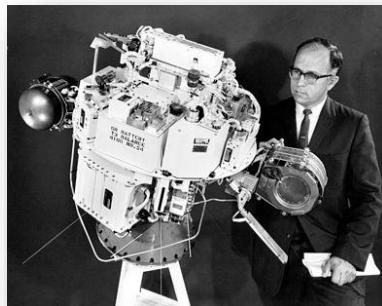
Introduction: History of Electric Propulsion



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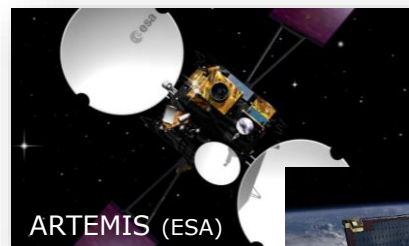


- First uses of electric propulsion in space in early 1960's:



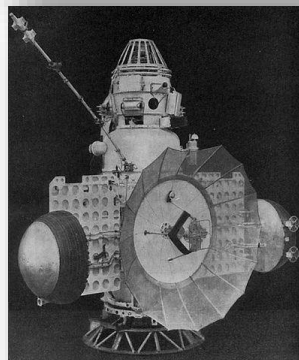
SERT-1 (US)
July 1964
Ion Thruster

Increasing number of EP systems flown late-1970's onwards (resistojets, arcjets, ion thrusters, hall effect thrusters).



ARTEMIS (ESA)

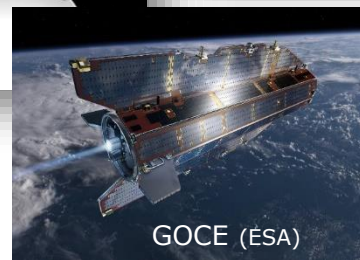
- Station-Keeping (NSSK, EWSK)
- Orbit Raising



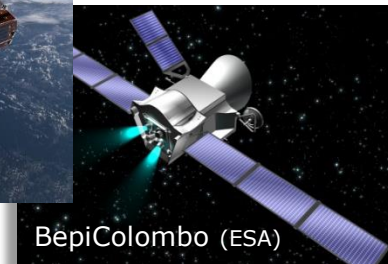
ZOND-2 (Soviet Union)
Nov 1964
Pulsed Plasma Thruster

- De-orbiting

- Drag-compensation



GOCE (ESA)



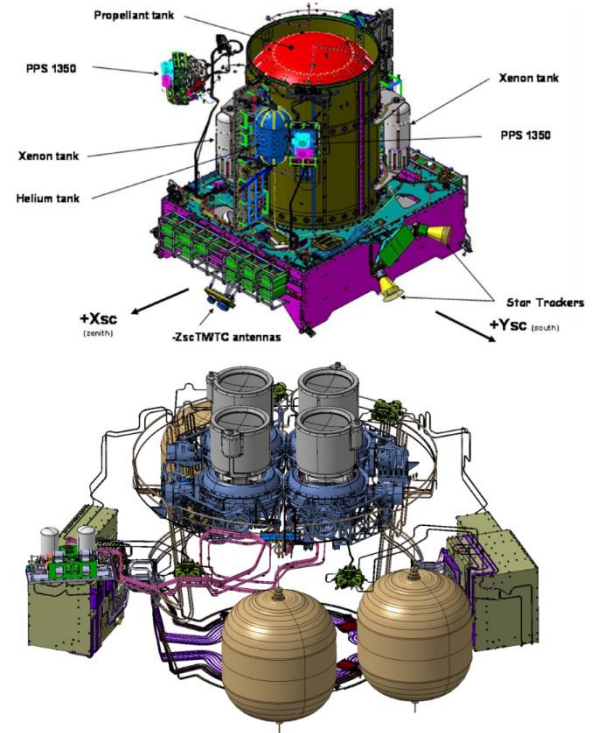
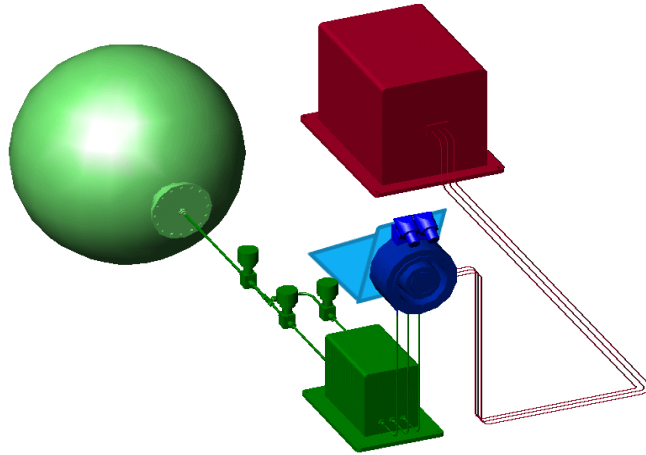
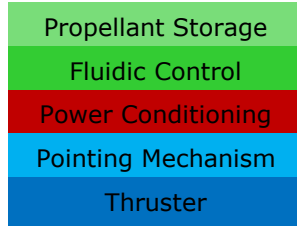
BepiColombo (ESA)

- Interplanetary transfer



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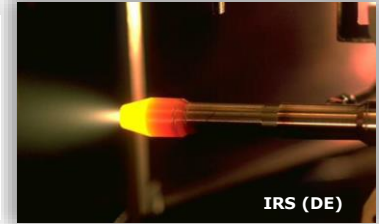
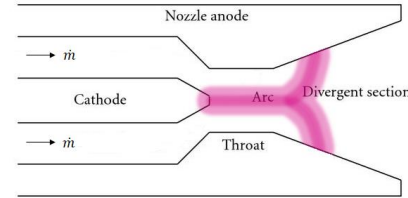
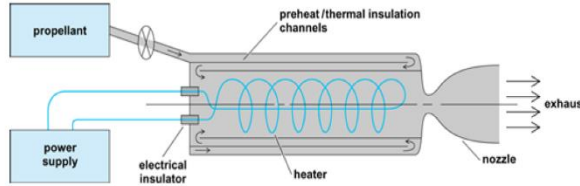
Introduction: Electric Propulsion Systems



Electrothermal Thrusters: Resistojets / Arcjets



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- **Resistojets** are electrothermal devices in which the propellant is heated by passing through a resistively heated chamber or over a resistively heated element before entering a downstream nozzle.
- The increase in exhaust velocity is due to the thermal heating of the propellant, which limits the specific impulse to low levels (< 500 s).
- Resistojets are relatively simple devices and can be used as auxiliary propulsion on satellites.
- The amount of energy added to the flow in a resistojet is limited by the maximum working temperature of the heating element.
- In an **Arcjet** thruster, an electrical discharge (arc) is generated within the flow between a cathode and anode. This imparts additional energy to the propellant flow, and therefore, higher specific impulse is achievable compared to resistojets.

Electrostatic Thrusters: Gridded Ion Engines (GIE)



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- Gridded Ion Engines comprise three main processes:-
 - Generation of a plasma discharge via ionization of propellant by electron bombardment.
 - Extraction of ions and subsequent acceleration to very high velocities across potentials of few kV applied between multi-aperture grids (electrodes).
 - Space-charge neutralization of the ion beam using an external electron source (cathode)

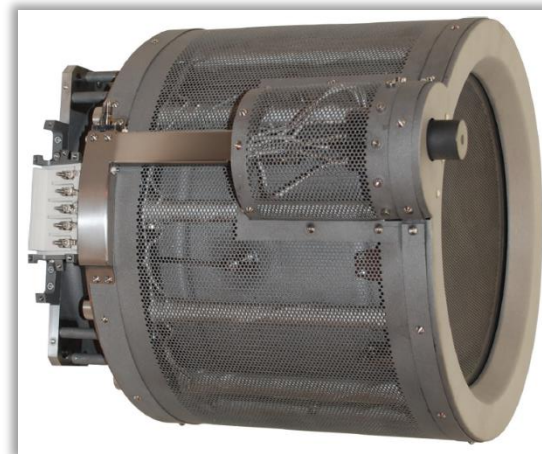
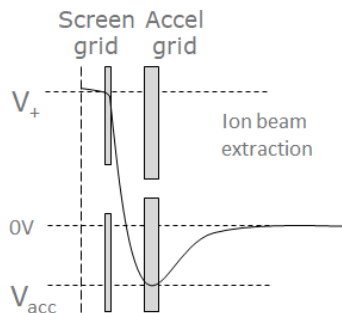
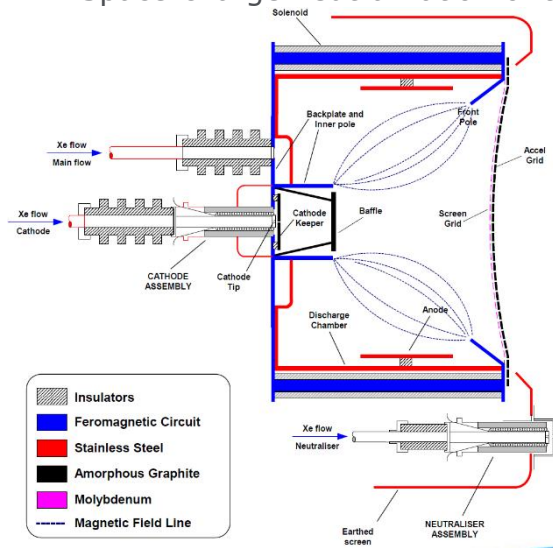


Image: QinetiQ

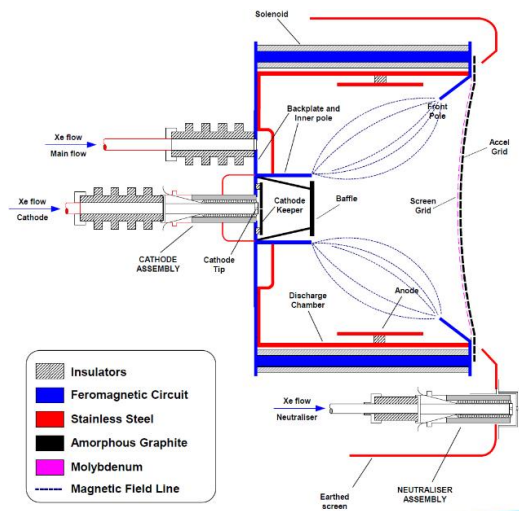
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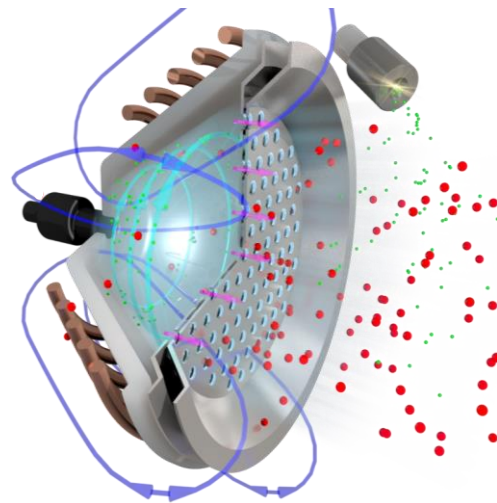
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Electrostatic Thrusters: Gridded Ion Engines (GIE)

- The plasma discharge in GIEs can be achieved by a number of methods:
 - Direct electron bombardment, whereby energetic electrons are emitted from an internal cathode inside the discharge chamber to ionize neutral particles. [Kaufman GIEs, e.g. QinetiQ T6 thruster]
 - Power coupling via radio-frequency energy or microwaves to excite electrons within the discharge chamber and maintain a plasma discharge. [Radio-frequency Ion Thruster (RIT), e.g. Ariane Group RIT-10 thruster]



Kaufman thruster



RIT thruster

$$B_z = \mu_0 \frac{N}{l} I_{RF} e^{i\omega t}$$

$$E_\theta = -\frac{i\omega r}{2} B_{z0} e^{i\omega t}$$

Electrostatic Thrusters:

Field Emission Electric Propulsion (FEEP)

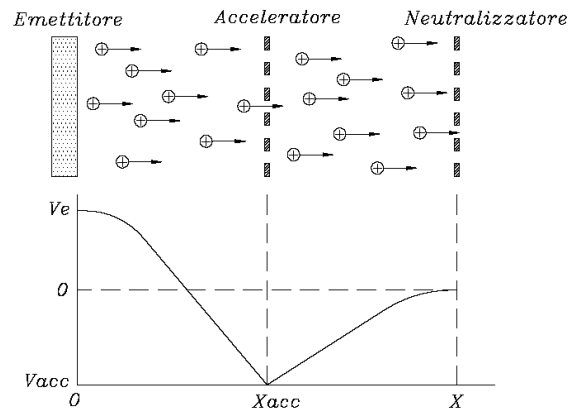
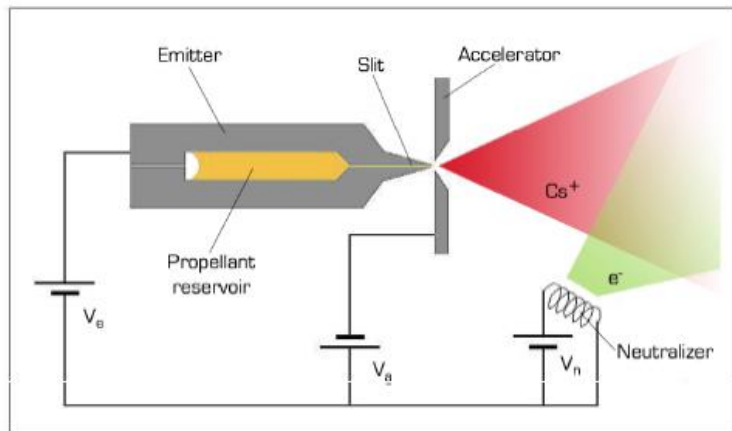
FEEP is an electrostatic type thruster:

⇒ thrust is generated by ions accelerated by electric fields at high exhaust velocities;

⇒ electrons need to be emitted downstream in the same quantity for charge balancing.

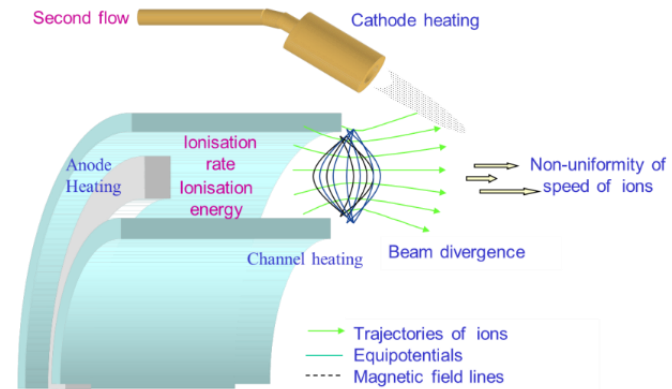
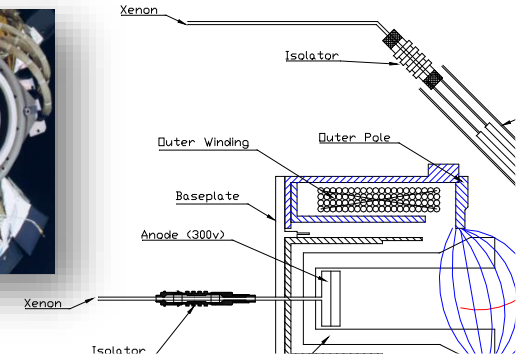
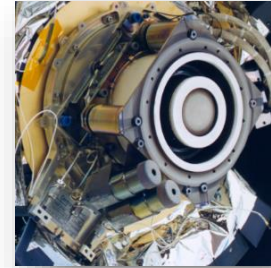
$$qV_e = \frac{1}{2} M v_e^2 \Rightarrow v_e = \sqrt{\frac{2qV_e}{M}}$$

$$\dot{m}_i = \frac{M I_b}{q} \quad I_b = I_e - I_a$$



Electromagnetic Thrusters: Hall Effect Thruster (HET)

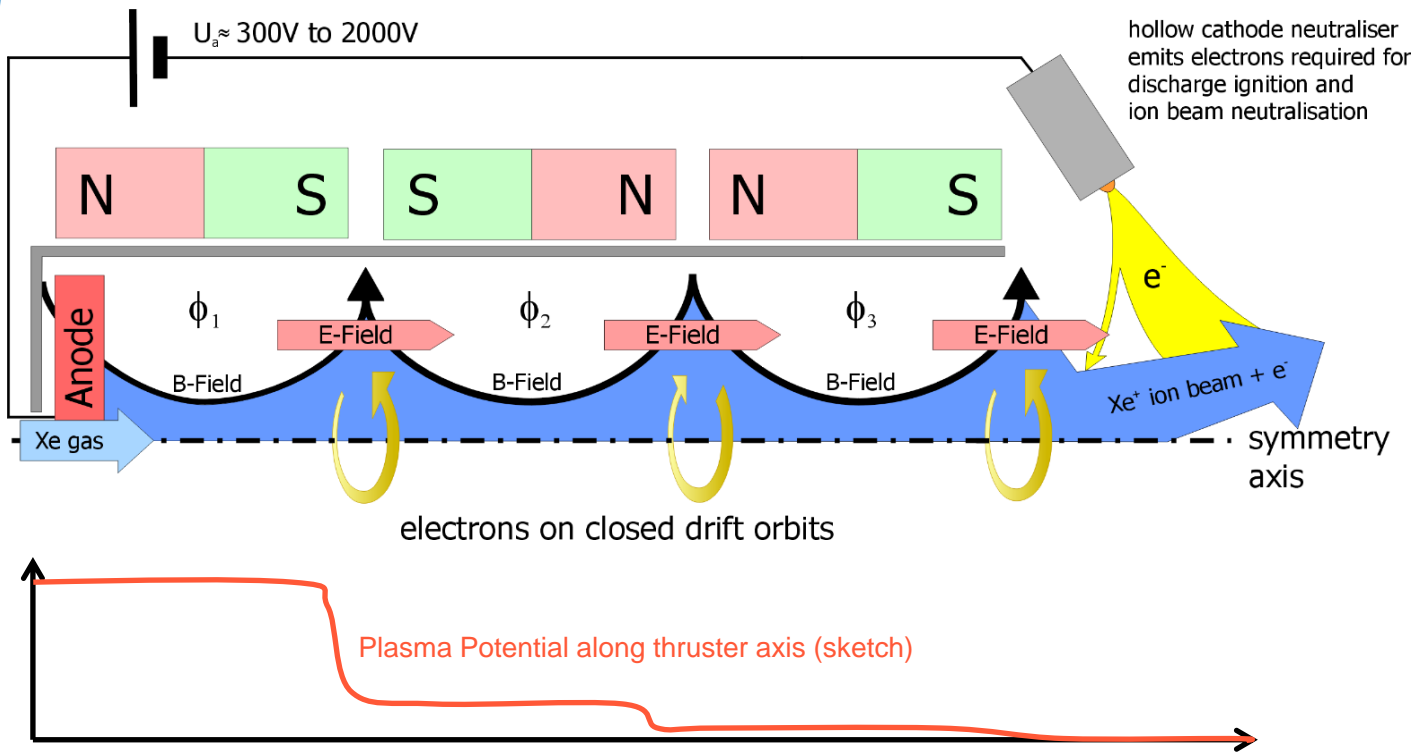
- Neutral gas supplied to hollow cathode and fed through anode at base of discharge chamber.
- Potential difference applied between cathode and anode.
- Electromagnets generate radial magnetic field in discharge channel.
- Electrons are magnetized; follow field lines and enter discharge channel towards anode.
- $E \times B$ field causes azimuthal drift of electrons around axis of thruster \rightarrow circulating hall current.
- As neutrals diffuse into discharge channel, they are ionized by high energy electrons.
- The more massive ions are not magnetized and are accelerated out of the discharge channel by the electric field.
- Equivalent number of electrons emitted by cathode \rightarrow space charge neutral plasma plume



Electromagnetic Thrusters: High Efficiency Multistage Plasma Thruster (HEMPT)



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Capabilities in Europe

Thales Electron Devices : HEMPT

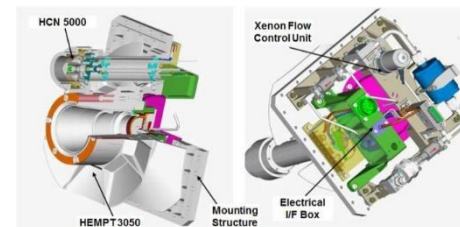
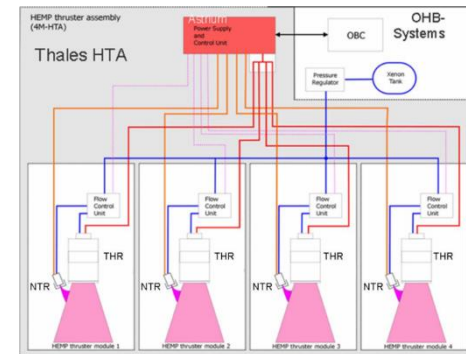


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Thruster Performances HEMPT 3050 (SGEO):

- Average Thrust Level during lifetime : ≥ 44 mN
- Average Thruster Power during lifetime : ≤ 1380 W
- Average Specific Impulse during lifetime : ≥ 2300 s
- Number of Cycles without safety margin : 6500 cycles
- Operational lifetime without safety margin : 4800 h
- Thruster total Impulse without safety margin : 0.76×10^6 Ns
- Agreed qualification factor of 1.5 to be demonstrated



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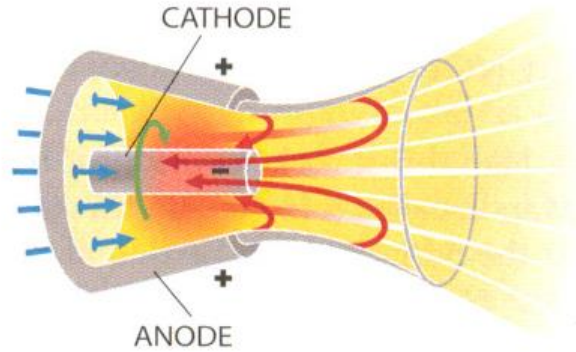


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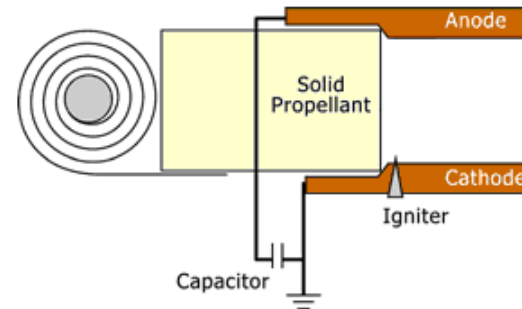
ELECTROMAGNETIC THRUSTERS



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MPD Thrusters



PPT Thrusters

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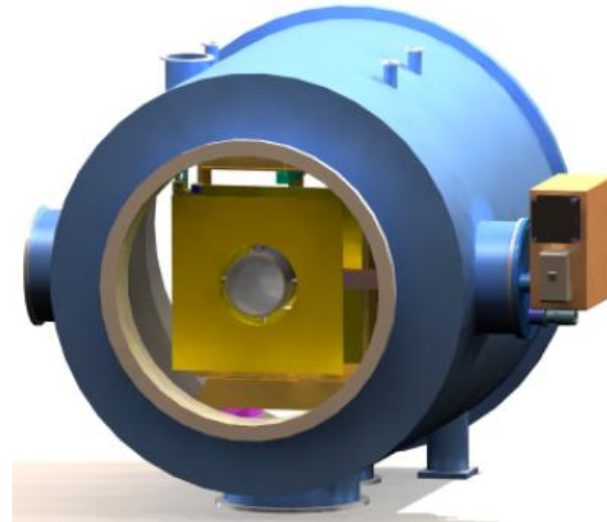
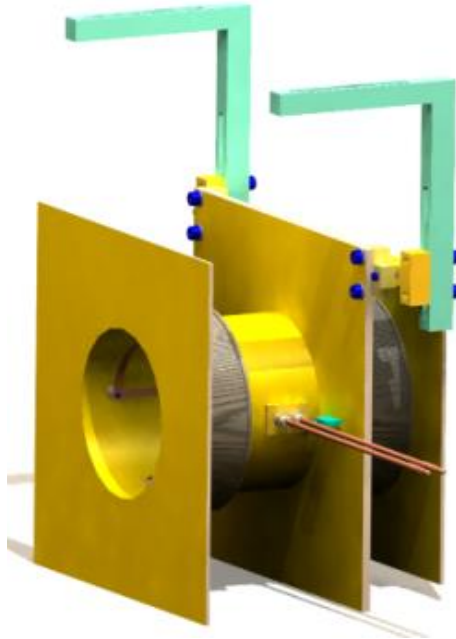


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Helicon Antenna Thruster



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Comparison: Gridded Ion Engine vs Hall Effect Thruster



- Between HETs and GIEs, a wide range of capabilities are available for different applications

Characteristic	Hall Effect Thruster	Gridded Ion Engine	Comment
Specific Power	18W/mN	25-35W/mN	Lower number represents improved Orbit Transfer durations for a given power ceiling
Thruster Efficiency	50%	70%	Higher number tends to reduce thermal interface demands for a given power ceiling
Specific Impulse	1500-2500s	2500-4500s	Higher number represents wet mass saving / higher payload fraction
Operating Voltage	300-400V	1000-2000V	Linked to specific impulse, higher voltages are more challenging for power supply design.
PPU Specific Mass	5kg/kW	10kg/kW	Higher number represents increased EP system dry mass penalty
Plume Divergence	45°	15°	Lower number reduces complications of thruster beam interaction with spacecraft appendages (solar arrays, antennas, deployable radiators etc.)
Throttle Range	2:1	10:1	20:1 demonstrated on GOCE (QinetiQ T5) Higher ratio useful for power limited missions (MP-R)

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Propellants for EP



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- Heavy metals were used in early years of EP (mercury, cesium).
- **Xenon** is today the most common propellant for both HETs and GIEs for the following reasons:-
 - Naturally occurring (87ppb in atmosphere) with very low chemical reactivity.
 - Low first ionization potential.
 - High atomic Mass.
 - Gaseous at ambient temperature.
- From a Satellite perspective:-
 - Safe to handle during filling operations
 - No decontamination required
 - Transportable by air
 - Compatible with electron sources
 - Low power consumption to ionize.
 - High thrust efficiency
 - High storage density



AlphaSat Chemical Fuelling: Hazardous Operation

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Commercial Mission Applications:

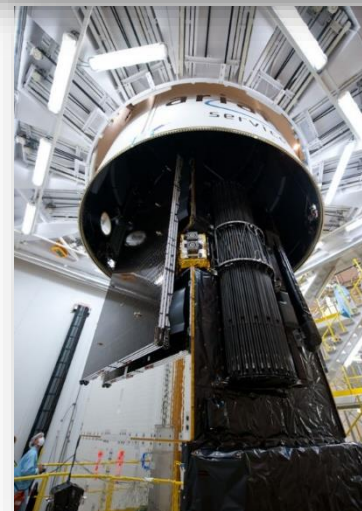
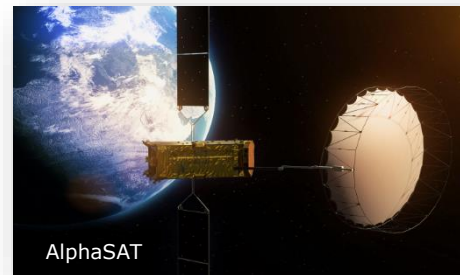
Telecommunication Spacecraft: Operational Station-Keeping



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- Since the 1980s EP has been used for station keeping of telecom satellites (US, Russia).
- In 2001, following a launch injection failure, ESA's Artemis mission was saved using its EP station keeping thrusters for partial orbit raising.
- In 2004, Intelsat 10-02 became the first European developed telecom satellite using EP for station keeping.
- Since then several satellites have been built in Europe that feature SPT-100 thrusters for station keeping: Astra-1K, Stentor, Intelsat-10, Yahsat 1A & 1B, Inmarsat-4 F1,F2 & F3, Eutelsat 10A & 36B, Yamal 402 & 601.
- In July 2013, AlphaSat became the first European developed telecom using four SAFRAN (FR) built PPS1350G thrusters for north/south station keeping.



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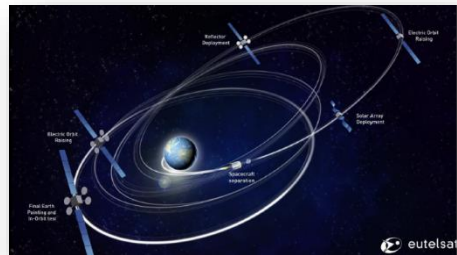
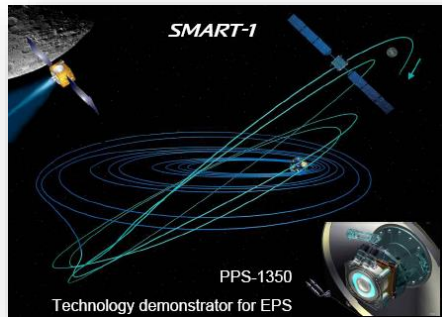
Telecommunication Spacecraft: Orbit Raising



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- In Europe, Orbit Raising/Transfer with Electric Propulsion was demonstrated by the SMART-1 lunar probe (5000 hours of almost continuous in-space operation) and by Artemis; worldwide by Deep Space 1, Dawn, Hayabusa.
- On telecom satellites, orbit transfer to GEO was typically consuming chemical propellant that amounted to 40% of the satellite mass and was completed in few days after launch. Using EP, the manoeuvre takes significantly longer (months), but can reduce the propellant consumption by thousands of kilograms, increasing the useful dry mass fraction and reducing the launch cost dramatically.
- Boeing was the first satellite manufacturer to introduce partial EP orbit raising (orbit topping) on their 702HP platform.
- Boeing's announcement in 2012 of sales of 4 of its all-electric small platform (702SP), featuring EP for station keeping and full orbit raising, triggered a revolution in the commercial utilisation of EP.
- In 2015, the Boeing built Eutelsat 115 and ABS 3A became the first all-electric commercial satellite demonstrating Electric Orbit Raising.
- The first European built all-electric satellite was launched in 2017 (Airbus Eurostar E3000 EOR satellite).



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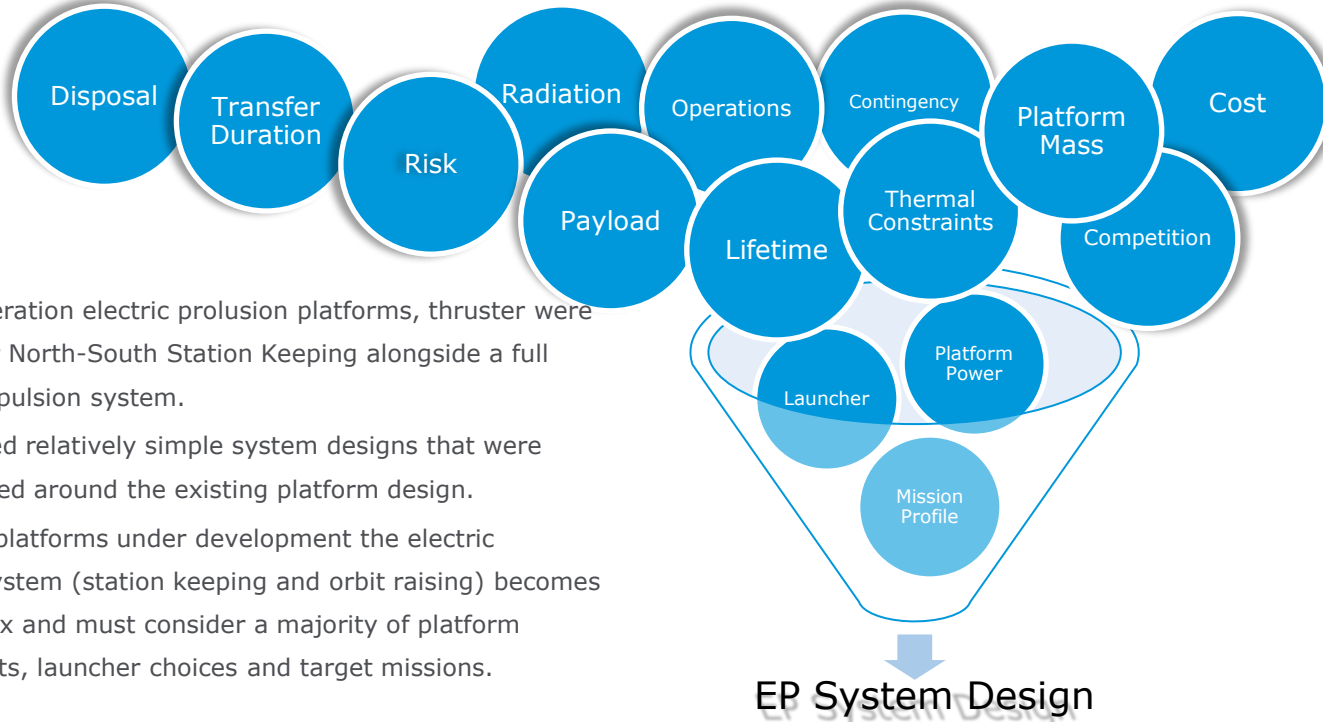
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Telecommunication Applications: Future Architectures



- The use of Electric Propulsion in the telecommunication space market is essential to improve the position of the European space sector. The announcement of Boeing in 2012 on the procurement of 4 telecommunication spacecraft (platform 702SP) , offered for only 125 million dollars each including launch, thanks to the use of electric propulsion for both NSSK and orbit raising from GTO to GEO, has been noted by European operators and primes. The launch of the first 2 spacecraft took place on the 1 March 2015.
- ESA is now fully involved in the preparation of several telecommunication programmes (**NeoSat, Electra**) that will make use of electric propulsion for all the key maneuvers, paving the way for the commercial use of all-electric platforms by the European primes: Airbus Defence and Space, Thales Alenia Space and OHB Systems.
- Boeing has selected the Falcon 9 for the launch of these spacecraft. Current and future European launchers will need to be capable to optimise their performances, interfaces and operations to offer the best launch options to new all-electric platforms.
- In the short term, the adoption of electric propulsion might offer new opportunities for the heavy lift Ariane 5, that typically offers to launch two spacecraft, one large and one medium. Adding the option of a low mass 702 SP class comsat, Arianespace could accommodate larger primary payloads co-manifested with a single all-electric spacecraft, without exceeding the rocket's total capacity. In the longer term, Ariane 6 will have to be compatible with a new generation of full electric spacecraft

Electric Propulsion Systems System Trade-off Considerations



- For first generation electric propulsion platforms, thrusters were only used for North-South Station Keeping alongside a full chemical propulsion system.
- This permitted relatively simple system designs that were accommodated around the existing platform design.
- For the new platforms under development the electric propulsion system (station keeping and orbit raising) becomes more complex and must consider a majority of platform design aspects, launcher choices and target missions.

Telecommunication Applications:

Existing Platforms



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Platform	Prime Contractor	Status	Platform Mass Range (tonnes)	Platform Power Range (kW)	EP Function	EP Thruster	EP Thruster Type
ARTEMIS	Thales Alenia Space- Italy	Flight Proven	3.0	3.0	NSSK (OR during recovery)	2 X UK-10 (T5) 2 X RIT-10	GIE
Eurostar E3000	Airbus Defence & Space	Flight Proven	4.5 – 6.0	9 - 16	NSSK	4 X SPT-100	HET
SpaceBus	Thales Alenia Space	Flight Ready			NSSK	4 X PPS-1350G	HET
AlphaBus	ADS / TAS	Flight Proven	6.0 – 6.5	12 - 18	NSSK	4 X PPS-1350G	HET
AlphaBus Extension	ADS / TAS	Flight Proven	<8.4	12-22	NSSK, Orbit Topping	4 X PPS-1350G 4 X PPS-1350G OPTION T-6	HET/GIE
SGEO	OHB	PFM 2014	3.2	6.5	NSSK, EWSK, Momentum Management	8 X SPT-100 Or 8 X HEMPT	HET/HEMPT
NEOSAT	ADS /TAS	Under development	3-6	15- 25	NSSK, Orbit Raising	4XPPS5000	HET
ELECTRA	OHB	Under Development	3.2	7	NSSK, Orbit Raising	4XPPS5000	HET

With the exception of ESA's ARTEMIS platform, all European commercial platforms utilize Hall Effect Thrusters.

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Telecommunication Applications: Full-EP platforms for EOR & STK



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All of the 3 main European LSIs are at present developing all-electric commercial satellites (via ESA programmes: NEOSAT and Electra).

HET-based subsystems are currently the preferred choice by European LSIs for full-EP telecomm platforms

However other architectures selected by non-European Primes (for example, Boeing 702SP platform used US XIPS engine (GIE); Boeing have also recently selected SAFRAN (FR) PPS5000 for a commercial program and are developing a RIT-2X subsystem jointly with ArianeGroup (DE)).

- NEOSAT (ARTES-14) → successful sales of Eurostar NEO and Spacebus NEO
- Electra (ARTES-33) → targeting small-GEO platforms



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Constellations



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- Starlink (SpaceX): up to 12,000 spacecraft (possible up to 42,000)
using low power HET (Krypton)
- OneWeb: > 700 spacecraft
- Others: (LeoSat, ICEYE etc.)

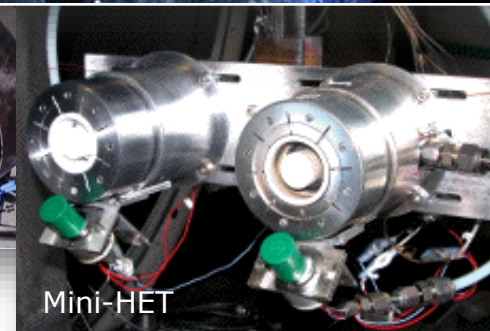
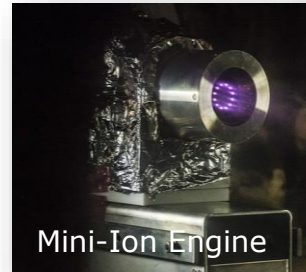
Constellations will use propulsion to perform:

- orbit acquisition, maintenance and de-orbiting from low earth orbit (around 600 -1000km)

Satellites

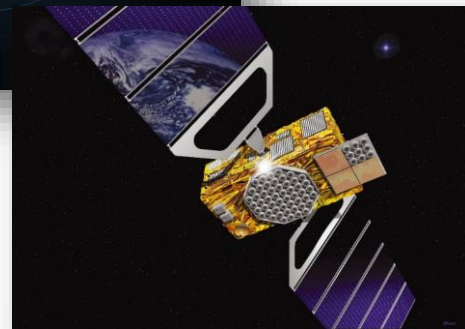
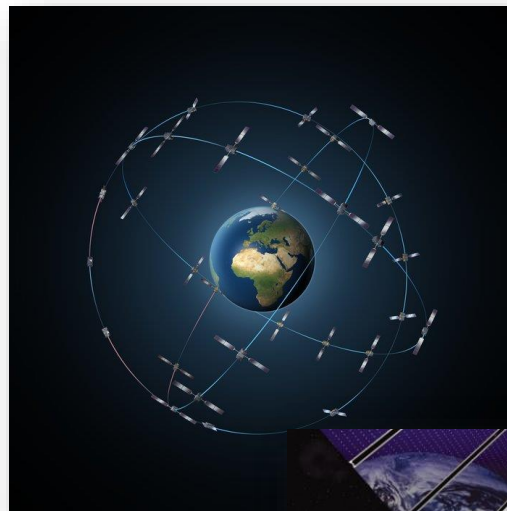
- ~ 200 kg with power for propulsion ~ 200 W
- Mini-HET is one of the most interesting options
- Spacecraft cost ~ 500 000 \$
- Propulsion system (thruster ~15 000 \$ and electronics ~25 000 \$)

Critical – end-of-life disposal strategy



Navigation Applications: Galileo 2nd Generation (G2G)

- ESA & EU are preparing the future replacement of the GALILEO constellation and is targeting the possibility to increase the Galileo Payload capability without impacting the launch costs (even possibly reducing them).
- The increase in payload capability could be achieved by changing the launch injection strategy and by using Electric Propulsion to transfer the satellite from the injection orbit to the target operational orbit.
- The use of Electric Propulsion might allow to use small launchers such as VEGA or place more spacecraft in the current SOYUZ and Ariane 5 launchers.
- GIE and HET subsystems are currently considered for the transfer by the selected Primes of the Phase A/B1 studies.



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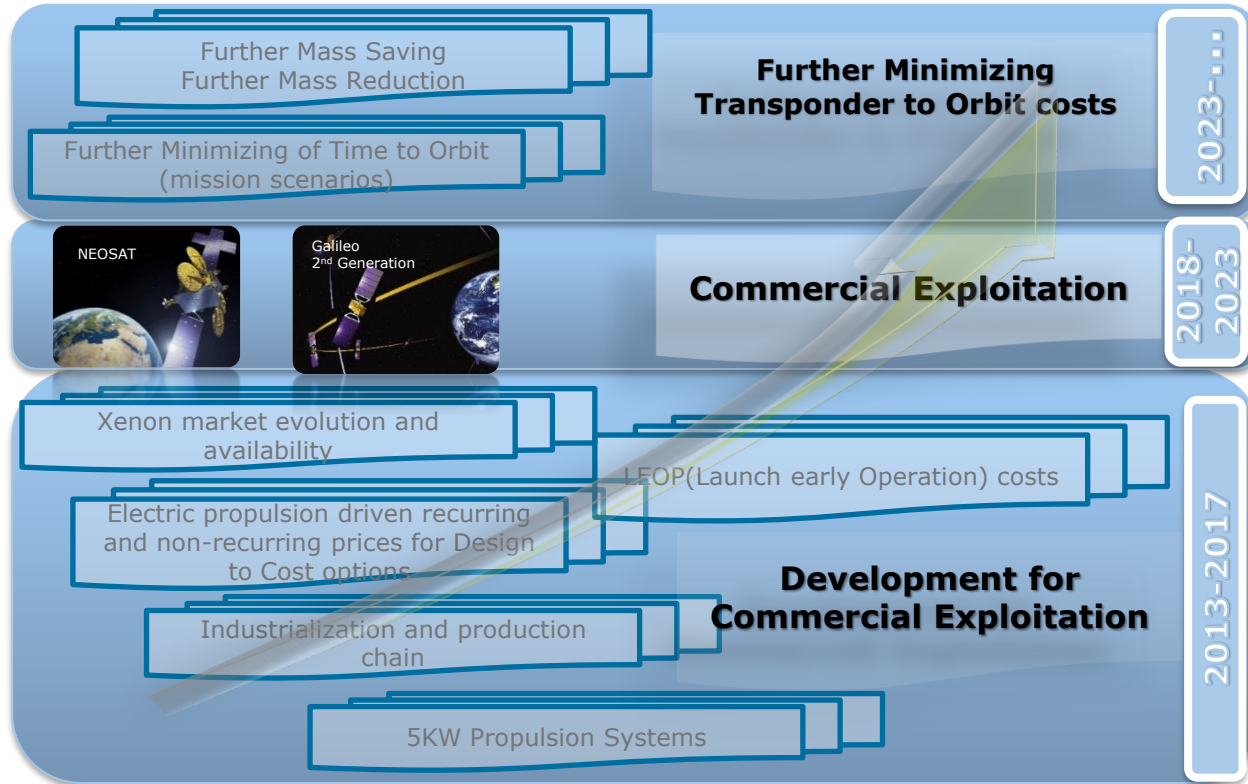


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Commercial Applications: Telecoms & Nav, future trends



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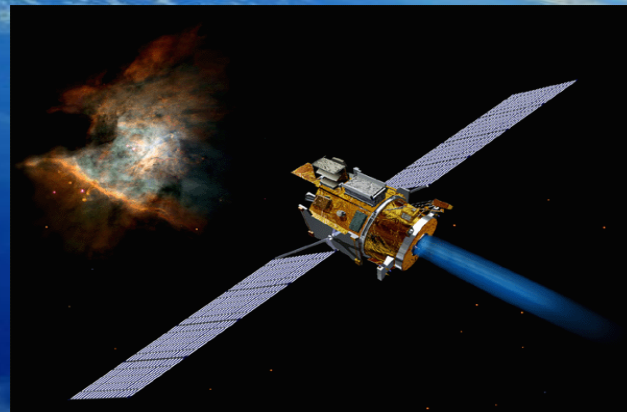
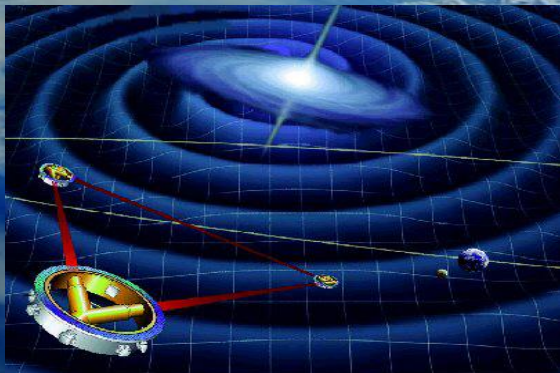


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Scientific Mission Applications:

Interplanetary Missions

- More scientific payload
- Shorter trip time
- Reduced launch window limitations



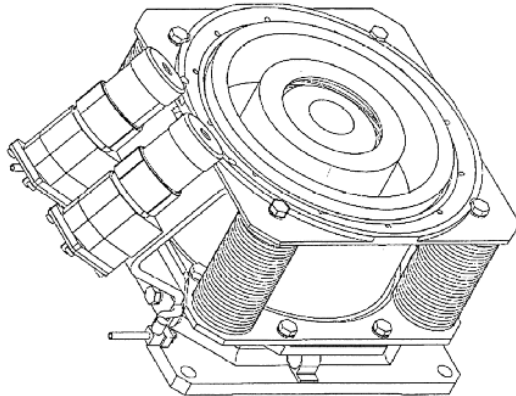
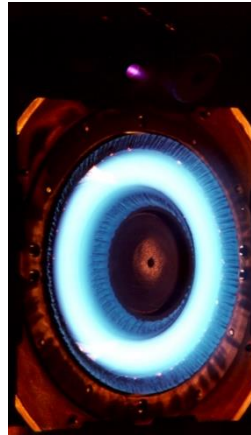
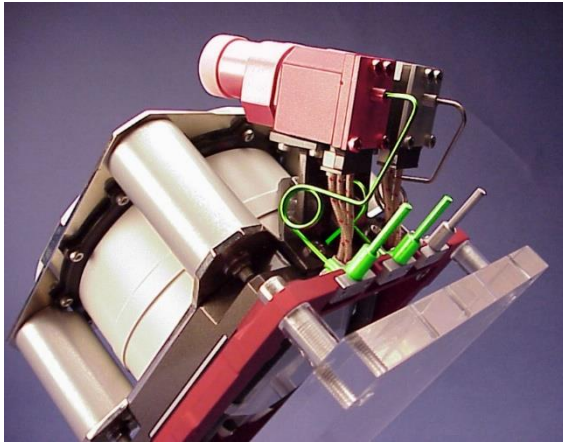
High Precision Pointing Missions

- Space interferometry
- Synthetic aperture observatories

Formation flying



The SMART-1 Thruster



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On SMART-1, Electric Propulsion is used as Primary propulsion system.

The thruster selected for this mission is the

PPS-1350 (SNECMA - F).

The PPS-1350 thruster is a derivative of the qualified Russian SPT-100, with increased performance in terms of thrust and specific impulse.

The PPS-1350 has been qualified for a 15 years mission for the NSSK of a large GEO Telecom. An EP diagnostic package (EPDP) was flown to assess the spacecraft thruster interaction

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Earth Observation: GOCE (the 'Ferrari' of space missions)



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Electric Propulsion was enabling for ESA's Gravity field and steady-state Ocean Circulation Explorer (GOCE) mission.

GOCE utilised the QinetiQ T5 GIE.

After nearly tripling its planned lifetime, GOCE completed its mission in October 2013.

The mission came to a natural end when it ran out of fuel and the satellite began its descent towards Earth from a height of about 224 km.



- See talk:
Session 2, Thurs 24 Oct, 11:30

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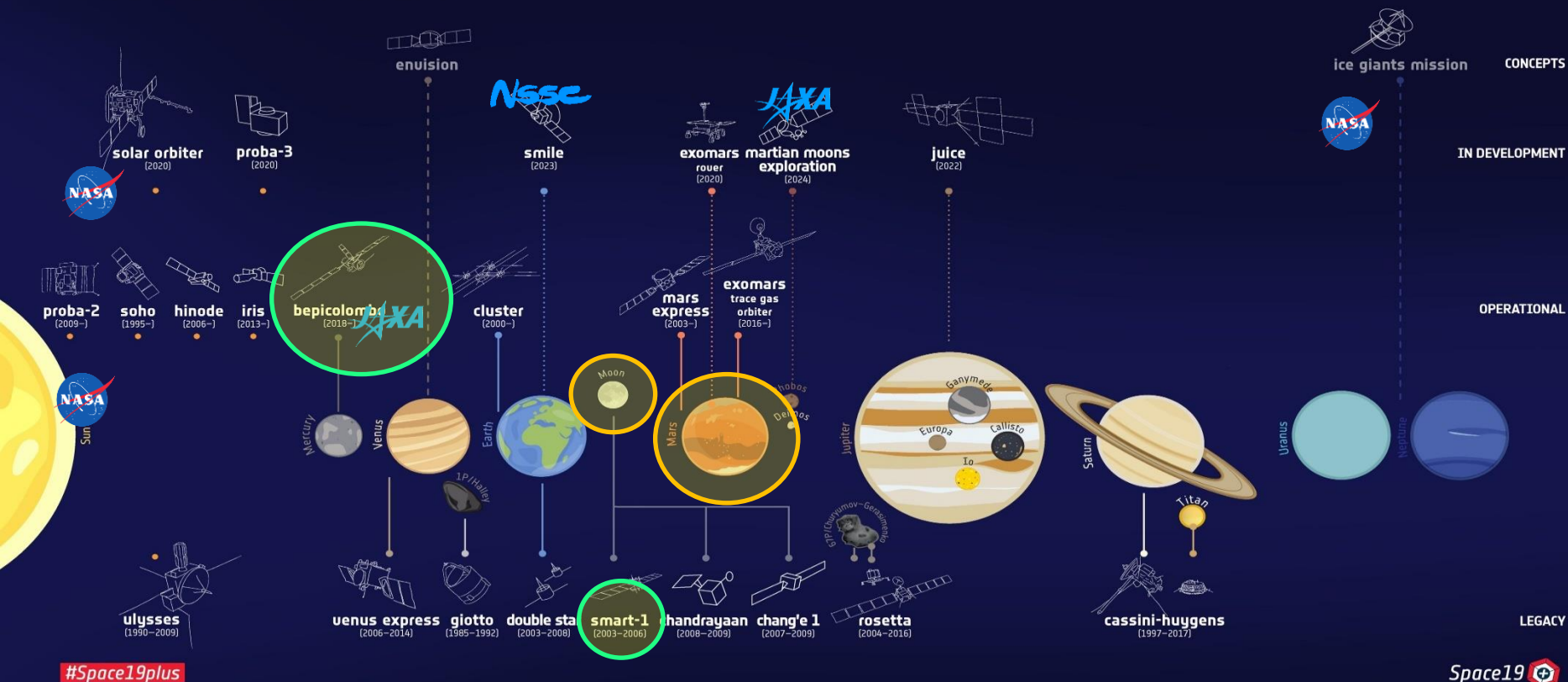


European Space Agency

The ESA Science Fleet in the Solar System



→ SOLAR SYSTEM EXPLORERS



#Space19plus

Space19

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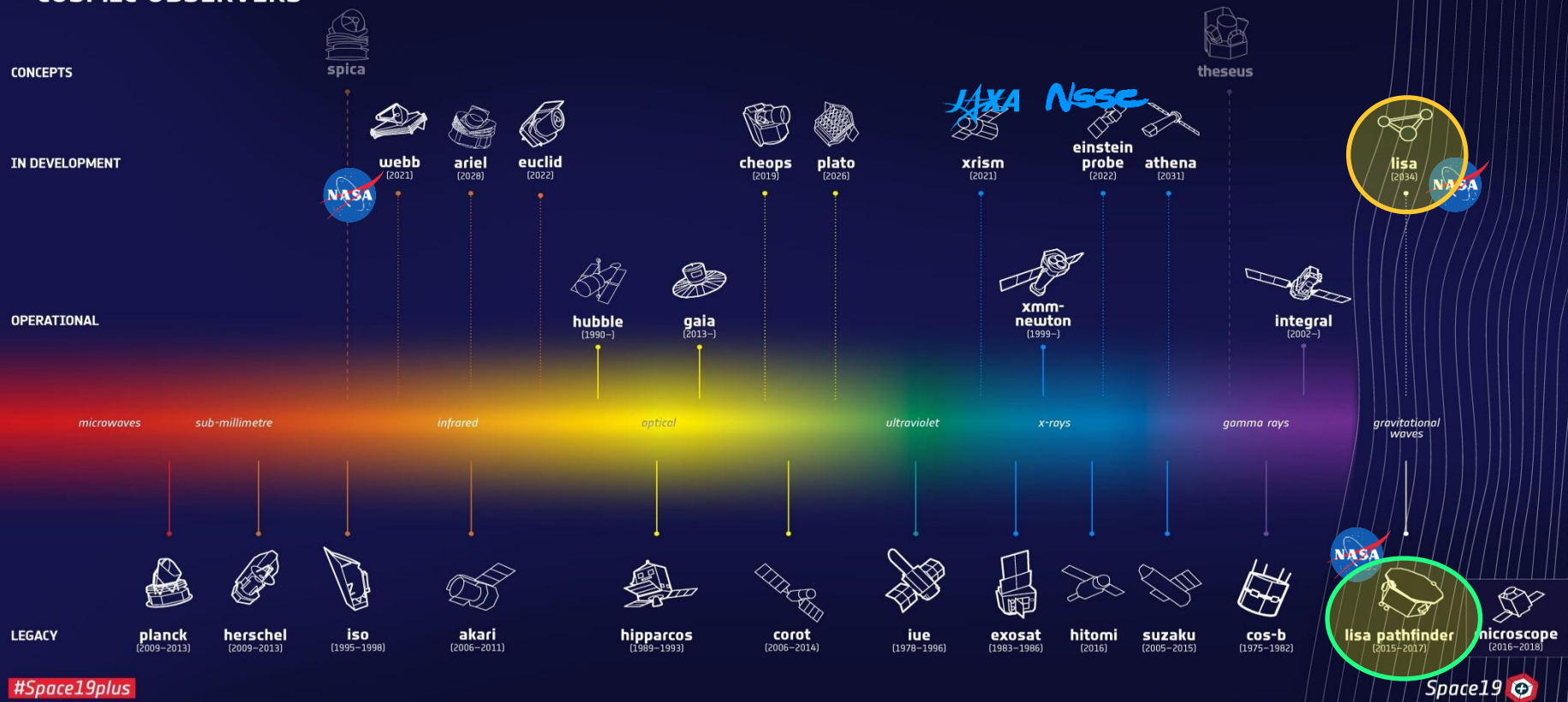


European Space Agency

The ESA Science Fleet for Astrophysics



→ COSMIC OBSERVERS



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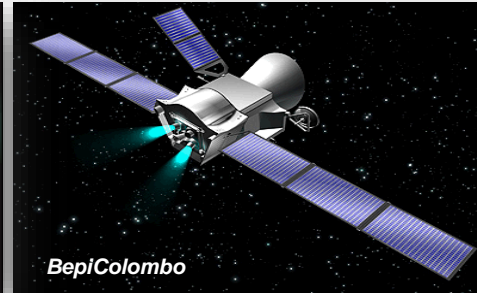
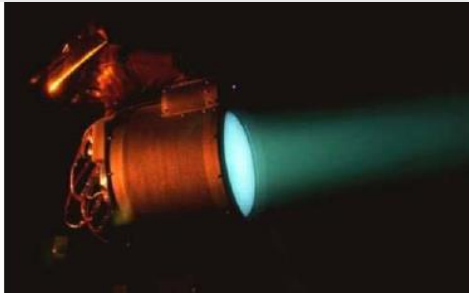
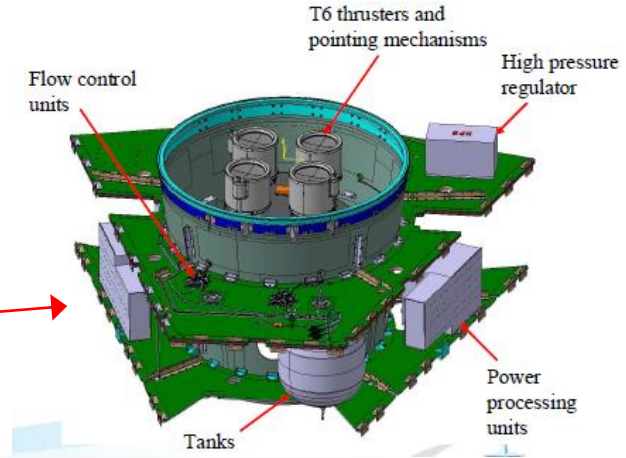
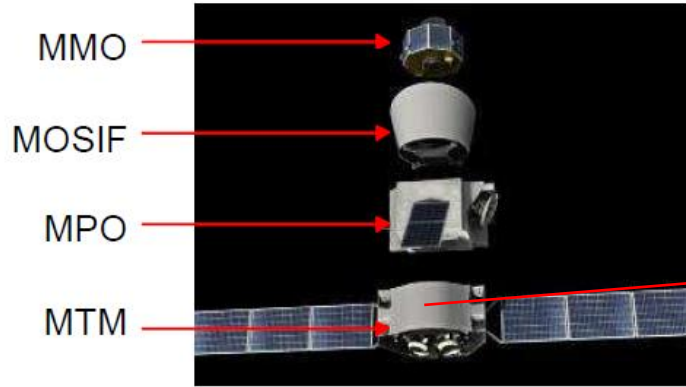


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Science Missions: BepiColombo



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11:30

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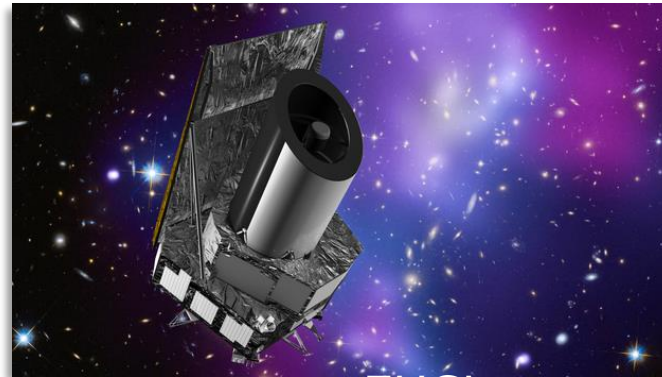
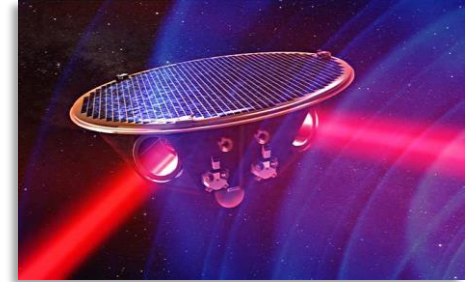
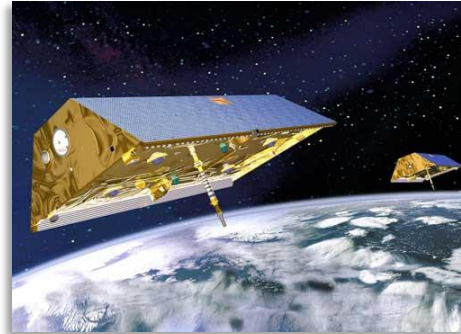
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Science and Earth Observation



Required on-going & future developments

- Mini-ion engines system and micro-field emission thrusters are in development to satisfy the needs of future gravity missions and other science missions such as NGGM and Euclid.
- Mini-hall thrusters system are in development to satisfy the needs of future mini/micro-satellites to perform SK and disposal maneuvers.
- Large Ion Engines and Hall Effect Thrusters must be developed to meet the needs of future asteroid or planetary exploration missions. Cargo missions to Mars will also make a good use of these systems.



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Scientific Missions: Future Applications

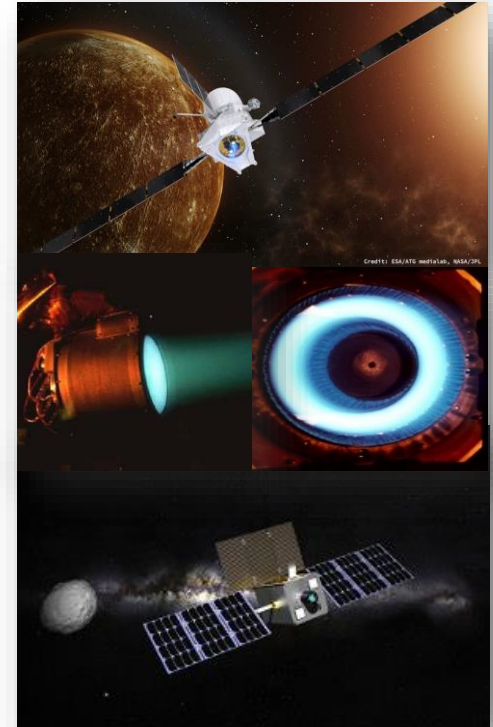


Where are we today?

- Electric propulsion has taken Europe to the Moon (SMART-1) and has allowed us to measure the Earth's gravitational field with unprecedented accuracy (GOCE).
- Electric propulsion is taking us to the planet Mercury (BepiColombo) and could allow us to investigate gravitational waves (LISA).

Future applications and development needs

- Electric Micro-Propulsion for drag compensation and precision formation control: miniature GIE subsystems and FEEP subsystems are in development in Europe to satisfy the needs of future gravity missions and other science missions (NGGM, applicable also for LISA).
- Low power / miniature EP subsystems for small satellite planetary missions and LEO constellations: miniature HET subsystems are in development to satisfy the needs of future mini/micro-satellites to perform SK and disposal maneuvers, miniature GIE subsystems for NEO target missions (M-ARGO).
- High Power ($\sim 15\text{-}20$ kW) GIE and HET in Europe would be beneficial for future asteroid or planetary science missions.
- RAM-EP for future EO and exploration applications



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Exploration Mission Applications:

Exploration: Lunar: SMART-1



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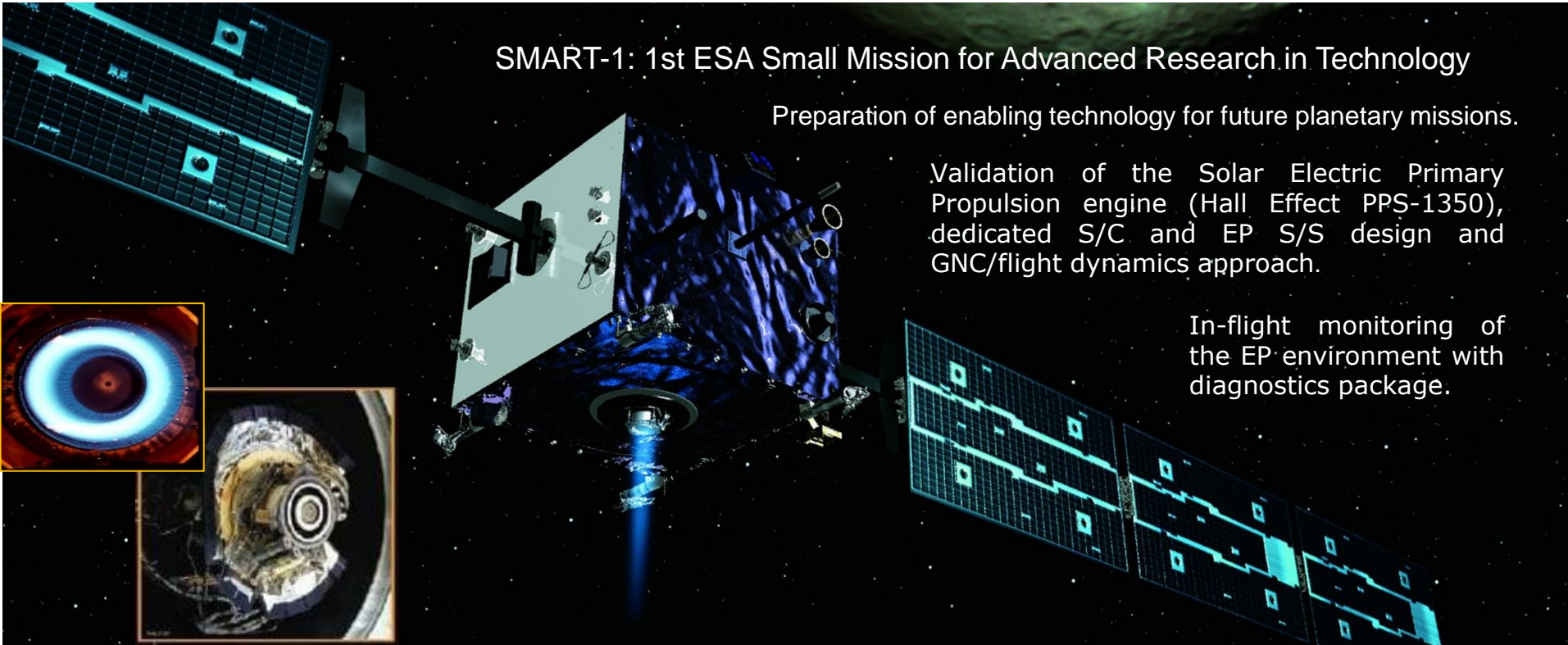


SMART-1: 1st ESA Small Mission for Advanced Research in Technology

Preparation of enabling technology for future planetary missions.

Validation of the Solar Electric Primary Propulsion engine (Hall Effect PPS-1350), dedicated S/C and EP S/S design and GNC/flight dynamics approach.

In-flight monitoring of the EP environment with diagnostics package.



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Exploration: Lunar: SMART-1

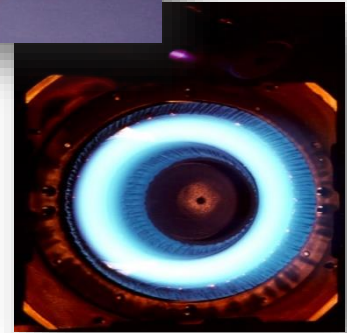
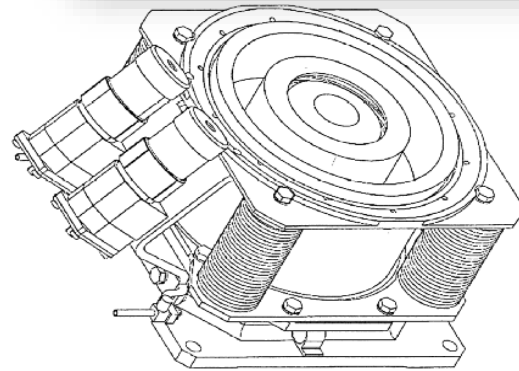


The SMART-1 mission utilised the SAFRAN PPS-1350 HET

The PPS-1350 thruster is a derivative of the qualified Russian SPT-100, with increased performance in terms of thrust and specific impulse.

The PPS-1350 has also been qualified for a 15 year mission for the NSSK of a large GEO Telecom.

An EP diagnostic package (EPDP) was flown on SMART-1 to assess the spacecraft thruster interaction.



Exploration: Lunar: SMART-1

Goal for the technology experiment (EPDP) in SMART-1:

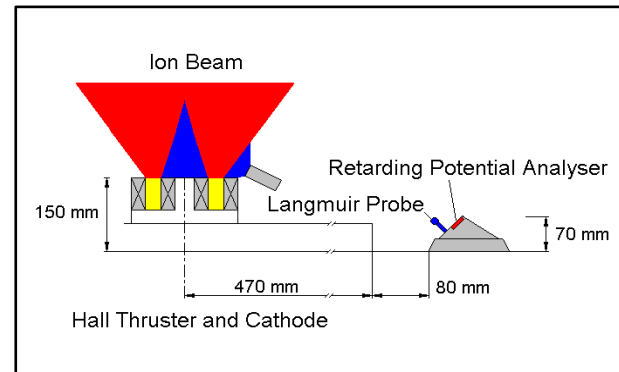
*"understanding the local environment of a spacecraft using
Hall Effect Thrusters (erosion, deposition, torque perturbations,
thermal and electric behaviour)"*

Working Approach:

- Flight measurements with the EPDP and SPEDE
- Ground laboratory measurements for correlation
- Models based on physical principles and mechanisms

EPDP: Plasma Diagnostic Package instrument

Summary of estimated parameters (derived quantities)



LP Sensor	Plasma density Plasma & floating potential Electron temperature Ion current density
RPA Sensor	Ion Energy Spectrum Ion current density
QCM Sensor	Mass deposition (contamination aspects)
SC Sensor	Open, short, load circuit effective resistance

Exploration: Lunar Gateway (as part of NASA ARTEMIS program)



Funded by the European Union



GATEWAY CONFIGURATION CONCEPT

An exploration and science outpost in orbit around the Moon

Credit: NASA



Power and Propulsion Element:

Power, communications, attitude control, and orbit control and transfer capabilities for the Gateway.



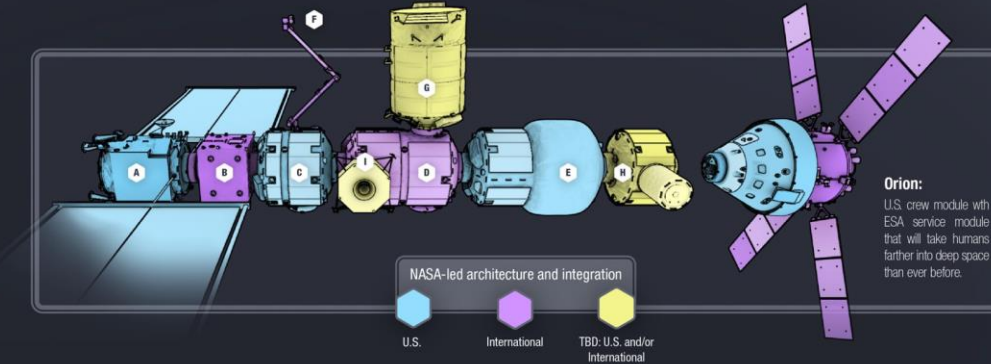
ESPRIT:

Science airlock, additional propellant storage with refueling, and advanced lunar telecommunications capabilities.



U.S. Utilization Module:

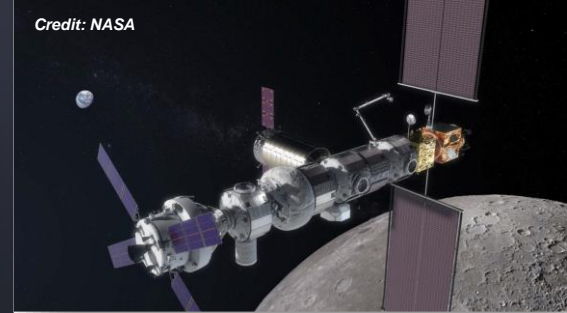
Small pressurized volume for additional habitation capability.



Orion:

U.S. crew module with ESA service module that will take humans farther into deep space than ever before.

Credit: NASA



NASA's new ARTEMIS lunar exploration programme aims at establishing a sustainable presence at the moon.

First element to be launched in Phase I of NASA's ARTEMIS program will be the **Power & Propulsion Element** (PPE) module.



Gateway Compared to the International Space Station

The International Space Station is a permanently crewed research platform that has 11 modules and is the size of a football field.

The Gateway is a much smaller, more focused platform for extending initial human activities into the area around the Moon.

Robotic Arm:

Mechanical arm to berth and inspect vehicles, install science payloads.

Logistics and Utilization:

Cargo deliveries of consumables and equipment. Modules may double as additional utilization volume.

Airlock:

Enables spacewalks, potential to accommodate docking elements.

Sample Return Vehicle:

A robotic vehicle capable of delivering small samples or payloads from the lunar surface to the Gateway.

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Exploration:

Lunar Gateway (as part of NASA ARTEMIS program)



Funded by the European Union



Power and Propulsion Element

First module in lunar orbit for Gateway

19

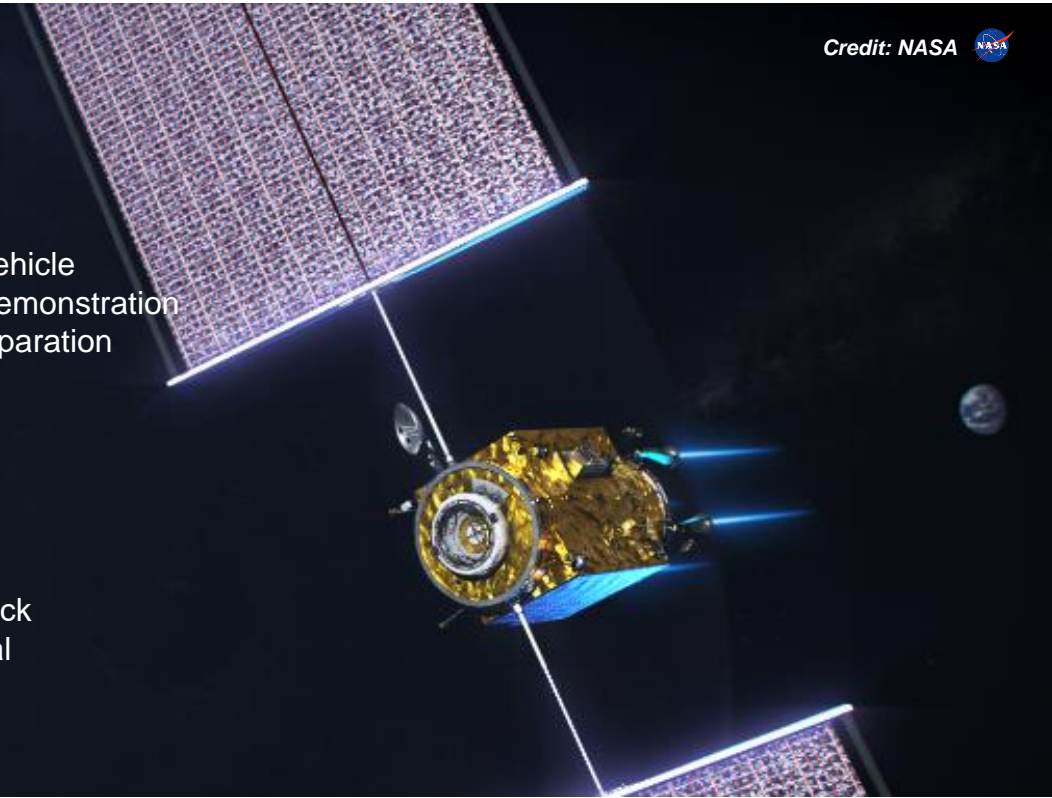
Key Characteristics:

- 2022 launch on partner-provided commercial launch vehicle
- Up to one year joint commercial/NASA on-orbit flight demonstration
- 15 year on-orbit operational life after launch vehicle separation
- 50 kW class spacecraft with 40 kW class EP system

Core Functions for Gateway:

- Power transfer to other Gateway elements
- Transport of Gateway to multiple cislunar orbits
- Attitude control and orbit maintenance for Gateway stack
- Communications with Earth, visiting vehicles, and initial communications support for lunar surface systems
- Accommodations for payloads

Credit: NASA 



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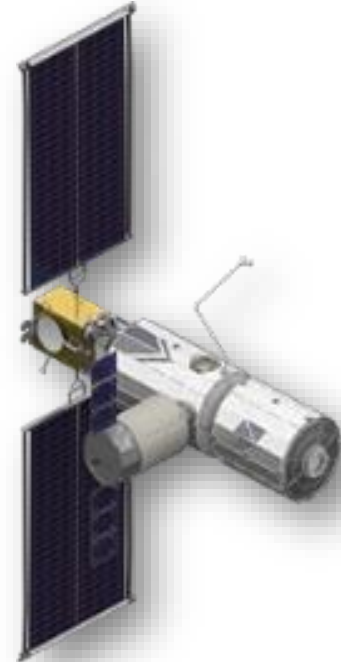
Exploration: Perspective for Cis-lunar Infrastructure



Funded by the European Union



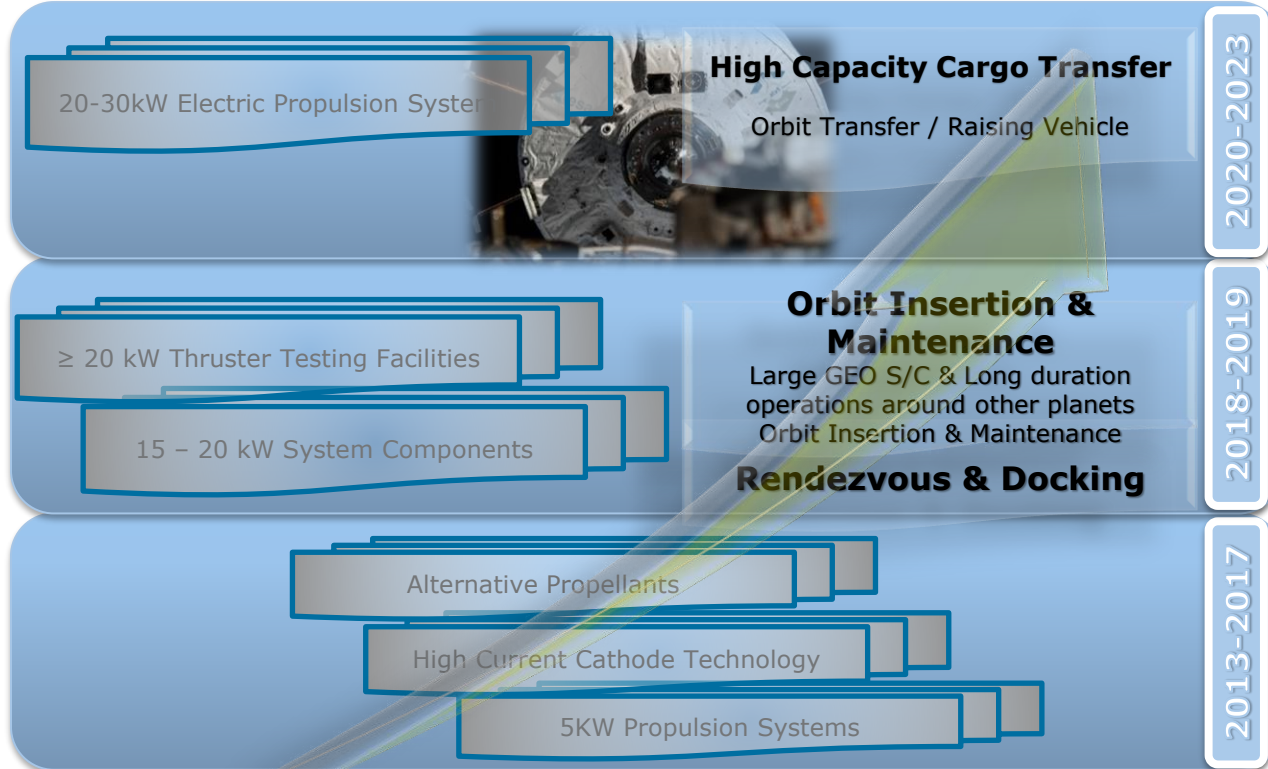
- ❑ Prior to the acceleration of NASA's ARTEMIS programme, as a potential ESA contribution to the PPE module ESA was considering to provide:
 - A 15-20 kW HET string (thruster, thrust vector control, Power Processing Unit) in addition to the (NASA) AEPS to be embarked.
- ❑ The business case for a SEP system (class 40-60 kW) is not demonstrated yet, but could use the same thruster.
- ❑ High power SEP is becoming more and more interesting for various applications:
 - Large satellite transfer to GEO
 - Interplanetary missions
 - Cis-lunar Phase 2 (sustained lunar exploration) and Mars transfer
 - Spacecraft servicing



Exploration: Future Applications – Space Tugs



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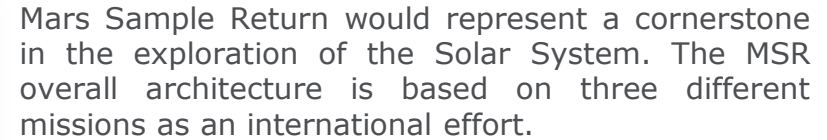


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Potential Near-Term Future Applications – Mars Sample Return



ESA is leading industrial studies for the Earth Return Orbiter (ERO) mission.

Solar Electric Propulsion (SEP) is considered for cruise phases (transfers) and orbit lowering/raising at Mars.



- See talk:
Session 4,
Thurs 24 Oct,
16:45

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Exploration:

Potential Far-Term Future Applications – RAM-EP



Martian Atmosphere Breathing Hall Effect Thruster (MABHET) by Busek & NASA : Extremely Long Mission Capabilities

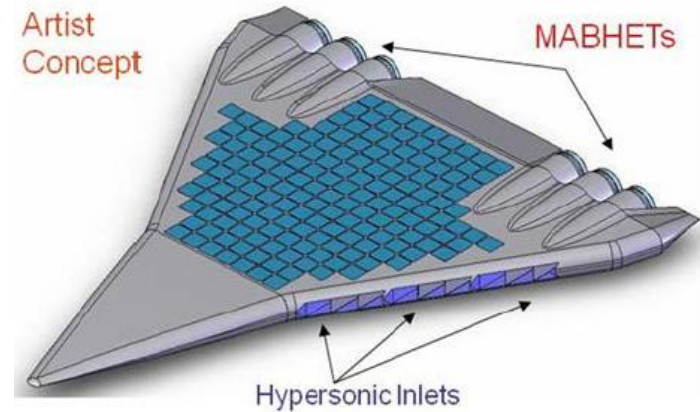
Concept studies by Busek / NASA Glenn:

(K. Hohman, V. Hruby, H. Kamhawi)

Solar Electric Power Orbiting Spacecraft that ingests Mars Atmosphere, ionizes a fraction of that gas and accelerates the ions to high velocity.

Mars atmosphere is thin and composed mainly of CO₂.

- The altitudes of interest are 120-180km due to drag and power requirements.
- The orbital velocity is around 3.4km/s.
- Solar Flux is about 584 W/m² (Earth ~1350 W/m²) .



Exploration:

Potential Far-Term Future Applications – RAM-EP



RAM-EP / Air-Breathing Electric Propulsion: History of ESA studies and developments

The RAM-EP concept was first studied in ESA with respect to Earth Observation applications.

In 2007, a high-level ESA CDF feasibility study concluded that to compensate the drag of a spacecraft operating at altitudes lower than 180 km in Earth's atmosphere, a RAM-EP concept could be a feasible solution.

In 2010, under ESA TRP contract, two test campaigns were carried out - one on a SAFRAN PPS1350 Hall Effect Thruster and one on a RIT-10 gridded ion engine - for performance characterization using atmospheric-representative propellant:

HET and RIT technologies are compatible with N₂/O₂ mixtures, which is of interest for RAM-EP applications in LEO (200-250 km).

Thruster lifetime is strongly affected by corrosion/erosion phenomena. However, with appropriate choice of materials, it is predicted that thruster lifetime could be in the 1000-10,000 hours range.

Exploration:

Potential Far-Term Future Applications – RAM-EP

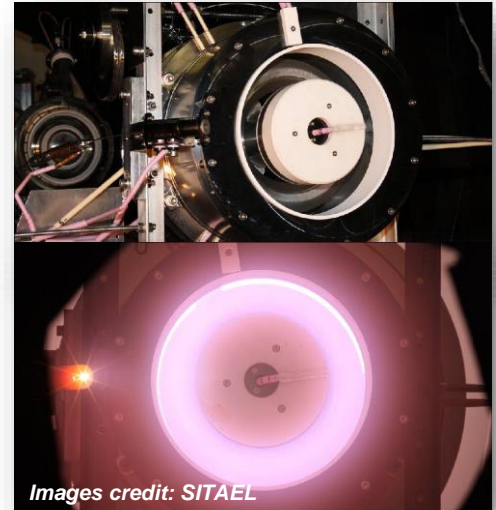


RAM-EP / Air-Breathing Electric Propulsion: History of ESA studies and developments

Industrial efforts carried out by SITAEL with support of QuinteScience and coordinated by ESA demonstrated experimentally the feasibility of such a concept in a ground facility.

The breadboard system tested in a vacuum chamber, comprised:

- a) a particle flow generator,
- b) a particle collector system,
- c) a HET thruster (to generate the required thrust) and
- d) a measurement system to characterize the flow and to obtain the forces.



Interplanetary Human Missions, MARS



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Land a crew of humans on Mars and return them safely, ensuring planetary protection for both, Earth and Mars,

Demonstrate human capabilities

needed to support human presence on Mars,

Perform exploration and

expand scientific knowledge taking maximum advantage of human presence including sample selection,

Assess suitability of planet for long term presence

Use of Electric Propulsion Systems for cargo



Required Knowledge



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Existence of life forms on Mars

Radiation Environment

Effects of Radiation on Humans

Medical and Physiological Aspects

Psychological Reactions

Martian Soil Properties

Martian Atmosphere Properties



Required Capabilities



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Assembly in Orbit

*Advanced Interplanetary
Propulsion*

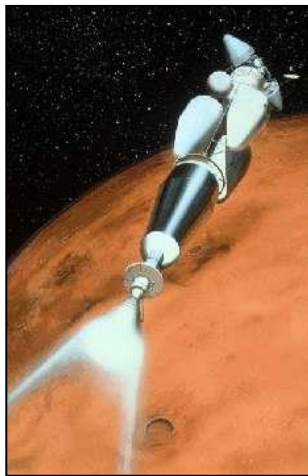
Light-weight Habitats

Life Support Systems

Aerocapture/Aerobraking

Descent and Landing

*Space Infrastructure
(Telecom, Navigation)*



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Cubesats Applications:

ESA's view on Cubesat propulsion



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- Cubesats originally intended for educational purposes and technology demonstrations but increasingly becoming attractive to **institutional and commercial users** for applications spanning from Earth Observation to Telecommunication, Information and even Exploration.
- **Propulsion capabilities are becoming crucial to enable mobility and enhance utilisation potential of CubeSats**
- Propulsion needed for insertion, station keeping, repositioning, **collision avoidance, deorbiting** but also for interplanetary transfers.
- Today, 100s of Cubesats are launched every year. Market forecast:
 - +50 CubeSat propulsion subsystems (EP or CP) under development in Europe, mainly by SME. Only few flight ready.
 - **+80 CubeSat propulsion subsystems in space**, from few suppliers and with limited return of experience: IOD missions with limited operation time and limited access to flight data.
- With a wide range of missions there is **no propulsion technology that fits all** and a portfolio of commercially ready technologies needed.
- Future **regulations on debris mitigation** may impose mandatory implementation of qualified and, perhaps, **independently certified propulsion** for CubeSats (e.g. for deorbiting/CAMs).
- Several announced (ESA) IOD missions to demonstrate propulsion capabilities but IOD is not (always) sufficient to demonstrate high technology readiness => **on ground qualification still required!**
- There are no official standards specific to CubeSat propulsion => necessity to tailor existing propulsion ECSS OR to create **dedicated ECSS and engineering guidelines** for Cubesat propulsion, particularly addressing **requirements for verification**, including life test.

- Strategic for cubesat propulsion:
 - **Cost reduction** while insuring performance, **reliability and safety**
 - **Increased reliability through ground testing** (including life demonstration)
 - Increased production rate
 - Availability of reliable microfabrication techniques, controlled manufacturing and cleanliness
 - Access to flight data from performed IODs to extract lessons learned.
 - Limit dependence on components subjected to export control restrictions.
 - Availability of test facilities, test methodologies, test equipment (e.g. to accurately measure static thrust down to μN level but also transients, noise, response time and MIB) and plume diagnostics:
- An **independent Test Center for End-to-End testing of Cubesats with propulsion** would offer a **unique capability** in Europe that will provide European industry with an opportunity to place **innovative, low-cost, enabling** propulsion technologies in the market with **reduced life cycle, increased maturity and reliability**.

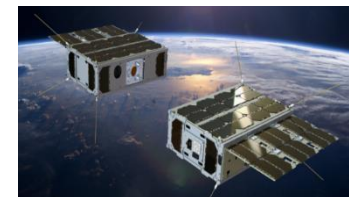
Cubesat mission needs



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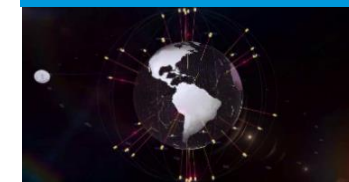
- The availability of propulsion may enable a wide range of future missions where specific capabilities are required:
 - new Earth Observation missions including constellations,
 - Telecommunication & Information missions in LEO including mega constellations,
 - In-orbit servicing and space debris monitoring,
 - Navigation constellations,
 - missions for astronomy and astrophysics and to study space weather
 - deep-space exploration.
- At present, the CubeSats available in the market that can host propulsion subsystems have a 3U (~5kg), 6U (~12kg), 12U (~20kg) and 16U (~30kg) form factor configuration.
- Cubesats require propulsion for insertion, repositioning, drag compensation, collision avoidance, disposal, precision pointing, formation flying, proximity operations, deep-space transfers.



RACE in close proximity



Eutelsat ELO constellation



Kineis constellation

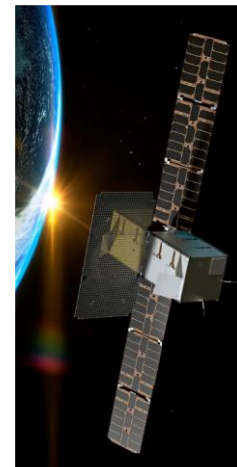
ESA Technology Cubesat IOD missions with Electric Propulsion



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- Main objectives for propulsion on ESA Cubesat IOD mission: **demonstrate high DV and 6 DoF.**
- ESA IOD Missions:
 - M-ARGO (Miniaturised Asteroid Remote Geophysical Observer): first stand-alone deep space 12U-XL Cubesat demonstrating an hybrid xenon-fed system made of cold gas thrusters and a RIT 3.5 gridded ion engine from Mars Space (UK) for 1-3 years low-thrust interplanetary transfer and 6 months close proximity operation at a Near Earth Object (NEO)
 - GOMX-5: 12U Cubesat from GomSpace (DK) demonstrating the iodine-fed NPT30 electric propulsion system from ThrustMe (FR) for large orbit transfer ($\Delta V > 280 \text{ m/s}$).
 - VMMO (Volatile & Mineralogy Mapping Orbiter): Lunar orbiter, planning to use FEEP for ΔV of 240-670 m/s depending on launch option.
 - E-Inspector, planning to use an electric propulsion system to reach and inspect a large debris.



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TDE – Innovative Propulsion for Cubesats & Microsats (Enpulsion)



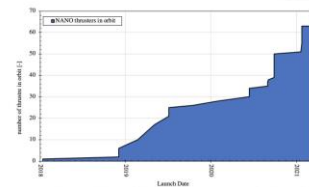
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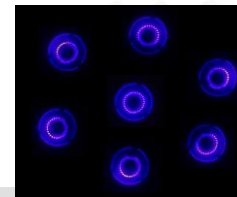
- Project also named **Enpulsion Nano AR3**
- Contractor:** Enpulsion (A)
- Objective:** to design, manufacture and test the IFM AR3 indium FEEP electric subsystem with segmented extractor at breadboard level (target TRL: 3/4).
 - Building on the flight heritage of the Enpulsion Nano (60+ in space), the Nano AR3 expands controllability towards active thrust vector control without moving parts.
 - Three-segmented extractor allows electrical field shaping, differential emission throttling, precise thrust vectoring.
- STATUS:**
 - Subsystem requirement and design review successfully completed.
 - Manufacturing of all parts of the subsystem ongoing.
 - Testing at ESA propulsion Laboratory planned to start in September (performance characterisation and endurance test)



- 63 ENPULSION NANOs in orbit
- More than 180 units delivered



- Enables thrust vector control
- No movable parts
- No need for heavy gimbals
 - Less complex
 - No added mass
- First flight model delivery in 2021



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TDE – Innovative Propulsion for Cubesats & Microsats (T4i)


- **Contractor:** T4i (I) with Opencosmos, Tyvak Int. (I) and University of Surrey (UK)
- **Objective:** to design, manufacture and test the E-REGULUS electric propulsion system at breadboard level (target TRL: 3/4).
 - E-REGULUS is an enhanced version (150W) of the 50W REGULUS system (IOD ongoing) using xenon instead of iodine as propellant.
 - Based on helicon plasma technology, it is a magnetically enhanced RF plasma thruster composed of a discharge chamber, an antenna and a magnetic field generator.
 - It does not use electrodes and does not require a neutraliser, thus allowing cost reductions and extended lifetime.






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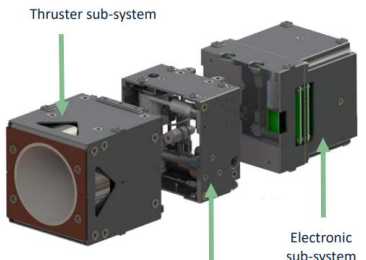




NOW FLYING!

Thrust Specific Impulse Total Impulse Required power Mass flow Propellant Volume Weight Electrical interfaces	0.25 – 0.65 mN (0.55 mN @ 50 W) Up to 650 s (550 s @ 50 W) 3000-11000 Ns (up to allowed tank size) 30 – 60 W (50 W nominal) 0.1 mg/s Solid Iodine (I ₂) 93.8 x 95.0 x 151.0 mm @ 3000 Ns 93.8 x 95.0 x 200.0 mm @ 11000 Ns 2.5 kg @ 3000 Ns CAN BUS, I2C with CSP protocol
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Thrust

Specific Impulse

Total Impulse

Required power

Mass flow

Propellant

Volume

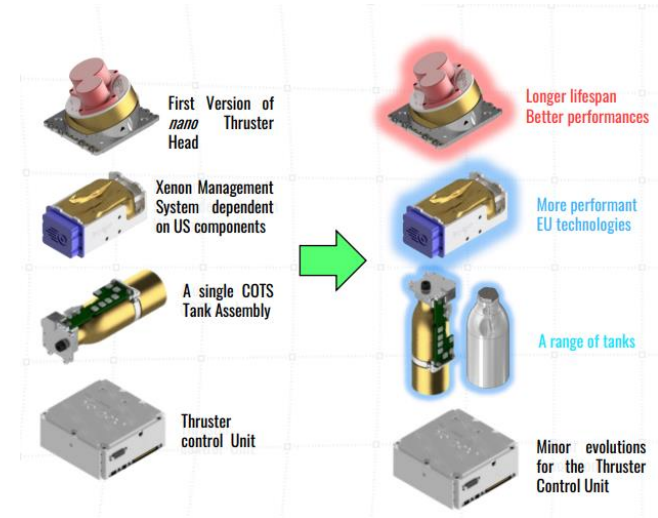
Weight

Electrical interfaces

	From 0.4 (modulable) From 500 s From 1500 Ns (up to allowed tank size) 50 – 150 W (150 W nominal) 0.2 mg/s Xenon (Xe) 93.0 x 96.0 x 245.7 (single-box configuration, without tank) Less than 4 kg CAN BUS, I2C with CSP protocol
--	---

TDE – Innovative Propulsion for Cubesats & Microsats (Exotrail)

- Project also named **Springboard**.
- **Contractor:** Exotrail (FR)
- **Objective:** to design, manufacture and test of the ExoMG™ - nano-L system at Breadboard level (target TRL: 3/4).
 - This is an electric propulsion system based on Hall Effect Thruster technology operating with Xenon and targeting longer lifespan (up to 5kNs), use of EU technologies and new tanks than the current flight ready version.
- **STATUS:**
 - Subsystem requirement and design review ongoing.
 - Testing at ESA propulsion Laboratory planned to start in Q1 2022 (performance characterisation and endurance test)



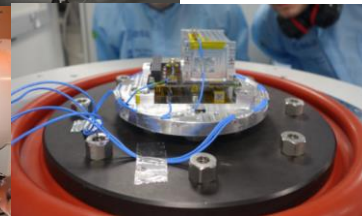
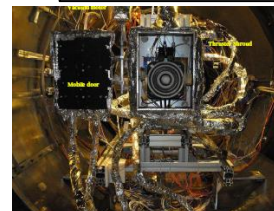
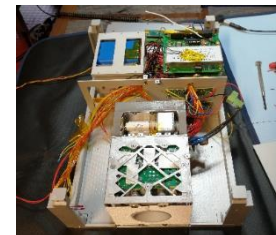
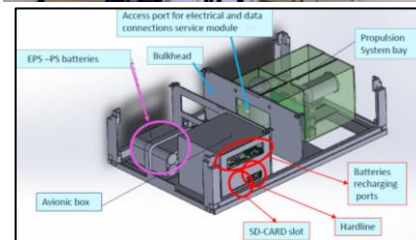
ESA plan to upgrade the ESA Propulsion Laboratory (EPL)

- The ESA Propulsion Laboratory (EPL) located at ESTEC has already capability to test Electric Propulsion and cold gas systems for Cubesats:
 - 7 vacuum test facilities, plume diagnostics, thrust balances,...
 - **Cubesat Propulsion Test Platform** to be commissioned in Q4 2021.
- ESA/EPL has submitted an internal plan to become the **ESA Test Center for Cubesats Propulsion** to support the development of innovative CubeSat propulsion in Europe and provide functional/ performance/ environmental test of CubeSats with firing propulsion (**End-to-End testing**).
- The plan foresees **incremental upgrades** starting with the upgrade of one existing facility to a **TVT test facility** by Q1 2022 to enable performance verification of electric and chemical propulsion subsystems in relevant thermal environment.

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EP Future Developments

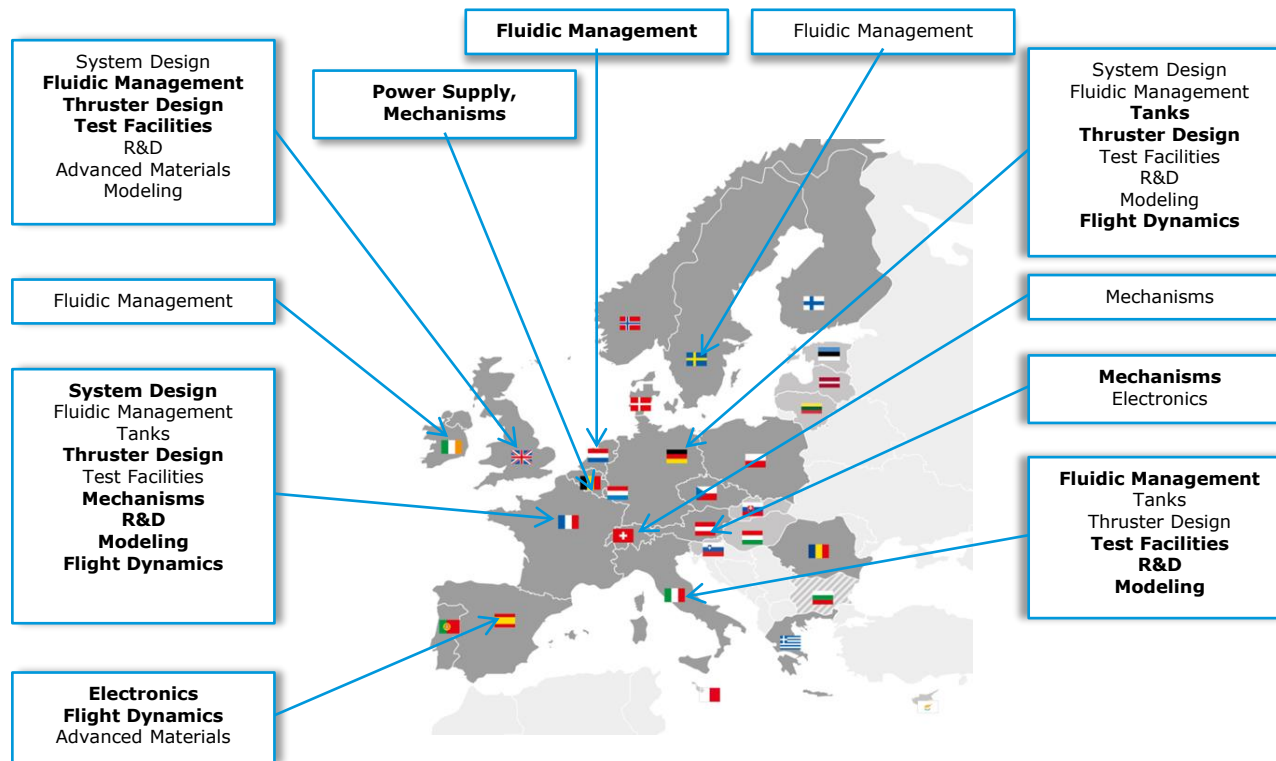


- **HALL EFFECT THRUSTER:** Extension of lifetime via magnetic confinement and double operation point (higher thrust during orbit raising and higher specific impulse during NSSK). TELECOMMUNICATION, Navigation and Science and Exploration missions will benefit from these developments. Power levels around 5 kW or higher. System activities, cost reduction and industrial production issues should be assessed.
- **ION ENGINE:** Reduction of the power to thrust ratio via the cusp design . TELECOMMUNICATION, Navigation and Science and Exploration missions will benefit from these developments. Power levels around 5 kW or higher. System activities, cost reduction and industrial production issues should be assessed.
- **HEMPT:** High power HEMPT with high lifetime (Germany and Italy) and different operation points to adapt the thruster output to the power of the solar array of the spacecraft. TELECOMMUNICATION, Navigation and Science and Exploration missions will benefit from these developments. Power levels around 5 kW or higher. System activities, cost reduction and industrial production issues should be assessed.
- **Mini-ion engines, FEEPs and mini-Hall effect thrusters, mini Helicon Antenna Thrusters** for science and Earth observation missions and **Cubesats**. Thrust levels from micro-Newtons to some milli-Newtons. Lifetime will be a special issue to be assessed.
- **Testing facilities:** The utilisation of High power engines will pose challenging requirements on acceptance testing facilities. The standardisation of testing methods will also be required to reduce cost and risk of EP developments.
- **New High Power Electric Propulsion** Concepts evaluation (Helicon Antenna Thruster, Electron Cyclotron Resonance thruster, MPD, E-Imapct thruster, etc.).

EP Capabilities in Europe



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EPIC: H2020 SRC for Electric Propulsion



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- Electric propulsion has been identified by European actors as a Strategic Technology for improving the European competitiveness in different space areas.
- **The European Commission (EC)** set up the “In-space Electrical Propulsion and Station-Keeping” Strategic Research Cluster (SRC) in Horizon 2020 with the goal of enabling major advances in Electric Propulsion for in-space operations and transportation, in order to contribute to the leadership of European capabilities in electric propulsion at global level within the 2020-2030 timeframe.
- The SRCs is implemented through a system of grants consisting of:
 - 1) “Programme Support Activity” (**PSA**): The main role of this PSA is to elaborate a roadmap and implementation plan for the whole SRC and provide advice to the EC on the calls for operational grants.
 - 2) Operational grants for R&D.

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EPIC: Programme Support Activity



- The European Commission (EC) has funded, as part of the Horizon 2020 Space Work Programme 2014, a Programme Support Activity (PSA) for the implementation of the **Strategic Research Clusters (SRC) on “In-Space electrical propulsion and station keeping”**.
- The “**Electric Propulsion Innovation & Competitiveness**” (**EPIC**) project is the PSA for the Electric Propulsion SRC funded as response to the H2020 Space COMPET-3-2014 topic.
- It was initiated in October 2014 and has a duration of **5 years**, during which it is meant to support the European Commission on the definition and successful implementation of the SRC in Horizon 2020, in order to achieve the objectives set for it and subsequently for Europe on this increasingly relevant technology area at worldwide level. The activities have been extended until 2023.
- **The EPIC PSA aims at providing advice to the EC preparing Roadmaps, drafting call texts and assessing results of the SRC operational grants.**
- The R&D work will come in the SRC as a part of future Calls made by the EC, open to all EU Member States and H2020 participants, and will be selected and supported through the normal Horizon 2020 grant procedures
- **EPIC PSA Partners: EPIC – ESA (coordinator), ASI, BELSPO, CDTI, CNES, DLR, UKSA, Eurospace, S4S**

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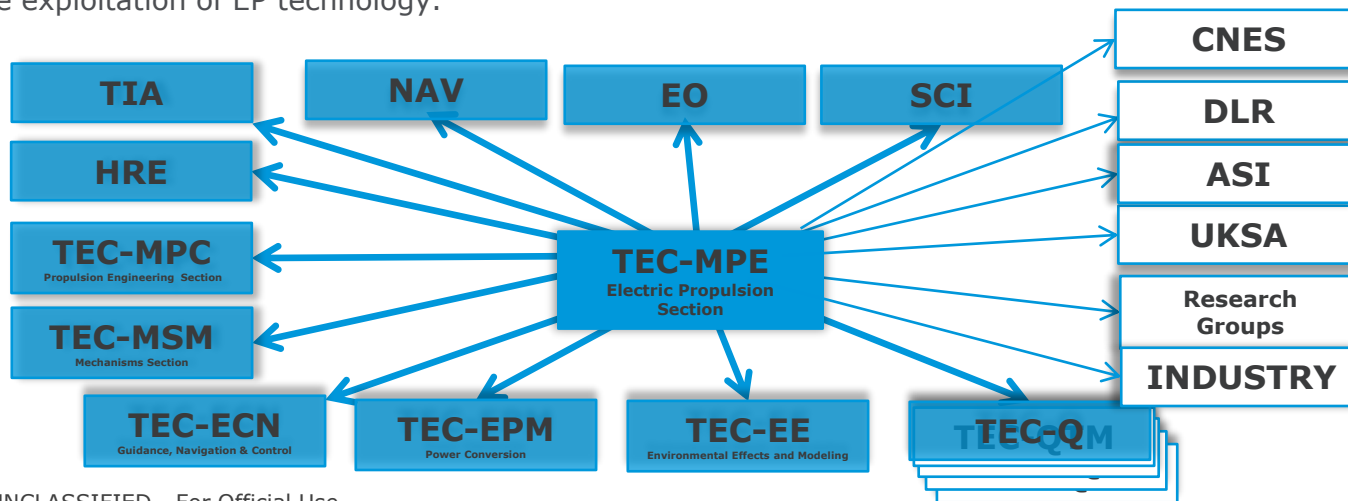
Electric Propulsion activities in ESA



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- The Electric Propulsion Section at ESA (TEC-MPE) coordinates all ESA activities in the field of electric propulsion.
- TEC-MPE is part of ESA's Directorate of Technical & Quality Management (D-TEC), which is the directorate providing engineering support to ESA's Application Directorates: Telecoms & Integrated Applications (TIA), Navigation (NAV), Earth Observation (EO), Science (SCI) and Human & Robotic Exploration (HRE).
- TEC-MPE interfaces with the many disciplines that are needed to support the development of technologies, right through to implementation of **flight ready systems**.
- The function of TEC-MPE, is entirely dependent on excellent working relationships with all European entities involved in the exploitation of EP technology.



Indication of regular interactions between specialist disciplines, customers & suppliers involving TEC-MPE.

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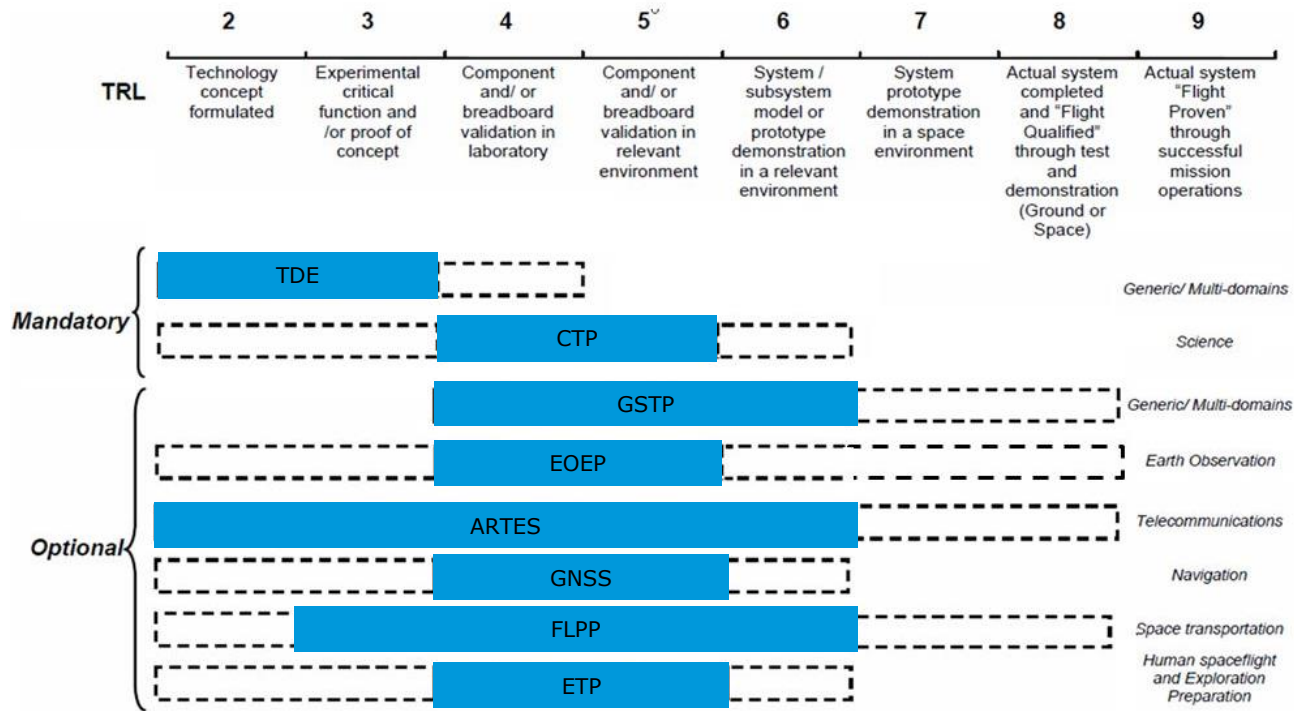


European Space Agency

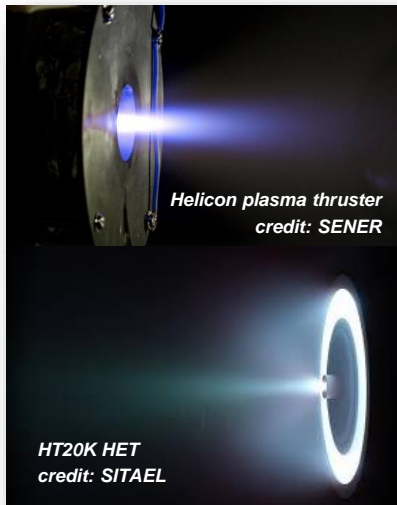
Electric Propulsion activities in ESA: ESA Technology Programmes



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EP development activities supported via a range of ESA programmes.



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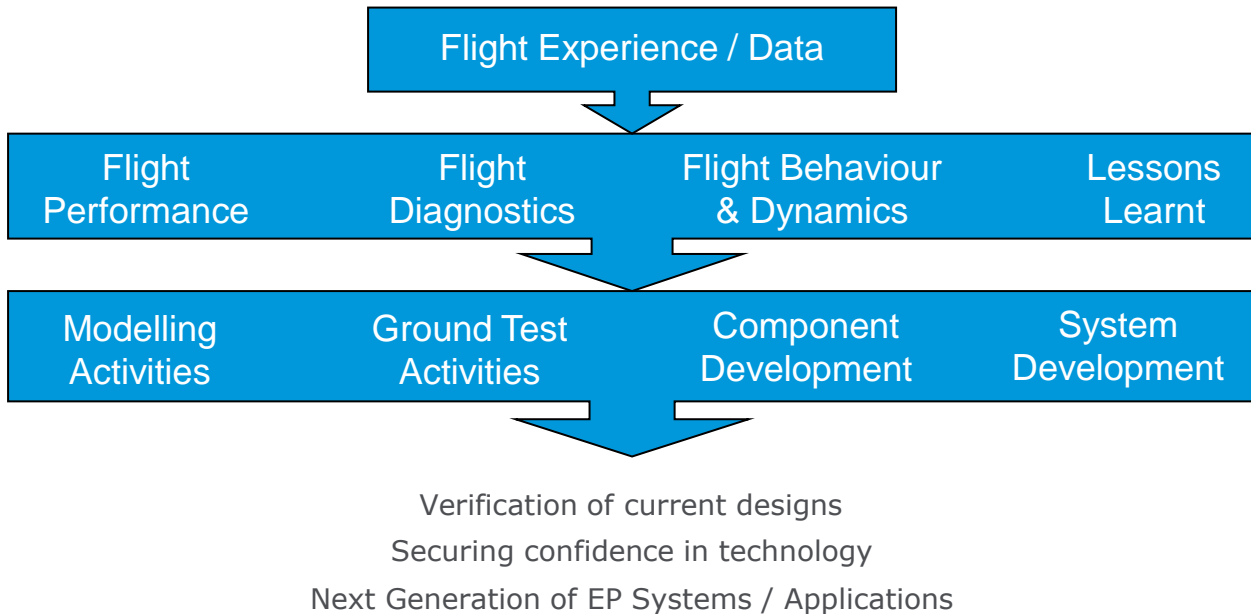
Electric Propulsion activities in ESA: Return of Experience from Flight Programs



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- Coordinated by TEC-MPE, dedicated activities are implemented to ensure maximum return of experience from Flight Programs, both institutional and commercial.



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Electric Propulsion activities in ESA: The ESA Propulsion Laboratory



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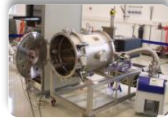


- The ESA Propulsion Laboratory (EPL) is located in ESTEC, The Netherlands.
- It provides test services to the Propulsion and Aerothermodynamics division of the European Space Agency, which is responsible for the technical support to ESA projects and the R&D activities in the areas of chemical propulsion, electric and advanced propulsion, and aerothermodynamics.

■ See talk:
Session 6, Fri 25 Oct, 12:15



CORONA



Micro Newton



Small Plasma Facility



FEPP



GIGANT



ELECTRON



GALILEO

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Electric Propulsion activities in ESA: The ESA Propulsion Laboratory



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- EPL today provides independent assessment on EP thrusters & propulsion components performances.
- Tests are mainly focussed on low power EP propulsion and cold-gas system.
- Future improvements are aiming at enabling measurement of thrust and thrust noise in μN regime for science and earth observation application (NGO, Euclid, NGGM) and at characterising mid-high power thrusters for science, navigation and telecommunication applications ($>2\text{kW}$).
- Planning and execution of performance characterization of electric thrusters (HET, GIE, FEEP, Resistojets), cold gas thrusters & propulsion components.
- Design, manufacturing and validation of diagnostics (thrust balances, data acquisition systems, beam probes) in collaboration with European industries/research centers.
 - ISO 17025 certification of thrust, mass flow and electrical power:
 - Force: $1\ \mu\text{N}$ – $500\ \text{mN}$
 - Mass flow: $1\ \mu\text{g/s}$ – $300\ \text{mg/s}$
 - Power: $1\ \text{mW}$ – $2\ \text{kW}$

Important and last Technology Developments

➤ Thrusters

- Higher and lower power versions of current engines (HETs, Ion Engines)
- HEMPT engine
- MEMS, Helicon Antenna Thrusters, In-Porous milliNewton thrusters, Micro-PPTs, etc.
- Mini-ion engines, mini-Hall Effect thrusters

➤ Components (emphasis on cost reduction)

- Xenon storage, regulation and flow control systems
- Cathodes and neutraliser

➤ Electric Propulsion in-flight Diagnostic Packages

➤ Verification Tools and techniques

- Advanced plume characterisation tools and models
- Electric Propulsion EMI validation facilities
- EP system design and performance verification models

➤ EP Implementation Support

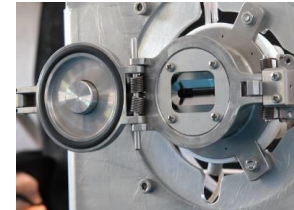
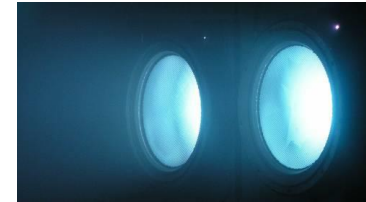
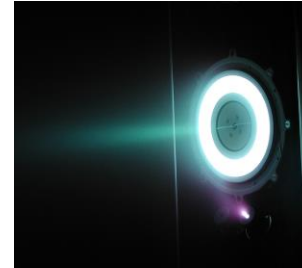
- Assessment of Flight data from missions in-orbit

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Optimisation of systems configurations



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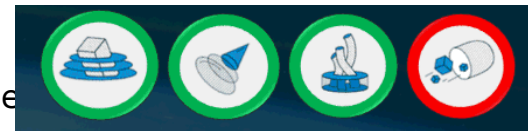


- **ESA responsibility:**

- make sure that the **right technology** will be available at the **right maturity** at the **right time** for future missions.

- **ESA technology targets:**

- 30% improvement of development time by 2023,
- one order of magnitude improvement in cost efficiency with every generation,
- 30% faster development and adoption of innovative propulsion technologies,
- inverting Europe's contribution to space debris by 2030.



- **Propulsion technology strategy:**

- Develop in-space propulsion:
 - to enable new, emerging applications
 - to enhance the creation of new markets
 - to enhance reliability and competitiveness of European propulsion products.

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Develop testing and diagnostic tools to enhance the capability for independent forecast and validation of the performances of European propulsion technologies.

Electric Propulsion activities in ESA: ESA Strategy



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- *Consolidation of the current European products (Hall Effect Thrusters, Gridded Ion Engines, field emission thrusters, HEMPT, MPD, etc.). In this process the qualification of the European products is one of the main activities together with the European autonomy in components. ESA aims to have full European systems where not only the thruster is European but also the other elements as well, such as pressure regulators, power processing units, neutralizers, etc.*
- *Utilization of heritage flight data (Artemis, Smart-1, GOCE, Inmarsat 4F, Intelsat 10, Astra 1K, Alphabus, BepiColombo etc.) to validate the models that will be used by spacecraft providers in the future.*
- *Standardization of engineering processes and testing facilities employed in the design, manufacturing and qualification of electric propulsion systems.*

Conclusion



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- Exploitation of Electric Propulsion in Europe has reached the end of the beginning, with mission success demonstrated for Telecom, Science and Earth Observation programmes.
- **High power EP (5kW) medium term applications:** telecommunication will be able to make an immediate use of these technologies or on orbit control and full or partial transfer.
- Later, Navigation, Science (interplanetary missions) and Exploration (the Moon, Asteroids and Mars) will require such systems.
- In order to improve European access, it is important to retain a capability to deliver alternative 5 Kw technologies. The power for these engines is around **5kW**.
- ESA is also developing micro thrusters such as **mini-ion engines, FEEPs, mini-Halls**, etc. with capability to fulfil stringent Science and Earth Observation requirements (LISA, NGGM, Euclid, microsatellites etc.). Airbus, ALTA, FOTEC, ENPULSION, etc. are busy with these developments where lifetime will have to be assessed.
- The Next evolution of the current engines developed today for high power (5kW) will have to provide higher LIFETIME, lower power to thrust ratio, higher specific impulses and be more efficient. These are the main challenges. **10 and 20 kW engines** will have to be developed.
- **Constellations of satellites** will make use of EP systems at very low prices due among several reasons to the large quantities. Low power engines for **constellations**.
- **Cubesats are a new market for Electric Propulsion.**
- ESA, Space Agencies and Industry have participated to the **EPIC** proposal within the European Community Horizon 2020 programme. ESA has been the coordinator of this proposal.

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