

CONFERS NEWSLETTER

2nd Quarter 2019

From the Desk of the Executive Director

It's hard to believe we're already halfway through 2019, especially when we look at the amount of work CONFERS has managed to accomplish so far.

CONFERS has continued to add new members and further refine our products. We welcomed four new members—Lockheed Martin, Space Initiatives, Space Works, and Trensipo—to bring the total membership to 28 organizations, and our Executive Committee has held regular meetings.

After we published our first set of [CONFERS Recommended Design and Operating Practices](#) in February, the Consortium submitted a formal request to Subcommittee 14 of the International Organization for Standards (ISO) to add a new work item on satellite servicing and begin discussions of an initial draft standard based on the CONFERS principles and practices.

We've also had a busy schedule of events, with three workshops held so far in 2019, where we continued discussions with our members on refining the existing CONFERS publications and developing new ones. Meanwhile, the CONFERS Technical Working Group continues to hold regular telecons to dive deeper on specific technical topics.

All of this is building to our second Global Satellite Servicing Forum, October 1-2, 2019 in Washington, DC. The Forum will bring together the international satellite servicing community to discuss markets, licensing, partnerships, and the role of commercial satellite servicing in enhancing space sustainability. More details about the Forum will be shared in the coming weeks, so stay tuned for updates!

Sincerely,
Dr. Brian Weeden
Executive Director, CONFERS
Director of Program Planning, Secure World Foundation

CONFERS Continues Developing Standards and Best Practices Through 2019 Workshop Series

By Ian Christensen, Stakeholder Engagement Coordinator

Since approving and releasing our first set of [Guiding Principles for Commercial Rendezvous and Proximity Operations \(RPO\) and On-Orbit Servicing \(OOS\)](#) in November 2018 and the [CONFERS Recommended Design and Operational Practices](#) in February 2019, CONFERS has continued to develop principles, practices, and technical standards that will enable commercial satellite servicing through a series of member (and invited government experts) workshops throughout the first half of 2019.

From April through June 2019, three CONFERS workshops were held in:

- Colorado Springs, CO in April 2019
- Washington, DC in May 2019
- London, United Kingdom in June 2019

We're currently planning our fourth workshop, which will be held Washington, DC in early September. Between each of these workshops, the CONFERS Technical Working Group (CTWG), a members-only team of technical experts, has held regular meetings to further develop CONFERS products for consideration by the larger membership.

The April 2019 workshop focused on finalizing the Consortium's first formal submission for the international standards development process through the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). At this workshop, CONFERS membership reviewed and finalized a work package, which we submitted to the ISO Technical Committee for Aircraft and Space Systems (TC20) Subcommittee for Space Systems and Operations (SC14). This work package is based on the CONFERS recommendations published in the [Guiding Principles for Commercial Rendezvous and Proximity Operations \(RPO\) and On-Orbit Servicing \(OOS\)](#) and the [CONFERS Recommended Design and Operational Practices](#). We hope that our submission will jumpstart ISO's work to develop high level standards related to satellite servicing. The ISO membership (composed of national delegations) is scheduled to vote on accepting this work package in June of 2019. As of this writing, we're awaiting to learn the results of the ISO vote.

The May and June workshops focused on deepening technical work produced by CONFERS. At these workshops, members began the process of revising and reviewing the existing Principles and Practices documents. Based on research conducted by the CONFERS team at the University of Southern California, our members began considering OOS interfaces as part of CONFERS recommended operating practices. We expect to continue discussing interfaces throughout the rest of 2019 in anticipation of a possible update to the [CONFERS Recommended Design and Operational Practices](#).

Members also discussed ongoing work on a CONFERS lexicon product, which would help ensure common terminology across the satellite servicing sector. The May and June workshops also provided opportunities for interaction between CONFERS members and various national governments, including briefings on licensing considerations related to OOS missions. During the June workshop, CONFERS members reviewed the draft agenda for the upcoming 2019 Global Satellite Servicing Forum (GSSF). You can read more about the GSSF in the feature by Rick Nobbs, below.

CONFERS will continue our efforts in the coming months. The CTWG continues to consider revisions to CONFERS products. During the membership workshop and meetings planned for September 2019, we hope to finalize updates to our existing publications in time for release at the 2019 GSSF.

CONFERS Submit Public Comments on Revamp of Commercial Space Oversight

By Brian Weeden, CONFERS Executive Director

The United States government is updating and reviewing the framework by which provides authorization and oversight of private sector space activities. The process began during the Obama Administration and was accelerated under the Trump Administration with the release of [Space Policy Directive 2](#) (SPD-2) in May 2018. SPD-2 directed the Secretary of Commerce and Secretary of Transportation to review and update existing licensing processes for commercial space launch and remote sensing. SPD-2 also directed the National Space Council to provide a report on updating export licensing regulations related to commercial space activities. In June 2018, the Trump Administration also released [Space Policy Directive 3](#) (SPD-3) on Space Traffic Management, which directed the Department of Commerce to begin developing a plan to provide civil space situational awareness (SSA) data and services to enhance safety of spaceflight.

As part of these updates, the U.S. government is required to provide public notice of the changes to the regulations and to allow public comments and feedback for a designated period of time. These notices are often made using a “Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM)” and the formal ex parte process for receiving public comments.

In the last year, CONFERS has provided [several public comments](#) to various NPRMs and Requests for Information (RFIs) that inform the way the U.S. government licenses commercial rendezvous and proximity operations (RPO) and on-orbit satellite servicing (OOS). In April, we provided input to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) on their proposal to revamp the orbital debris mitigation requirements in their radiofrequency spectrum licenses (specifically, the requirement to notify the FCC of any spacecraft that will be engaging in RPO activities). In April, we provided comments to both the Department of Commerce and Department of State on the current export control licensing regime and called for ongoing dialogue with industry about revising and streamlining the process and moving many of the technologies for commercial OOS and RPO from the U.S. Munitions List to the Commerce Control List. In May, CONFERS provided comments on the Commerce Department’s request for information about the role industry can play in enhancing civil SSA, the importance of industry best practices and standards for STM, and our concerns about the impact that restricting non-Earth imaging could have on commercial RPO and OOS.

Through these comments, CONFERS provided our members with a strong, unified voice that is shaping future licensing and regulatory regimes. Going forward, we will look for additional opportunities to provide feedback to and engage with the United States and other governments as they put in place the oversight frameworks to enable commercial RPO and OOS to thrive in a sustainable manner.

Global Satellite Servicing Forum 2019

By Rick Nobbs, CONFERS Program Manager

Last year, we held the first [Global Satellite Servicing Forum](#) (GSSF) to showcase the changes and excitement in the commercial satellite servicing world—and it was a big success! A max-capacity crowd listened to “flash talks” where many of our members described their technologies and business plans, along with panel discussions on market opportunities and policy challenges. Keynotes from the U.S. Department of Commerce and NASA, as well as a panel of regulators from the United States, France, and the United Kingdom added a governmental perspective.

For 2019, we are planning an even bigger and better GSSF, which will be held at the FHI 360 Conference Center in Washington, DC on October 1-2, 2019. We are expanding the depth of discussions on the potential market for commercial satellite servicing and how to push past the policy and regulatory challenges. Government and industry representatives will be discussing how public-private partnerships for satellite servicing can provide benefits for civil, national security, and commercial applications and space exploration. The detailed agenda will be available in the near future on the [GSSF page](#) within the CONFERS website.

For more information about sponsorships and speaking opportunities, please contact Rick Nobbs at rick.nobbs@ati.org.

Upcoming activities for 2019

By Rick Nobbs, CONFERS Program Manager

While we have had a full agenda for the first half of 2019, there's much more to come:

- Workshop 7, Washington, DC, September 4-5
- UK Space Conference, Wales, September 24-26 (stop by the CONFERS booth)
- CONFERS General Assembly, Washington DC, September 30
- GSSF, Washington DC, October 1-2
- International Astronautical Congress (IAC), Washington DC, October 21-25 Oct CONFERS will be participating in a panel and will have a booth at the show)

Additionally, the Executive Committee is working to schedule a virtual event over the summer; more information on this member-only event is coming soon!

For more information about these events, please contact Rick Nobbs at rick.nobbs@ati.org