

European Expert Centre for Space Safety providing services and support for space surveillance and traffic management

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Developed within ESA's SSA and Space Safety Programme (S2P), the Expert Centre for Space Safety provides subject matter expertise and operational services to coordinate SST data acquisition by a multitude of diverse sensors. It supports a variety of applications including tasked tracking, survey, and characterization observations by means of passive optical, satellite laser ranging (SLR), and radar techniques. A core service consists in the validation and qualification of sensors for the mentioned applications. The service includes technical support to sensor operators by experts to achieve compliance with data calibration and quality, as well as data formatting requirements. All formats and interfaces used by the Expert Centre are based on international standards and the data quality requirements are derived by the user community.

Coordinating observation campaigns for customers, in particular ESA, is another important service offered by the Centre. Such campaigns may include very heterogeneous types of sensors operated by commercial companies, academia, government, and inter-governmental institutions. The Expert Centre takes care of the sensor planning, the data quality control, calibration and reformatting of the data if necessary, as well as the monitoring of key performance indices defined in service level agreements.

In terms of object characterization, the Expert Centre focuses in particular on establishing and maintaining a catalogue of attitude information by fusing observations from different techniques, such as light curves, SLR and radar measurements.

The paper will illustrate the different services and operational capabilities with examples of sensor qualifications and extensive survey, tracking and characterization observation campaigns which involved more than a dozen optical, SLR and radar sensors.

The Expert Centre is hosted and operated by the Astronomical Institute of the University of Bern, Switzerland (AIUB) and may serve as a reference for future national expert centres and site-specific deployments within ESA.