Shared Legacy, Collective Future: An Abrahamic Approach to Space Cooperation in the MENA Region

The Abrahamic model of space exploration bridges the ancient view of the heavens - once defined by religion and earthly use such as navigation and time measuring - with a modern, collective drive for progress. Historically, the Middle East was the cradle of astronomy, where stars served as a roadmap for both time and purpose. Today, this tradition is being reborn through the Abraham Accords, unlocking new frontiers in research, communication, and regional prosperity.

In the modern Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, the Abrahamic traditions - Judaism, Christianity, and Islam - continue to share a profound cultural and ethical architecture that shapes daily life, even amidst contemporary geopolitical complexities. While the specific rituals differ, the underlying values of hospitality, charity and communal gathering remain universal.

By aligning resources under shared ethical and cultural standards, MENA nations can navigate the stars as a unified team rather than competitors. Ultimately, space transcends national boundaries, fulfilling a bond that has long held these cultures together under the same sky.

National visions

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region is currently navigating a pivotal shift in its economic and technological trajectory. Long defined by its terrestrial energy resources (e.g. Oil and natural Gas) - the region is now looking toward the day after fossil fuel, with bold visions relying on Knowledge based economy where AI and Space play a pivotal role.

In many of the MENA region, and especially in the Gulf, there are bold visions for the future (Saudi Vision 2030, the UAE "We the UAE", Oman vision 2040" are good examples). These visions of the future focus on a vast area of topics, and ALL emphasize the importance of space for scientific, economic, security and educational progress and prosperity. Moreover, many MENA countries are signatories to the NASA lead "Artemis Accords" (As of February 2026, countries of the region that already signed the accords includes the UAE, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Israel and the newcomer – Oman). Within the innovative national strategies, the "New Space" economy can be viewed as a primary pillar.

MENA as a space hub

The MENA region possesses several inherent physical advantages that make it an ideal candidate for a unified space ecosystem. Its proximity to the equator is a significant asset; launches from lower latitudes require less fuel to reach geostationary orbits, providing a direct cost advantage over higher-latitude sites in Europe or Northern Asia.

Regional space port could be a profitable business – as we see more commercial companies developing satellite launch vehicles (SLV) – especially from Europe. To launch these (relatively) small launchers from the MENA region, especially from the Gulf, bares huge advantages. The development of regional commercial space launch centers in the region will give a huge boost to economy, and for the regional space ecosystem.

Clear signs of the development of large-scale commercial space infrastructure can be seen in the United Arab Emirates, where one of the largest infrastructures in the world has been established for the serial production of satellites (Orbital Space, a company operating in Abu Dhabi). Additional infrastructures that can provide not only employment but also develop the entire economy of the region will become a reality in the not-too-distant future. This activity combines excellent relations with countries outside the region (the USA, Korea, Finland, and others) and some of the activity also serves the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the BRICS. Deep cooperation between the countries of the region themselves will benefit not only from the ties among them but will strengthen the MENA region in general vis-à-vis space agencies and space companies from around the world.

Towards a unified regional space policy

Today, several national space agencies operate in the region (Israel, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Egypt, Oman, Qatar) and space activity on a more modest scale takes place in other countries (such as Jordan). In the Gulf region, two trends can be identified that are occurring simultaneously: a kind of "space race" (between the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia) on the one hand, and space cooperation on the other (between Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates, in the development of the "Arab Satellite" shared by a large number of Arab countries led by the United Arab Emirates).

In the field of future cooperation, the model of the European Space Agency (ESA) can be pointed to as a viable option for space cooperation between the countries of the region. The day when a regional space agency (MENA SPACE AGENCY) will be established may not be close, but the benefits inherent in real, deep cooperation, which includes the division of responsibilities, areas of activity and joint funding - are obvious. A collective regional approach might lead to creating a regional "Space Law Treaty" – in line with the Outer Space Treaty, the Artemis Accords and the already existing space laws of various countries in the region.

Resilience

One of the biggest challenges today in the use of space is resilience. The space environment is increasingly filled with thousands of new satellites every year, traffic is becoming congested and dense, and the risk of collisions is increasing alarmingly. Sharing information about the orbital elements of the countries in the region is critical, and joint management of the satellites from the region is an interesting future option with many advantages.

Furthermore, agreements between countries in the region - whereby it will be possible to use the satellites of one country if the satellites of another country are damaged (whether for technical reasons, hostile activity or sudden events such as increased solar activity) will provide functional continuity for the entire region. Furthermore, instead of each country investing in its own multi-satellite array, the resilience of the entire system will come from the multiplicity of satellites in the region. It is possible, and likely, that in the first phase, military satellites will not be included in the regional satellite array - but this should not be ruled out for future calculations - in a bid to establish military ties and alliances between countries that already have military ties and alliances.

Joint space projects – towards the "Abraham Sat"

In the first stage, long before the establishment of a regional space agency, one can think of an achievable goal for the very near future - the establishment of a joint space research program. One could think of expanding an educational program for building microsatellites (like Israel's TEVEL program) in which high school students take part in the design and construction of microsatellites - and expanding it to a regional mission in which schools and educational institutions from the region take part (in the design, production, operation of ground stations, etc.).

Furthermore - the development of a joint satellite for the Abraham Accords countries could be a real accelerator for the realization of the regional vision for cooperation in space. The "Abraham Satellite" could serve as a pioneer in the trend of being able to develop a space solution for shared needs on the ground - such as water resource management, combating desertification, and more. The most immediate benefit of a collective MENA space strategy is the application of satellite technology to the region's most pressing environmental challenges: water scarcity, food security, and desertification. These issues are transnational and would be more difficult and expensive to solved by individual states acting in isolation. The MENA region reflects unique environmental challenges and characteristics, joint space-based research on **Transboundary Aquifer Management, Climate Mitigation and Precision Agriculture** might be suitable for cooperation and collaboration.

A preliminary, more modest and achievable goal in the immediate term is the establishment of a regional space forum that will meet regularly, hold space conferences, and hold workshops between the countries of the region - for the sake of the common goals that will be defined. Important international space conferences are already being held in Israel, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Oman - but an institutional framework for a dedicated space conference for the countries of the region has not yet been established - and the non-governmental sector (Such as the International Astronautical Federation, The International Space University and other NGO's) may have an important role in advancing the issue.

Towards a borderless horizon

The transition from a 'Shared Legacy' to a 'Collective Future' requires MENA leaders to rethink sovereignty. In the vacuum of space, national borders vanish; only Vision transformed into technological reliability remain. By trading competitive nationalism for a strategic, integrated approach, the region can evolve from a consumer of space technology to a primary architect of a new model for space economy, cooperative and influential – bringing shared heritage to new height, and to a shared vision and prosperity.