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Egyptian Space Policy (725 words)

Stated Goals for Space

Egypt's primary formalized space objective is the localization and transfer of space technology to achieve self-reliance in building and launching satellites from its own territory.¹ This goal aims to reduce dependence on foreign contractors and secure sovereign access to data that is critical for national planning and development.² Additionally, Egypt seeks to establish itself as a regional leader and hub for space cooperation within both the African and Arab worlds,³ aligning with its broader policy approaches. The hosting of the African Space Agency (AfSA) headquarters in Cairo, Egypt is a direct operationalization of this strategy.⁴ Recently, Egypt has also set goals for deep space exploration, specifically through its participation in the China-led International Lunar Research Station (ILRS) project, which aims to establish a permanent lunar base by the 2030s.⁵

Within the nation's science policy agenda, space is treated as a high-level priority, albeit secondary to pressing military and short-term security imperatives. Therefore, it could be argued

¹ "Egypt: National Priorities." *World Economic Forum*, n.d. <http://initiatives.weforum.org/future-space-community/case-study-details/egypt:-national-priorities/aJYTG000000d2z4AA>.

² Iderawumi, Mustapha. "Egypt Launches SPNEX Satellite, Advances Domestic Space Manufacturing." *Space in Africa*, December 14, 2025. <https://spaceinafrica.com/2025/12/14/egypt-launches-spnex-satellite-advances-domestic-space-manufacturing/>; "Egypt Launches SPNEX Satellite Aboard China's Lijian-1 Y11 Rocket." *SatelliteProMe*, December 2025. <https://satelliteprome.com/news/operators/satellite/egypt-launches-spnex-satellite-aboard-chinas-lijian-1-y11-rocket/>.

³ "Arab Republic of Egypt." *African Space Agency*, n.d. <https://africanspaceagency.org/arab-republic-of-egypt/>.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Iderawumi, Mustapha. "Egypt Joins China-Led International Lunar Research Station Initiative." *Space in Africa*, December 8, 2023. <https://spaceinafrica.com/2023/12/08/egypt-joins-china-led-international-lunar-research-station-initiative/>.

that Egypt's space ambitions are significantly motivated by its national security imperatives. The Egyptian Space Agency (EgSA), established in 2018, is an independent public authority directly affiliated with the President of the Republic, which indicates top-tier executive support.⁶ The state views space technology as a “catalyst for socio-economic growth” and a vital tool for international collaboration.⁷ This priority is further evidenced by significant infrastructure investments coming from within and beyond, including the development of Space City and a China-funded Assembly, Integration, and Testing (AIT) center, for instance.⁸

Moreover, Egypt's participation in the Chinese ILRS initiative, while maintaining cooperation with European and African space partners, reflects a deliberate strategy of multi-alignment in the evolving global space order. Its decision not to join the American-led Artemis Accords⁹ further underscores this effort to preserve strategic flexibility across competing space blocs.

Connection with Science Policy Goals

Egypt's space ambitions are deeply and pragmatically integrated with its broader science and development policies, aligning with the wider orientation of African space governance (particularly through AfSA) to harness outer space as a tool for socioeconomic development and state capacity, rather than to reinvent the wheel technologically. A notable example is the

⁶ “The Egyptian Space Agency.” *International Space Education Board*, n.d. <https://iseb.space/member/egsa/>; Maher, Mohamed. “Egypt's Failure to Join Artemis Space Accords May Be a Costly Miscalculation.” *Al-Fanar Media*, August 19, 2025. <https://al-fanarmedia.org/2025/08/egypts-failure-to-join-artemis-space-accords-begs-the-question-why/>.

⁷ Ahmed, Ayman. “From TIBA-1 to NEXSAT-1, What's Next for Egypt's Space Ambitions?” *Italian Institute for International Political Studies*, November 24, 2024. <https://www.ispionline.it/en/publication/from-tiba-1-to-nexsat-1-whats-next-for-egypts-space-ambitions-191507>.

⁸ “Arab Republic of Egypt.” *African Space Agency*; Winter, Lucas. “New Milestone in China's Support for Egypt's Space Program.” *T2COM G2*, April 1, 2023. <https://oe.t2com.army.mil/product/new-milestone-in-chinas-support-for-egypts-space-program/>.

⁹ Maher, “Egypt's Failure to Join Artemis Space Accords.”

utilization of outer space to advance climate action and innovation, where satellites such as SPNEX function as research platforms to track climate impacts and changes in the ionosphere.¹⁰ They also advance sustainable development by supplying high-resolution space-based data to the national strategy, supporting agriculture, urban planning, water management, and disaster risk reduction.¹¹

Through its "Investment in People" (IIP) program, EgSA connects space technology with education, offering master's scholarships, internships, and workshops to incentivize and train a new generation of Egyptian scientists and engineers.¹² The AfSA aims to do the same to cultivate the next generation of emerging African space experts. Finally, space assets are utilized to monitor desert borders and coastal lines to meet national security objectives in Egypt,¹³ which are, once again, a top priority to the region's military powerhouse.

Supporting Constituencies & Opposition

Reflected in the examples of investments mentioned above and further mentioned below, support for Egypt's space regime comes from a broad coalition of domestic and international stakeholders. Within the government, the presidency and executive leadership provide its legal and political foundation, while the scientific community, particularly the Academy of Scientific Research and Technology (ASRT), partners on funding and research for projects like SPNEX.¹⁴ Internationally, China is the principal backer, contributing more than \$140 million in grants and

¹⁰ Egypt: National Priorities." *World Economic Forum*; Iderawumi, "Egypt Launches SPNEX Satellite;" "Egypt Launches SPNEX Satellite," *SatelliteProMe*.

¹¹ Ahmed, "From TIBA-1 to NEXSAT-1."

¹² Ibid.; "Arab Republic of Egypt." *African Space Agency*.

¹³ Ibid.; Winter, "New Milestone in China's Support for Egypt's Space Program."

¹⁴ Iderawumi, "Egypt Launches SPNEX Satellite."

technical support,¹⁵ alongside cooperation from Russia, the European Union and Italy in particular, and the African Union, reinforcing Egypt's position as a regional space hub.¹⁶

Although there is little formally or publicly documented domestic political opposition to Egypt's space policy, Egyptian experts and commentators have raised strategic concerns about the country's decision not to join the Artemis Accords.¹⁷ Critics such as journalist Mohamed Maher and lunar geologist Farouk El-Baz argue that this choice risks sidelining Egypt in the global space race in such a high-stakes geopolitical gamble, with El-Baz emphasizing that management challenges, rather than technical capacity, are the primary barrier to joining major international space partnerships.¹⁸ Taken together, these critiques highlight that Egypt's space strategy hinges less on technological ambition than on its ability to manage its regional position and partnerships, coordinate institutions, and convert external cooperation into sustainable domestic capacity.

¹⁵ Winter, "New Milestone in China's Support for Egypt's Space Program."

¹⁶ "Arab Republic of Egypt." *African Space Agency*; Ahmed, "From TIBA-1 to NEXSAT-1."

¹⁷ Maher, "Egypt's Failure to Join Artemis Space Accords."

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

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