



Space Venture 2024:

Global Investment Dynamics



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1 SPACE VENTURE 2024 KEY TAKEAWAYS

ESPI's **Space Venture** is intended to inform space sector policymakers and the broader public on how private investment in the sector is evolving, seeking to support future policies in **optimising the use of public funds** to attract further private capital in **attaining the wider societal and economic benefits of space**. The report serves as a reference point for understanding space investment dynamics globally, with specific regional insights. While focused on venture-backed companies, it also covers other deal types and established firms (see Methodology in Annex A).

Global Investment Dynamics

- Global investment in space ventures has reached **€6.9 billion in 2024, a 6% YoY increase**.
- **Together, China and Europe represented 50% of tracked global investment**, both hitting record-high levels. Scaleup funding is rising in both and is set to drive future dynamics.
- **VC funding represented 72% of tracked global investment**, but debt instruments have increased in importance in 2024, reaching a peak of €540 million.
- Private consortia provided more than **80%** of the funding in North America, while in Europe and Asia, the interplay between public and private investors is much **more prevalent**.

European Investment Dynamics

- European space ventures have attracted a **record €1.5 billion in 2024**, the largest single-year increase (56% YoY) since 2014. Companies targeting **security account for a record 40% of the total**, largely enabled by public actors, as over 80% of it came from public or mixed investor consortia.
- Since 2014, ESPI has recorded **€9.8 billion** across 631 transactions, with a 40% CAGR.
- **The top five ventures** have attracted €681 million in 2024. The biggest transaction of the year was Safran's acquisition of PreliGens for €220 million.
- **Growth-stage investment is showing a strong upward trend**, with €473 million secured in Series C+ rounds. Among these, in 2024, Europe saw its first-ever Series E.
- **Top countries by investment secured since 2014:** 1) UK; 2) France; 3) Germany; 4) Finland; 5) Spain; 6) Switzerland.
- **Top countries by investment attracted in 2024:** 1) France; 2) Germany; 3) UK; 4) Spain; 5) Finland; 6) Italy.

Insights on China, Africa, and Japan (ESPI Partnerships)¹

- **China:** Satcom drove the country's performance in 2024, with constellation operators raising €1 billion. Other verticals, such as EO have seen a decline in funding since 2020.
- **Africa:** In 2024, while four companies raised a total of \$30.3 million across six funding rounds, 86% of African space companies relied on self-funding for their financing.
- **Japan:** The ecosystem is maturing; between 2020 and 2024, 80% of the investment went to Series B and later rounds, compared to only 41% between 2015 and 2019.

¹ The data and analysis for these sections were developed in partnership with OrbitalGateWay Consulting, SpaceinAfrica, and SPACETIDE, respectively, in cooperation with ESPI. Numbers and outcomes can differ from the ESPI database/research.

2 EXECUTIVE TAKE(S): WHAT ARE THE CURRENT GLOBAL DYNAMICS?

In 2024, three main trends that deviate from previous years have been observed, notably (i) the relative rise of China and Europe in the global context, (ii) an opposite 3-year trend between the U.S. and Europe when assessing the public budgets/investment ratio, and (iii) increased targeting of security & defence markets by European startups and scaleups.

2.1 China and Europe Drive Global Investment Dynamics

In 2024, global investment in space ventures (see Definition in Annex A) amounted to **€6.9 billion** across 265 rounds, rebounding 6% from the 4-year low recorded in 2023. The highlight, however, lies in the regions driving this growth.

For the first time since 2019, U.S. ventures secured less than half of the global investment. On the flip side, in 2024, **Europe and China combined accounted for 50% of all investment**. While the U.S.'s share peaked at 85% in 2021, it accounted for only 41% in 2024. **What happened?**

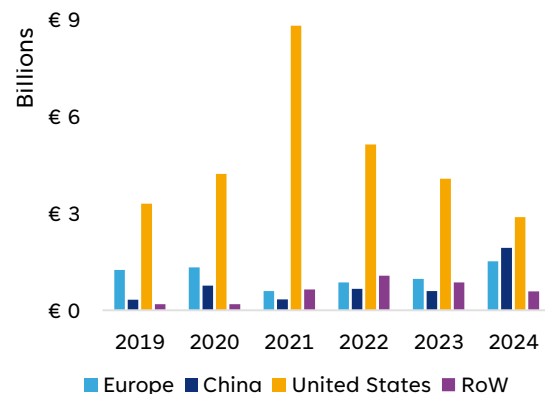


Figure 1: Funding per Region/Country

First, there was an **absolute decrease** in U.S. investment, from a peak of €8.8 billion to a 6-year low of €2.9 billion. The decrease can be explained by **pressures on the supply of capital** due to higher interest rates. **But the demand for capital may also have been cut short** as many U.S. space scaleups have exited early through SPACs and acquisitions. Moreover, the maturing of the U.S. space venture ecosystem results in increased revenues, which, in conjunction with massive prior funding rounds, extended the runways of those that are not publicly listed.

Second, there was also an important **relative decline**, as a function of **China and Europe reaching record levels of investment, at €1.9 billion and €1.5 billion respectively**. These countries see the emergence of their first scaleups, leading to higher funding rounds, while still featuring vibrant early-stage funding. **The global landscape is now more diverse than ever**, and this trend is expected to deepen in the years to come.

2.2 Comparing Private Investment and Public Space Budgets

While (quasi-)private investment in the space sector is growing globally, **institutional support remains essential**. In the past three years, **the ratio of private investment and public space budgets has decreased in the U.S. and increased in Europe**, reaching 4% and 9%, respectively, in 2024, revealing distinct dynamics. In the U.S., investment has declined while the space budget continued to grow. In Europe, by contrast, space budgets have risen marginally, while investment has surged. Beyond the simple arithmetic, it is worth noting **two different public support strategies for scaling the space sector through private markets**. In the U.S., public support functions primarily as a market guarantee through large, recurring procurement contracts. In Europe, public actors often also

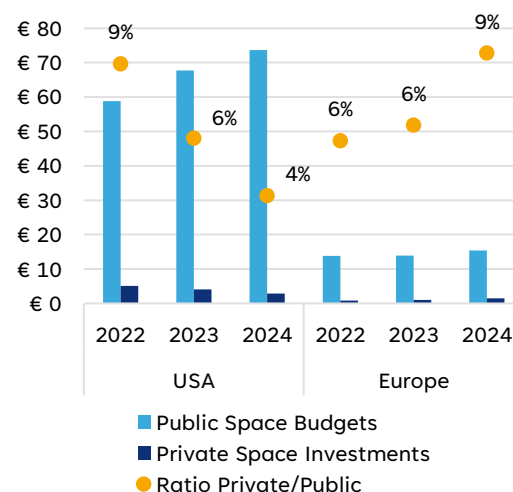


Figure 2: Ratio of public budget to private investments

operate as co-investors, directly funding or anchoring private capital rounds (see chapter 3.3).

2.3 Catching the Zeitgeist? European Space Ventures for Security & Defence

Defence spending is set to drive the expansive fiscal policy in Europe. The space sector, instrumental to Europe's security needs, is poised to benefit from these expenditures. Europe has many gaps in defence capabilities, and space is a domain where these are especially pressing, namely in ISR and secure satcom, and their supply chains.

How are Space Ventures contributing to these efforts? Analysing strategies of companies in our database identifies a clear increase in companies explicitly targeting security & defence markets.¹

Notwithstanding OneWeb and O3b Networks, with relevance for defence users, but targeting a much wider market base, the trend towards product and service offerings relevant for defence is clearly visible, **with over €600 million invested in these companies in 2024 alone. This accounts for more than a third of the total in this segment since 2014.** Notably, the relative weight of investment in space ventures with explicit security business lines reached an all-time high of 40%. The public sector was instrumental in fuelling this dynamic, as more than 80% of the 2024 investment in these companies was done through public or mixed (public and private) investor consortia. One such example is the NATO Innovation Fund, which has invested in 3 European space ventures in 2024.

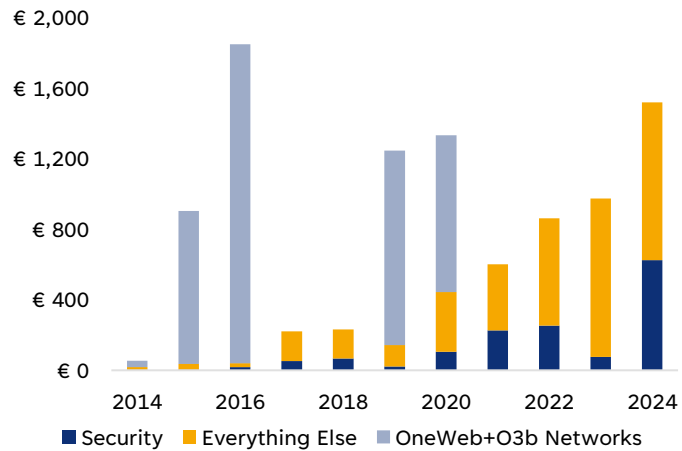


Figure 3: Investment in European Space Ventures with those targeting Security Markets Highlighted

Moving to national comparisons, **over half of the 2024-backed ventures targeting security are in the UK and France.** Importantly, relative to others, some countries with a high number of these companies do not foresee a substantial increase in defence spending (e.g., France due to its high debt level, Spain and Portugal due to their distance from Ukraine). In turn, this can spur **local ventures targeting these markets in countries such as Germany, Poland and Sweden**, as we can expect a high share of these public expenditures to prioritise national industries.

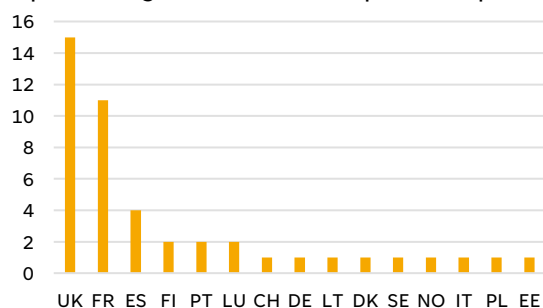


Figure 4: Geographic Distribution of European Space Ventures w/ Security Business Lines that have raised at least one funding round

Security is now playing an increasingly important role in Europe's space venture ecosystem, driving investment and, even more critically, creating demand for services and products. Moreover, the Trump administration's review of the U.S. foreign policy led Europe to rethink its reliance in its strategic autonomy calculus. Therefore, **the unfolding year is expected to at the very least continue, if not accelerate, this trend.**

¹ Space ventures dedicated to satellite manufacturing and subcomponents are generally excluded, as most of the time they do not have separate business lines for defence, instead, we focused on operators of space infrastructure, data analytics and other service companies. Moreover, **this does not mean that all investment was raised with the sole purpose of defence & security.** Often, these companies have different business lines and also target other sectors. However, over the last years, an increase in focus and overt statements/disclosures that defence & security are a part of the companies' target markets is notable, especially in analytics and SSA.

3 SPACE VENTURE: GLOBAL

Global investment in space ventures reached **€6.9 billion** across 265 funding rounds in 2025, up 6% from the previous year, with deal activity rising marginally by 1%. Since 2019, the sector has sustained a 6% compound annual growth rate (CAGR). Despite this growth, global investment remains 33% below the 2021 peak of €10.4 billion.

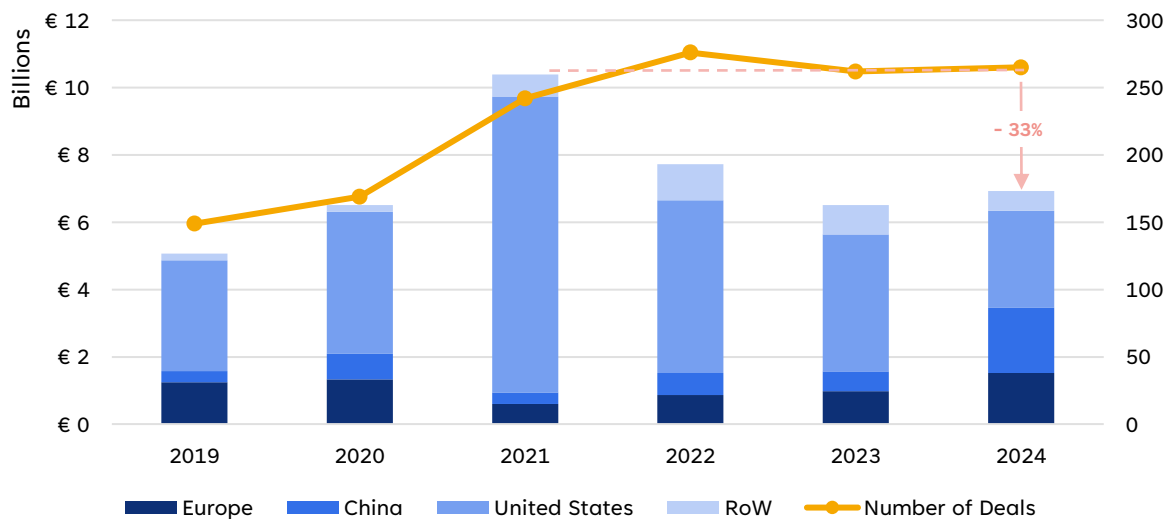


Figure 5: Global Investment by country/region and number of deals per year

The **U.S. has traditionally led global space venture funding**, peaking at 85% of total tracked investment in 2021 and consistently holding over half. **However, this dominance has been declining.** In 2024, the U.S. accounted for less than half of global funding for the first time, raising just €2.9 billion (the lowest since 2019), reflecting a 3% negative CAGR. Meanwhile, **Europe and China are hitting record highs**, raising €1.5 billion and €1.9 billion, respectively, **together representing 50% of all global investment.** Since 2019, Europe has seen a steady 4% CAGR, while China boasts an impressive 42%, primarily driven by large satcom financing rounds in 2024.

3.1 Investment by Type

Looking at investments by type further helps uncover the forces behind recent trends. From 2021 to 2023, total investment in space ventures dropped, due to rising interest rates and broader economic challenges slowing venture capital activity across the U.S. and bringing a reality check for phenomena such as the SPAC boom. This made it harder for space ventures to raise money, adding to the overall decline.

VC funding alone accounted for €4.9 billion, 71% of the total, representing a 4% YoY decrease, continuing its slow decline recorded since 2021. Over the last three years saw debt instruments **increasing their importance, be it on a standalone basis or in conjunction with equity investments**, reaching a combined €540 million peak in 2024, 8% of the total. As part of the total, ESPI also includes self-capitalisation into Blue Origin by Jeff Bezos, which is estimated at around \$1 billion per year since 2019, classified as an "Angel" investment.

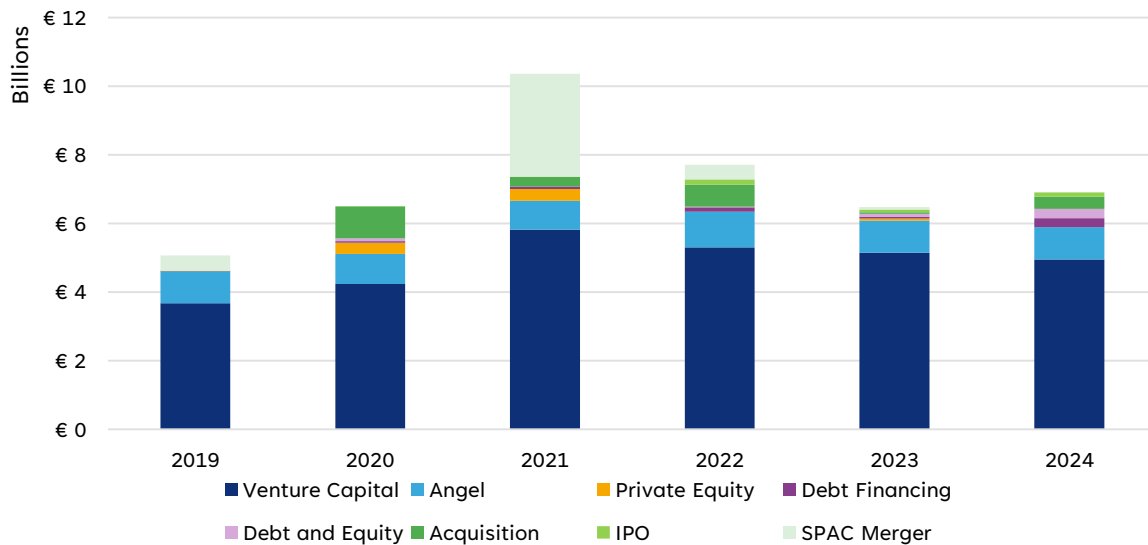


Figure 6: Global Investment by Type since 2019

Interestingly, while public market exit opportunities have been rare, especially since the burst of the SPAC bubble, which affected investor confidence negatively, a **sustained opening for IPOs in Asia** has occurred over the last two years. There were five IPOs recorded since 2023, all of them in **Japan and South Korea**, amounting to **€212 million**.

3.2 Investor Activity by Region in 2024

VC firms are, unsurprisingly, the dominant investor type in 2024, accounting for just over **70%** of all investors globally. Regional trends, however, tell a more nuanced story. Although **North America (NA)** and **MEA (Middle East and Africa)** stand out for their strong VC concentration, **LATAM** appears entirely VC-driven, though the sample size there is limited. Interestingly, **MEA** also saw a lot of activity from development banks.

Even though VC also dominates in **Europe**, it is the region with the most diverse mix of investor types, with a balanced presence across non-VC categories. In **Asia**, VC activity drops below 60%, with Industry taking a prominent role, either through direct investment or Corporate VCs. Moreover, Private Equity firms are more active in Asia than in other regions of the world.

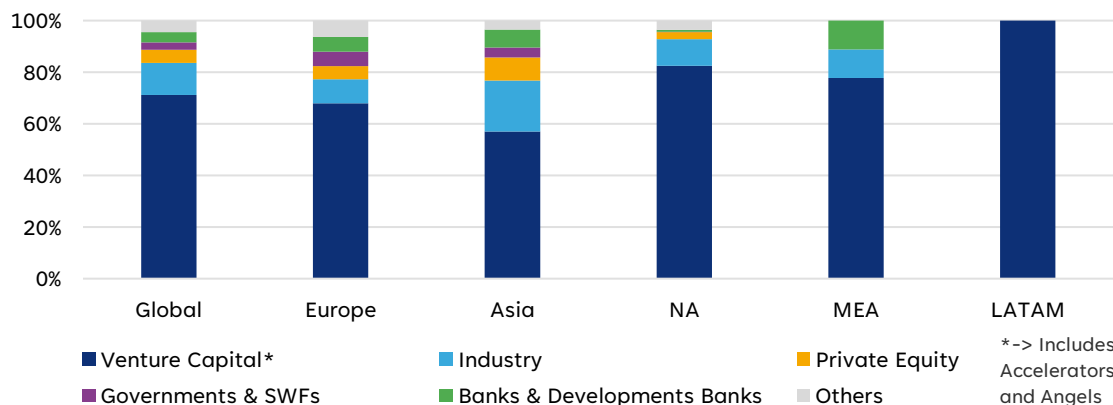


Figure 7: Investor Activity by Region in 2024

Established Companies

ESPI now also tracks investments in **established** companies with notable space portfolios. These are not included in the broader data because the structure of these companies and the dynamics behind the investments are different. Still, this funding activity plays an important role in shaping the sector. In 2024, deals involving established companies reached a total of **€11.3 billion**, with acquisitions making up the largest portion. **The top three acquisitions** alone accounted for **€9 billion**.

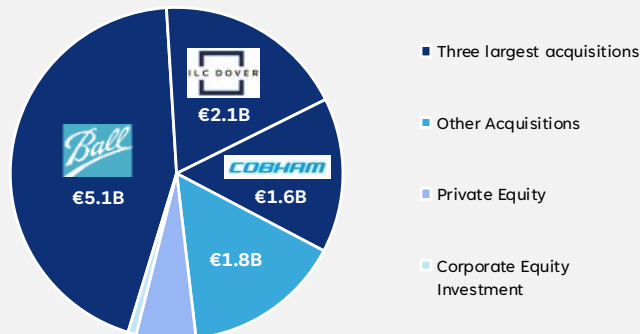


Figure 8: Established Companies Deal Activity by type in 2024

3.3 Type of Consortia

When analysing the types of investors, it is also useful to consider how they group themselves in investment rounds. An investment round may consist exclusively of state-backed investors (a **public** consortium), exclusively of investors without state affiliations (a **private** consortium), or a mix of both (a **mixed** consortium).

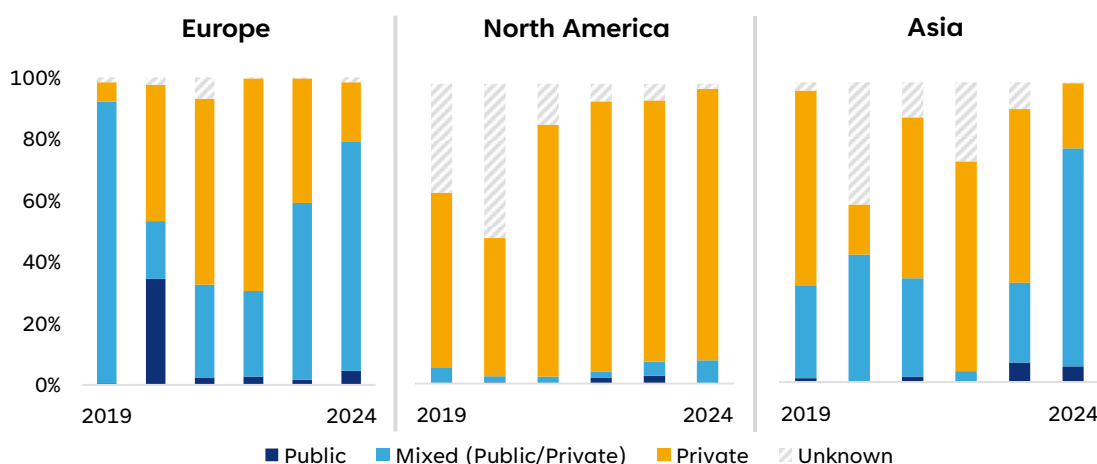


Figure 9: Type of Investment Consortia by Region

A major difference standing out between Europe, NA, and Asia is the prevalence of **private consortia in North America**, while **Europe and Asia** see a bigger interplay between both public and private investors in the form of **mixed funding rounds**. Indeed, North American space ventures have consistently had more than **80% of the funding** provided exclusively by private investors. This does not mean that there is no public support for space ventures in this region, but that is mainly done through large and recurring **public procurement** programmes (enabled

by large space budgets – in 2024, the U.S. space budget was estimated at €73.6 billion), generating revenues for these companies, which in turn attract investors.

On the other hand, in **Europe and Asia**, the public sector has a much more active role in funnelling investment into space ventures, generally signalling less risk appetite from private investors in the space sector. In **Asia**, mixed funding consortia often take that shape via **industrial players** (especially active in the region) that are wholly or partially owned by the state or through development banks. Nevertheless, there is a great diversity in the type of state players investing in space ventures. Notably, **local governments** play an active role in funding space ventures in China, contributing substantially to this trend.

In **Europe**, the reason for the prevalence of mixed consortia is more nuanced. Firstly, the spike in the share of total funding by mixed and public consortia in 2019 and 2020 can largely be attributed to investments in O3b Networks and OneWeb (for example, €444 million invested by the UK Government in OneWeb in 2020 as part of the company's Chapter 11 filing).

From that point onward, Europe experienced a sustained increase in total investment. However, it has faced difficulties in scaling up its ventures without relying on foreign capital, a challenge not unique to the space sector but compounded by its strategic significance. Nevertheless, European institutions are aware of this and have been working to address it by crowding in investment at later stages, which usually require higher investment amounts. This helps explain why **64% of funding rounds in European scaleups have involved either mixed or public consortia, while that number decreases to 37% for startups**.

The above ratio is the opposite of what one would expect in healthy, well-functioning capital markets, where private investment typically increases with company maturity.

3.4 Analysing Global Scaleup Dynamics

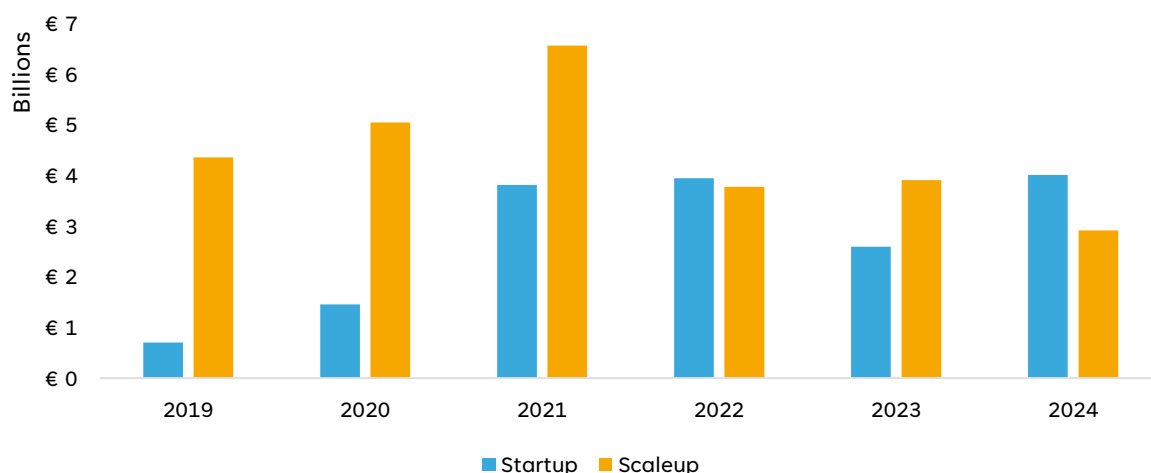


Figure 10: Global Investment distributed by Startups and Scaleups

Between 2019 and 2021, investment in startups and scaleups surged, with scaleups peaking in 2021 at nearly €6.5 billion. Two key factors explain this rise.

- 1) **First wave of scaleups.** Many ventures from the early NewSpace wave, mostly founded before 2015, were scaling up around this time. Companies like SpaceX, Blue Origin, Rocket Lab, Relativity, Planet, Astranis, and HawkEye 360 were already at the growth stage or matured around this time, securing major funding rounds.

- 2) **Capital was “cheap”** due to low interest rates, encouraging investment in high-risk ventures. This also drove the SPAC boom in 2021 and 2022, channelling significant funding into space.

From 2021 onwards, global investment dynamics shifted, with a decline in scaleup funding and investment in startups overtaking it in 2022 and again in 2024. This is largely due to two reasons.

- 1) **Global space venture dynamics start decoupling from U.S. funding dynamics.** With other regions attracting significant amounts of capital to space ventures, the share of startup and scaleup funding ceased to mirror that of the U.S., reflecting a more diverse reality.
- 2) **Other regions' space ventures are still at an early stage.** In Europe and China, in particular, most of the investment is still directed at space companies in early stage. This led global startup funding to surpass scaleup investment in 2024 for the first time since 2019.

This means that in other regions, there is still a **strong strategic drive** to invest in space ventures, including at the startup level, as there are still key points of the space value chain without growth-stage ventures with considerable moats. A good example of this is in the launch sector. This explains why, when looking at Europe and China, startups have routinely secured more funding than scaleups.

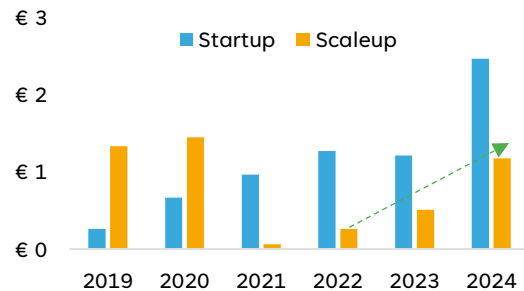


Figure 11: An Incoming Wave of Scaleups?

Beyond the end of low interest rates, this can also help explain why in the U.S. investment has slowed down, while in Europe it continued to increase.

In the coming years, we can expect **a new wave of funding into scaleups**, as early-stage ventures in these countries mature. Indeed, in just three years, scaleup funding soared in Europe and China, from €260 million to more than €1 billion in 2024.

3.5 Investment distributed across the Space Value Chain

Both upstream and downstream segments followed the broader recovery trend in 2024. The key difference, as expected, lies in funding scale. **Upstream companies**, being more capital-intensive, attracted **€4.9 billion**, while **downstream companies** secured **€1.1 billion**. Downstream is nearly back to 2022 funding levels, while upstream remains about €2 billion below its peak. In contrast, funding for **in-space economy ventures** declined. These companies secured only **€895 million** in 2024, down from €2.1 billion in 2021. Fewer players are actively raising in this segment, so large rounds by individual companies have a greater influence on the overall trend.

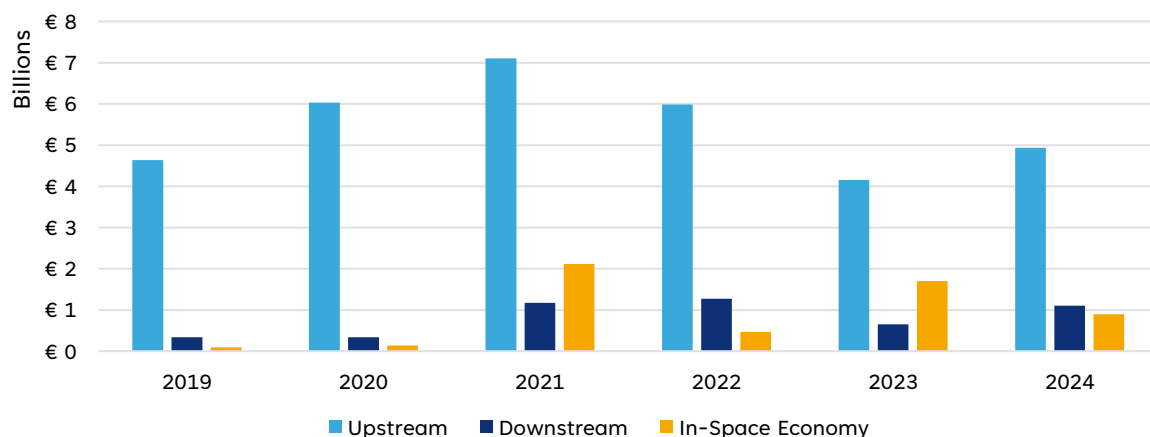


Figure 12: Distribution of the Global Investment in the Space Value Chain

4 SPACE VENTURE: EUROPE

Since 2014, ESPI has recorded 631 financing deals involving European space ventures, totalling **€9.8 billion**, leading to a CAGR of 40%. Between 2014 and 2024, Europe saw two major outliers: O3b Networks (now fully owned by SES) and OneWeb (later combined with Eutelsat). Together, they secured €4.7 billion, accounting for 48% of all funding since 2014, mainly through private equity minority rounds and eventual acquisitions. Due to their outsized share of funding, **we have excluded them from the remainder of this section** on European Space Ventures.

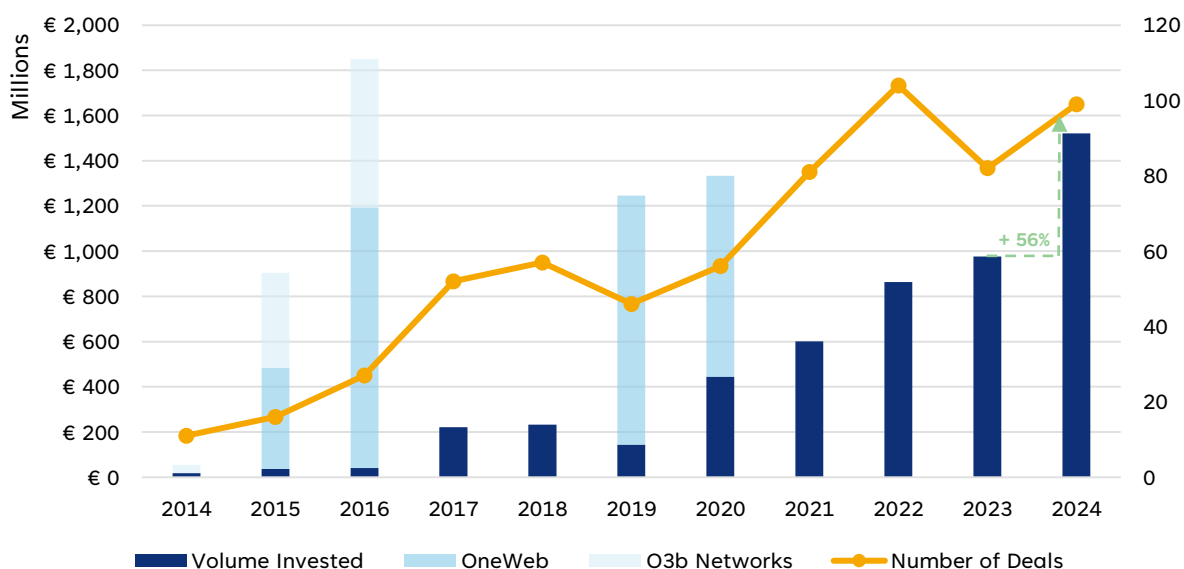


Figure 13: Investment in European Space Ventures and Number of Deals per Year

In **2024**, European space ventures attracted **€1.5 billion**, reflecting a 56% increase from 2023. While funding has generally trended upward since 2014 with some fluctuations, the growth seen in 2024 stands out as the **largest single-year increase** in that period. However, the number of deals grew by only 21%, indicating that capital is being concentrated in fewer but larger rounds. This signals a **shift toward scaling**, which typically carries higher investment amounts per deal.

Maximising the Public Benefits of Space Venture Dynamics in Europe

Security & Defence has emerged not only as a domain of strongly increasing governmental need, i.e. to protect peace in Europe and the world, it is now also a segment attracting significant private investments. Future governmental strategies should leverage the potential of the space sector and take measures to further attract private funding and co-investment in support of public policy objectives and needs.

4.1 Top 5 Ventures in 2024

The top five ventures to attract the most investment in 2024 have reached **€681 million**, up **40% from 2023 (€411 million)**. The analysis of these five companies confirms a sustained increase in the combined value of the ventures in the upper percentile, alongside a stable proportion of their contribution to total investments since 2019.

Indeed, the proportion of the top five contributors has fluctuated between 40% and 47% during the period, besides a peak of 68% in 2020. Such results indicate that even though the frontrunners

of the sector are attracting larger sums of capital, the European startup and scaleup ecosystem at large is demonstrating a **healthy dispersion of investments** across a broad range of players.

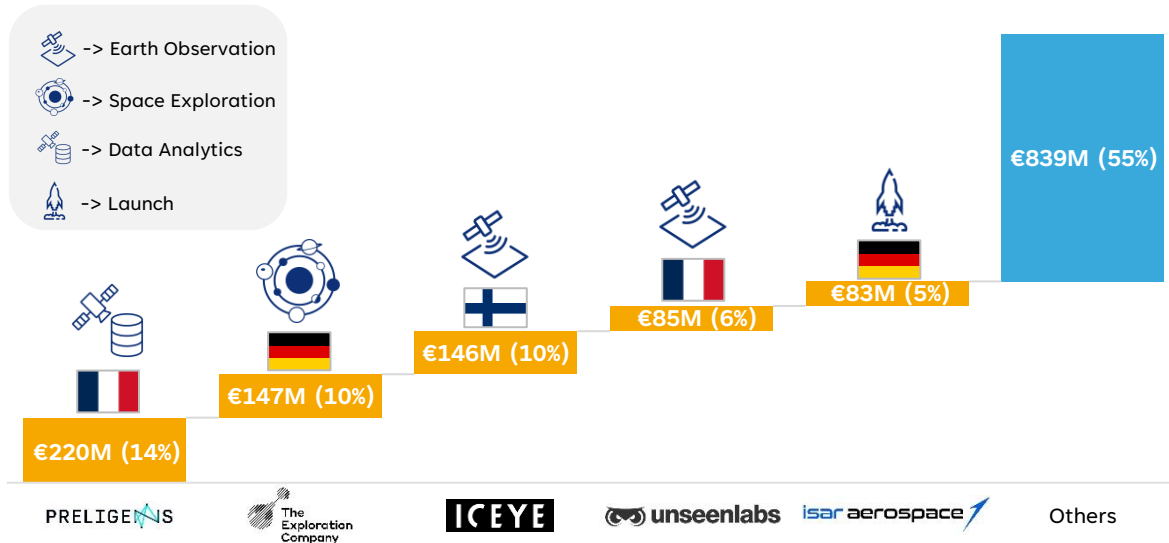


Figure 14: Share of Total Investment by Top 5 European Space Ventures in 2024

4.2 Investment Type

Venture capital played a dominant role in funding European space startups during the 2014-2024 period, representing 82% of the total investment. In 2024, the number of VC deals bounced back up from the 2023 low (62 deals) to reach 80 deals and **surpassed the €1 billion mark** in investment for the first time, a 27% increase in value compared to last year. Surprisingly, despite the increase in deal number and total value, **the share of VC investment has decreased to 69% of the total, down from 84% in 2023.**

Acquisitions ranked as the second most significant type of deals in 2024 with a total volume of €238 million. However, 90% of the value came from Safran's acquisition of Preligens for €220 million. Moreover, while ESPI recorded seven acquisitions in 2024, only two had their values disclosed as of the time of writing this report. As in previous years, the large proportion of undisclosed deals likely results in a significant underrepresentation of the importance of this deal type in the European space ventures.

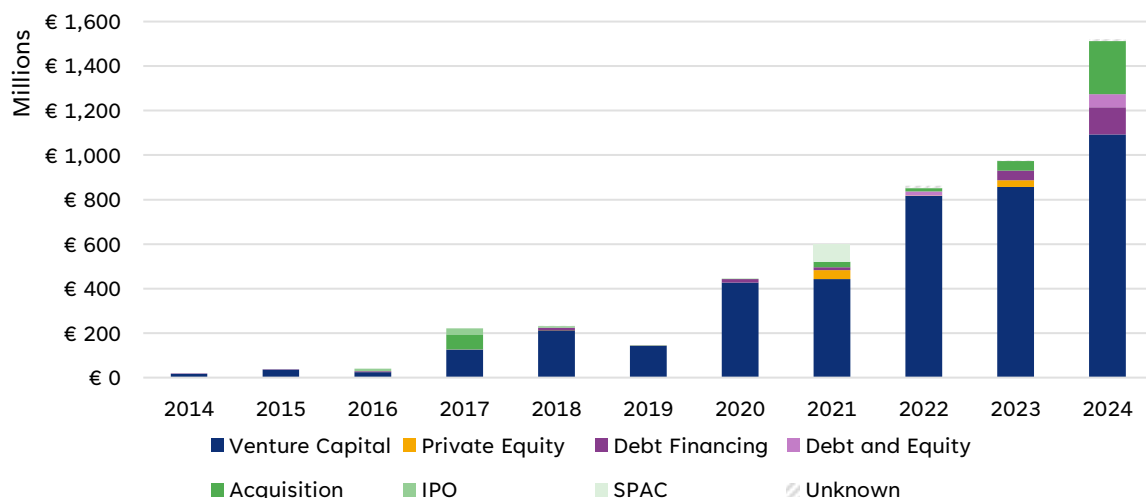


Figure 15: Investment by Type

Debt financing represented the third source of funding, amounting to approximately €121.5 million across eight deals, the highest recorded total and a 183% YoY increase. Importantly, figures show a great level of dispersion in funding allocation across deals, with the largest debt round accounting for 26% of the total, compared to 61% in 2023. This highlights the consolidation and increased relevance of this financing type as an important vehicle for funding, and particularly for CAPEX-intensive startups in launchers and space infrastructure. Given that debt financing is a **routine tool for many revenue-driven companies**, a wide range of non-public transactions understate the figure. When aggregated with deals mixing debt and equity, the total raises to €181 million.

France 2030

France 2030 is a €54 billion investment plan launched in 2021. A **dedicated €1.3 billion space component** targets broad priorities: guaranteeing **autonomous access** to space, ensure “strategic positioning” in **EO and connectivity constellations**, and steering the ecosystem towards **new markets** and space-derived uses. Specifically, the initiative aims to deliver one light reusable launcher by 2026, ten constellation-enabled services by 2030, and 200 public and private entities users of space data. As of late January 2025, more than 40 projects have been allocated funding.

Under this investment plan, CNES launched a call for tenders for a “Demonstration of a micro and mini launch service”. The structure includes **time-bound milestones and termination clauses** if deadlines aren't met. The **total €400 million** primarily covers flight costs, with partial funding already allocated to two companies. The four selected launch companies, all aiming for launch between 2026 and 2027, are **Latitude, HyPrSpace, MaiaSpace, and Sirius Space Services**. These demonstration tests could be **make-or-break** for companies like Sirius and HyPrSpace, which haven't received as much funding as their competitors. MaiaSpace, benefiting from the support of ArianeGroup, appears to be relatively shielded from the consequences of a missed milestone. If successful, the €100 million funding would exceed the sum of private investment received by each company.

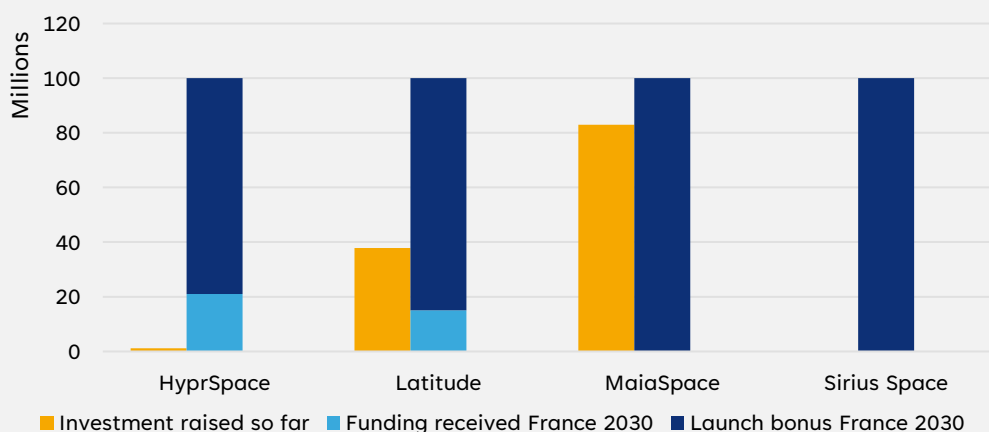


Figure 16: Funding Secured and Expected for French Launch Companies Under France 2030

The **development of launcher subcomponents** - targeting propulsion, avionics, materials, etc. - is supported under another €500 million budget line, with six lead companies involved. Moreover, 18 projects have been selected targeting **constellations**, nine of which received €44 million. An additional €50 million was allocated to retrofitting the CSG launchpad. The remaining budget, yet to be allocated, stands at slightly over €300 million.

4.3 Top Investors by Deal Activity in 2024

Most top investors in European space companies in 2024 came from major European spacefaring nations. Notable exceptions are Spain and Switzerland, represented by unusual players: Global Portfolio Investment, a holding company of the owners of the Mayoral textile group, and xFarm Technologies, a space-enabled company that acquired two other companies.

Interestingly, there is a **heavy activity from public institutions** both on a national level (BPI France, CDP Venture Capital, Bayern Kapital) and international level (EIC, NATO Innovation Fund). Moreover, government-affiliated investors influence the sector in ways that are not immediately visible. VC firms such as Primo Capital and High-Tech Gründerfonds, for example, have public institutions as limited partners. Public VC firms also invest in private VC firms, such as CDP Venture Capital, being reported as a limited partner at Primo Capital.

Since most deal activity is concentrated in startups, scaleup investors are underrepresented in the table below. **Although some investors backed scaleups (marked with *), none were lead investors.** In 2024, more than 35% of lead investors in European space scaleups were foreign, mainly from the United States and Japan, with the rest based in France or Finland.

















Place	Top Lead Investors			Top Participant Investors		
	Investor	Country	# Deals	Investor	Country	# Deals
1 st	 Expansion Ventures		4	 BPI France*		5
	 Primo Capital*			 Seraphim Capital*		
2 nd	 High-Tech Gründerfonds		3	 European Innovation Council*		4
	 BPI France*			 Space Founders		
3 rd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Global Portfolio Investment (ES) - European Innovation Council (EU)* - NATO Innovation Fund* - Galaxia (IT) - xFarm Technologies (CH) 		2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bayern Kapital (GER)* - Expansion Ventures (FR) 		2

Table 1: Top European Investors by Number of Funding Rounds in 2024. (*) = Participated in at least one scaleup funding round.

4.4 Investment Stage

Overall, **VC investment at early-stage has stabilised**, pointing to the establishment of a consistent benchmark for European space ventures at this stage. **At the growth-stage, investment values still fluctuate**, signalling that this part of the investment ecosystem is still evolving. Nevertheless, it saw both Series C and D+ reaching their highest investment levels ever.

Regarding early-stage investment, **Seed saw a return to growth** following the 68% drop in investment recorded between 2022 and 2023. Even so, that drop was driven by an unusually high number of large seed rounds in 2022, such as E-Space's €47 million and Constellr's €10 million seed funding. When looking at the broader picture, the outlook is more positive. **Ventures at the seed stage breached the €100 million mark in total funding, while maintaining a balanced distribution of investment**. 65% of the priced seed rounds secured between €1 million and €5 million, with only one company raising more than €10 million. This is notable because, excluding the peak in 2022, which saw unusually big rounds at seed stage, yearly investment in space ventures at this stage has remained consistently just below €100 million since 2021.

Series A has remained steady, consistently raising around €170 million since 2022, and **Series B appears to be plateauing** as well, with funding stabilising at around €250 million from 2021 onward, when excluding the dip recorded in 2022. Notably, 58% of the total Series B value came from The Exploration Company's massive round in November. This level of investment concentration at Series B has not been seen in prior years.

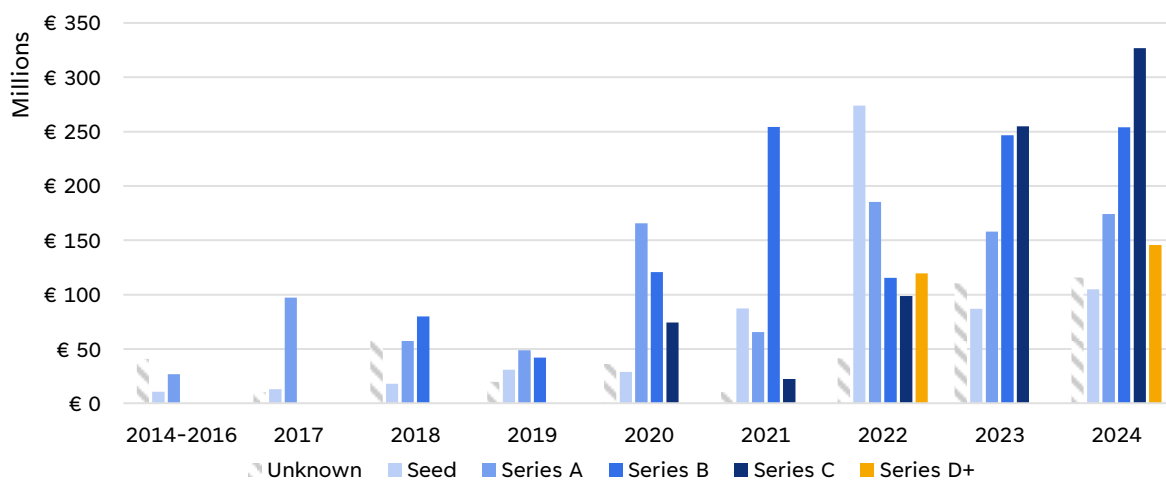


Figure 17: Yearly Volume of Venture Capital Investments by Round from 2014-2024

Companies saw significantly more growth-stage investment than in previous years. **Series C reached its highest total ever**, with €327 million allocated across seven deals, marking a 28% YoY increase. This was largely driven by Unseenlabs, Isar Aerospace, and D-Orbit, which together accounted for 60% of the total. In addition, **Icye secured the first-ever Series E round raised by a European space venture**, totalling more than €145 million. The increase in both value and the number of companies receiving growth-stage funding highlights the growing maturity of the sector and the gradual emergence of European champions.

European Innovation Council in Space: Room to Grow?

The **European Innovation Council (EIC)** plays an important role in supporting the funding of deep-tech ventures across Europe. As a key initiative of the EU, it aims to help bridge the gap between scientific research and market-ready innovation, particularly in areas involving high-risk and high-potential technologies, by providing funding to startups and SMEs to help them **develop, demonstrate, scale, and commercialise** their technologies.

The EIC's total budget amounts to €10 billion for the 2021-2027 period, with €6 billion having already been disbursed. Of that, looking at grants only and therefore excluding equity, €63 million has been allocated to space technologies between 2021 and 2024.

Still, the EIC is an important and growing force in the European startup ecosystem. The EIC's space portfolio addresses three key pillars: Space Debris Sustainability, Enabling Space Technologies, and Earth Observation and Meteorology. These are implemented through Pathfinder (TRL 1–4), Transition (TRL 4–6), and Accelerator (TRL 6–9) instruments, which offer grants (up to €4 million) and, in the case of the Accelerator, a mix of grants (up to €2.5 million) and equity (up to €10 million). In the last three years, EIC space-focused calls included €32 million for in-space solar energy (Pathfinder, 2023), €65 million for customer-driven space tech (Accelerator, 2023), €20 million for infrastructure resilience (Pathfinder, 2024), and €50 million for in-space servicing and robotics (Accelerator, 2025). **Below is a brief analysis of the grants distributed between 2021 and 2024, providing complementary insights to ESPI's database, which only tracks equity and debt financing.**

The EIC investment has remained consistent throughout the period, with an average of €15.8 million allocated per year. In 2024, the total disbursed amounted to **€17.2 million**, the largest amount to date. **29 companies have received grants across 30 projects**, with the yearly distribution of selectees generally remaining stable across the years, with a dip to six in 2022 and a peak to nine in 2024. The **average amount disbursed per company was €2.1 million**, with two grants of undisclosed value.

A clear distinction is visible in **the regional distribution of the funding**, which exhibits a long-tail distribution. French companies secured nine projects and €21.3 million in funding, more than a third of the total. When aggregated with Germany, where six projects saw a €11.6 million allocation, **the figure climbs to 52%**, leaving €30.3 million to 15 projects across 10 countries. Countries with a tradition in the space sector, like **the UK and Italy, only had two and one projects respectively, funded across the period**, with related funding of €4.8 million and €2.5 million.

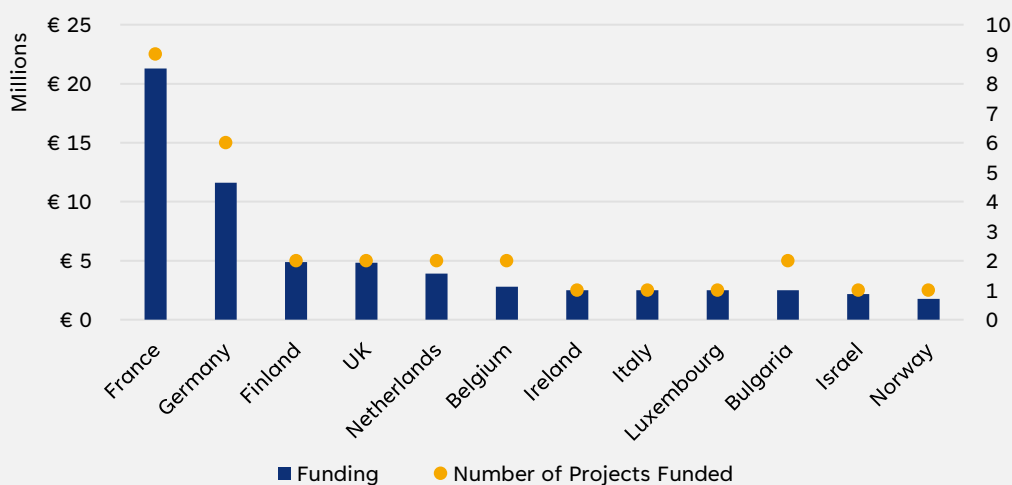


Figure 18: Aggregated Funding (Grants) Received and Number of Projects per European Country between 2021 and 2024. (Source: EISMEA).

4.5 Geographic Distribution since 2014

The following chart displays the picture of **aggregated investment** secured by European countries between 2014 and 2024. The UK, France, and Germany have remained in the top 3 since 2020. Finland, Spain, Switzerland, Italy, and the Netherlands make up the chasing group.

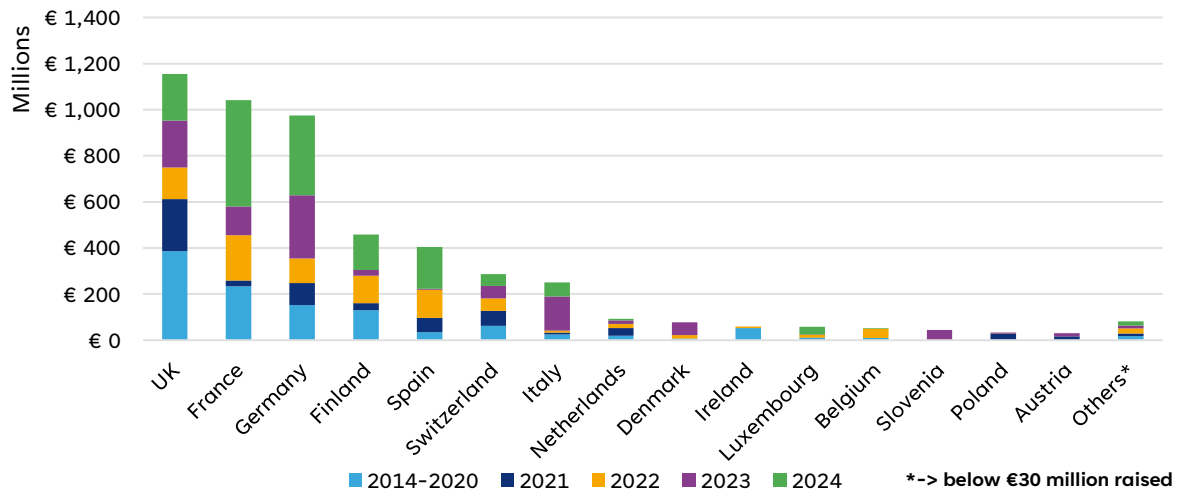


Figure 19: Geographic Distribution of Total Funding since 2014²

Country	Place	Move	Highlights
	1 st	=	The UK has seen its margin shrink but remains first on aggregated funding since 2014. With €1.2 billion in cumulative capital and 169 deals, it still scores almost twice as many as France and Germany, its closely tied pursuers.
	2 nd	▲+1	Following an impressive 2024 performance, raising 44% of its total funding since 2014, France now ranks second in terms of aggregated investments, totalling over €1 billion across 90 deals.
	3 rd	▼-1	Germany has attracted €975 million over 87 transactions. The country broke a record in funding value for the fourth year in a row, indicating a sustained push in its space sector.
	4 th	=	Finland comes fourth, with companies raising €458 million across 23 deals since 2014. Finland exhibits a pronounced concentration, with 91% of the total secured by ICEYE.
	5 th	▲+1	Spain has so far raised €404 million across 47 deals. 2021 was a turning point, but as shown by the absence of funding in 2023, its ecosystem remains small and prone to fluctuations.
	6 th	▼-1	Since 2014, Swiss startups raised €286 million across 58 deals. The country is characterised by a stable yearly funding amount, averaging €56 million per year since 2021.

Table 2: Top European Countries by Aggregated Space Investment Since 2014 and Change in Place Between 2023 and 2024

² The 'Others' grouping (which includes countries where the total fundraising since 2014 is under €30 million) secured €82 million. Most of this was raised by Norway, Sweden, and Bulgaria, whose startups have secured €28 million, €22 million, and €19 million, respectively.

4.6 Geographic Distribution in 2024

Funding concentration has increased in 2024 with the top three countries – France, Germany, and the UK – now accounting for 66% of the tracked total. Moreover, when adding Spain and Finland to the list, the figure rises to 88%, up from 82% in 2023. Besides the notable performers described below, the Czech Republic is to be highlighted as it saw its first space deal, with Zaitra, a startup dedicated to in-orbit data processing, raising €1.7 million in a Seed round.

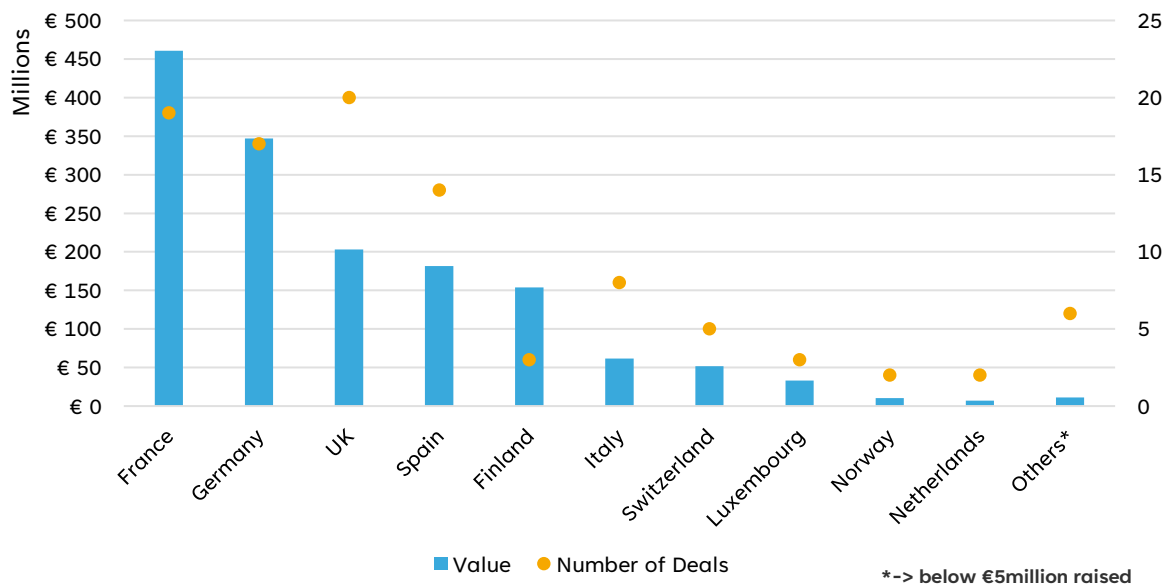


Figure 20: Geographical distribution of investment in Europe in 2024

- France:** France accounted for €461 million in investment in 2024, a significant 270% YoY increase. This was mostly driven by Safran's acquisition of Preligens and Unseenlabs' Series C. Nevertheless, ESPI recorded 19 deals, more than doubling the activity recorded in 2023.
- Germany:** Germany saw €347 million being allocated to its space ventures, a 26% YoY increase in investment, and increased its deal activity from 12 to 17 transactions. The Series B round raised by The Exploration Company (€147 million) and Series C by Isar Aerospace (€65 million) make up 61% of the total value.
- United Kingdom:** The UK has maintained an equal YoY investment value in 2024, with €203 million recorded. Although ranking third in volume, the country experienced the highest level of deal activity, with 20 recorded, and also exhibits a smoother distribution than other countries. Notable transactions include a €41 million Series C by All.Space and two deals by Vortexa, totalling €54 million.
- Spain:** Spain secured €182 million in 2024 after only recording €3.3 million in 2023. The number of deals almost tripled from 5 to 14. Nevertheless, most of the deal activity came from two companies. Launch company PLD Space and IoT constellation operator Sateliot raised three rounds each, totalling €65 million for the first and €46 million for the second.
- Finland:** Finland saw €154 million being distributed across three transactions, exhibiting the largest average deal size of all countries, with €51 million per deal (France comes second with €24 million). ICEYE raised €146 million in two Series E rounds, with Kuva Space contributing €8 million to the total.







4.7 Venture Watch: Deals to Expect in 2025

When trying to assess the eventuality of companies raising in the future, the median deal time can be a relevant indicator. Although not an indicator with any certainty, as **factors such as revenue and cost structure have a major influence**, it can still be useful to help identify companies that may be raising capital in the near future. The median deal times were calculated considering priced rounds from the first time a company raised at a certain stage until they graduated to the next stage.

Time to Graduate	
Seed -> Series A	25 months
Series A -> Series B	31 months
Series B -> Series C	28 months

Figure 21: Median Deal Times

In the table below, we have included some of the companies on ESPI's watch list. Moreover, at least two companies from ESPI's Watch List have already raised capital in 2025. ATMOS Space Cargo raised Series A in February 2025. ATLANT 3D, falling into the space-related category, secured €14 million in March 2025 in a Series A extension. Others might follow during the year:

Company	Last round	Description
Seed		
	€1.8M, 2023	Reflex Aerospace designs and manufactures custom small satellite platforms with reduced lead times, tailored to specific mission requirements in EO, SATCOM, and optical SAR.
	€17M, 2023	constellr provides high-precision thermal intelligence solutions using proprietary microsatellite technology to deliver accurate, real-time surface temperature data for agriculture or environmental monitoring.
Series A		
	€3M, 2022	ANYWAVES designs and manufactures high-performance, off-the-shelf and custom antennas specifically designed for LEO satellite constellations and launchers.
	€28M, 2022	Morpheus Space provides advanced electric propulsion systems and mission planning software for small satellites.
Series B		
	€40M, 2022	Kayrros provides space-based environmental intelligence solutions that use EO data, geoanalytics, and AI to deliver insights on emissions, climate risks, and asset monitoring.
	€20M, 2023	Leaf Space provides Ground-Segment-as-a-Service solutions, offering satellite operators access to a network of owned and operated ground stations for data transfer and communications.

5 SPACE VENTURE: CHINA

Commercial space in China has grown from a starting point of zero in 2014 to an industry attracting billions of dollars today. For much of this time, commercial companies have existed in a precarious position, with uncertainty regarding the government’s commitment to reform and opening up to commercial markets. Governance in China remains opaque and unpredictable still today, but over the past year, commercial space has achieved a level of support and a critical mass of funding, to where it may have reached escape velocity. This is true across the whole sector, but **satcom** in particular has seen rapid progress.

The data and analysis for this section were developed by **Orbital Gateway Consulting (OGC)** in cooperation with ESPI. OGC is the leading source for Chinese space industry data and analysis. Headquartered in Hong Kong, the team of Chinese-speaking analysts has been tracking the development of the Chinese space sector for nearly 10 years. Numbers and outcomes can differ from ESPI database/research.

2024 was by far the most successful year for fundraising in Chinese commercial space. Our midpoint estimate for funds raised in 2024 is ¥19.1B (~€2.5B), with this being some 60% higher than the previous record set in 2020 (¥11.8B, €1.47B using mid-point 2020 exchange rates). At the same time, 2024 saw a rise in the number of rounds to 67, and the average round size reached an all-time high of ¥285M (~€38M).

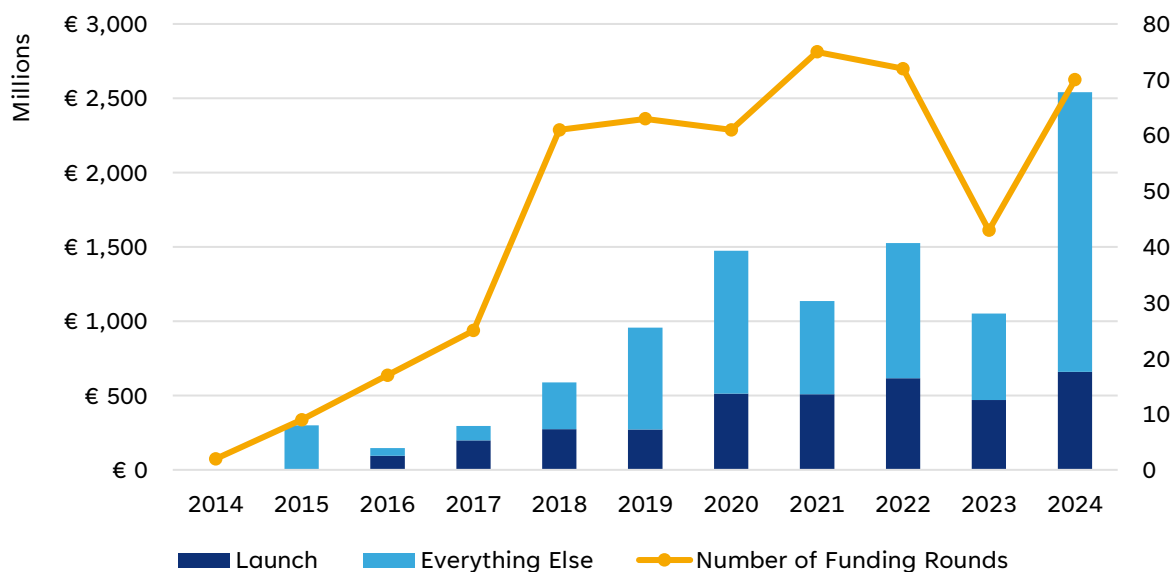


Figure 22: Funding per Company Type and Number of Funding Rounds (Source: Orbital Gateway Consulting)

Beneath the headlines, however, 2024 saw some important changes in the type of companies receiving funding. **Launch companies** raised 40% more money in 2024 than they did in 2023, yet their proportion of overall funds raised fell from 45% to 26%. This partly reflects the increasing maturity of China’s commercial launch sector: Galactic Energy, for instance, completed 5 launches in 2024, sending 23 satellites to orbit. Likely, this led to revenue coming in the door, and thus, all else equal, less need for new funding. But the bigger factor in launch becoming a smaller piece of the pie was a notable uptick in funding raised by **satellite manufacturers** and **communication satellite operators**.

5.1 The Rise of Satellite Internet

The largest trend in China's commercial space sector in 2024 was **the rise of satellite internet**. From a funding perspective, companies planning to operate satcom constellations raised ¥7.4B (€1B), and those building satellites raised another ¥6.2B (€820M).

With several of these rounds taking place at the beginning of 2024, we can already see their results playing out in the market. Most notably, the Thousand Sails Constellation (formerly known as G60) has seen progress as a “Chinese response to Starlink”. The operator of Thousand Sails, **SpaceSail**, raised ¥6.7B (€880M) in January 2024, and the manufacturer, **Genesat**, raised ¥600M (€79M) in December 2023 and another ¥1B (€131M) in December 2024. The money has gone to good use, with SpaceSail launching 72 satellites between August 2024 and January 2025, and announcing plans to launch up to 648 satellites by EOY 2025. SpaceSail has also been pushing hard into foreign markets and moving quickly, including a November 2024 MoU with Brazil's Telebrás and January 2025 announcements of gateways being shipped to Malaysia and a subsidiary being established in Kazakhstan. SpaceSail may be learning from the challenges that other Chinese companies have faced in ramping up commercial business and is thus focusing on commercial relationships at an earlier stage.

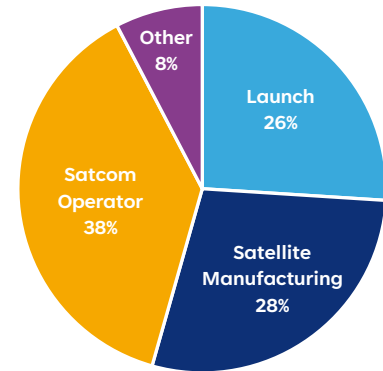


Figure 23: Commercial Funding per Verticals (Total ¥19,1B).

Source: Orbital Gateway Consulting

This surge in satellite internet activity stems from an October 2023 announcement by the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT) that called for greater private investment and an “orderly opening up” of the satellite internet sector. This decision was likely in part a result of increasing pressure from Starlink across a variety of verticals (in particular, milsatcom) and regions (in particular, Belt and Road countries). Moving forward, satcom will remain strategically important in China, providing tailwinds for the sector.

5.2 Signs of Trouble in other Verticals

Outside of satcom, Chinese commercial space verticals have struggled, particularly **Earth observation** (EO), where funding has sharply declined since 2020. Several leading EO firms are facing financial trouble, revealing oversupply and difficulties in commercialising their operations.

China's top EO satellite operator, **CGSTL**, had to cancel its long-delayed IPO in late 2024 after multiple unsatisfactory prospectuses. Its latest financials show hundreds of millions of Euros spent on satellite expansion, but business growth lagging behind. With heavy funding from CAS and the Changchun City Government, CGSTL launched ~150 satellites from 2017-2024, including an intensive manifest of 149 satellites in 2022-2024, but has thus far failed to scale commercially.

Further downstream, GIS service platform firm **PIESAT**, which went public in 2019, reported a ¥1.4B (€180M) loss for FY 2024 due to weak commercial and stagnant government business. Its share price has fallen ~75% since April 2023.

5.3 What to Watch in 2025

China's commercial space sector has seen immense growth since 2014, with most of this growth coming from pre-revenue companies raising increasingly larger rounds of funding. As we move deeper into 2025, we are beginning to see more concrete financial results from companies reaching greater levels of maturity. Most recently, commercial remote sensing/IoT satellite operator **ADA Space** announced plans for a Hong Kong IPO. Similar to **CGSTL** before them, ADA Space announced impressively fast revenue growth in the most recent financial year, with 2023 seeing a nearly threefold increase from 2022. Whether ADA Space can sustain this growth is another question, and if CGSTL is any indication, it will be a challenge.

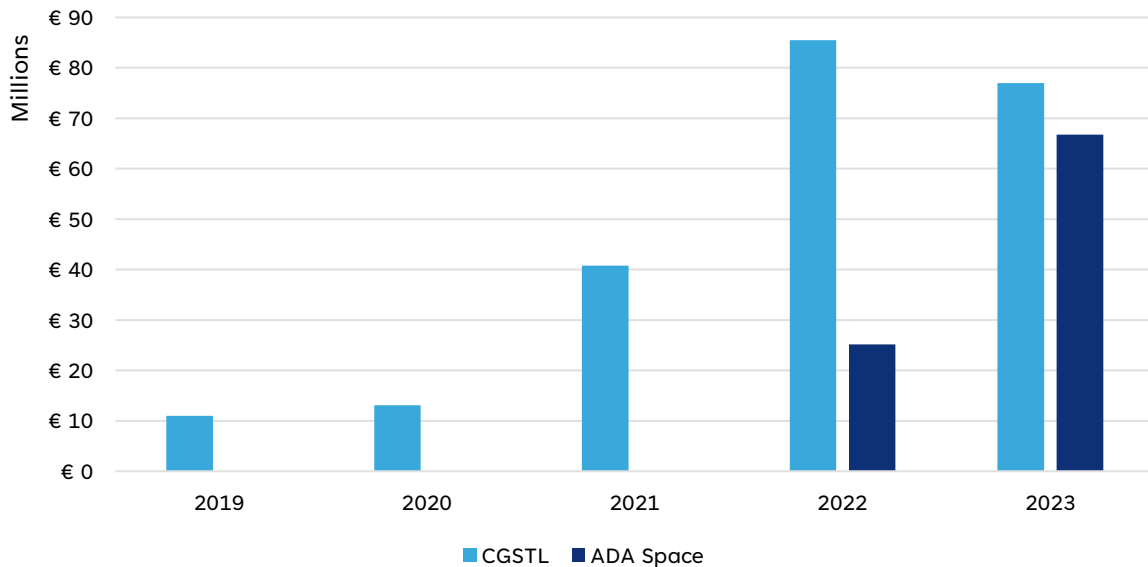


Figure 24: Revenues per Year, CGSTL and ADA Space. Source: Orbital Gateway Consulting

While not good for IPO prospects, these challenges are an indication of an important difference between China and the west in the space domain, and one that may actually benefit Chinese companies in the long-term. In the west, many space companies have reoriented their business towards government contracts, because in many western countries, the government is the best customer for commercial space. On the other hand, in China, the government is not as good a customer for these companies: most government missions are still awarded to state-owned enterprises such as CASC and CASIC.

Commercial companies, therefore, need to find **non-government markets** to generate revenues. As a result, we have seen these companies offer bite-sized services to small commercial customers, notably CGSTL opening a data portal where people can buy remote sensing data for as little as a few tens of dollars. Similar trends have been seen in communications, with Chinese space companies partnering with mobile phone makers and auto manufacturers for direct-to-satellite connectivity. In the highly competitive mobile phone and EV markets in China, this can be a real competitive differentiator, and a source of revenue for commercial space companies.

In the near-term, we should expect to see more cash burn by Chinese space companies, and investor appetite is likely to remain strong due to government policy tailwinds. **Long-term**, we may expect to see Chinese space companies take the lead in developing real commercial use cases for space infrastructure. With the expectation of hundreds of commercial satellites being launched in 2025, this year may be a turning point for Chinese commercial space activity.

6 SPACE VENTURE: AFRICA

Space in Africa's database reports **327 active NewSpace companies** across 36 African countries, driving the continent's engagement in global space technology and innovation. Company formation peaked in 2018 but has declined since, particularly in 2023 and 2024. This slowdown reflects industry maturation, with investors favouring established companies.

The data and analysis for this section were developed by **Space in Africa** in cooperation with ESPI. Space in Africa is the market leader in market research and consulting focused on the African Space Industry. Based in Estonia and Lagos, Nigeria, with analysts and consultants across the subregions in Africa, Space in Africa hosts the NewSpace Africa Conference—the continent's largest space event. Numbers and outcomes can differ from ESPI database/research.

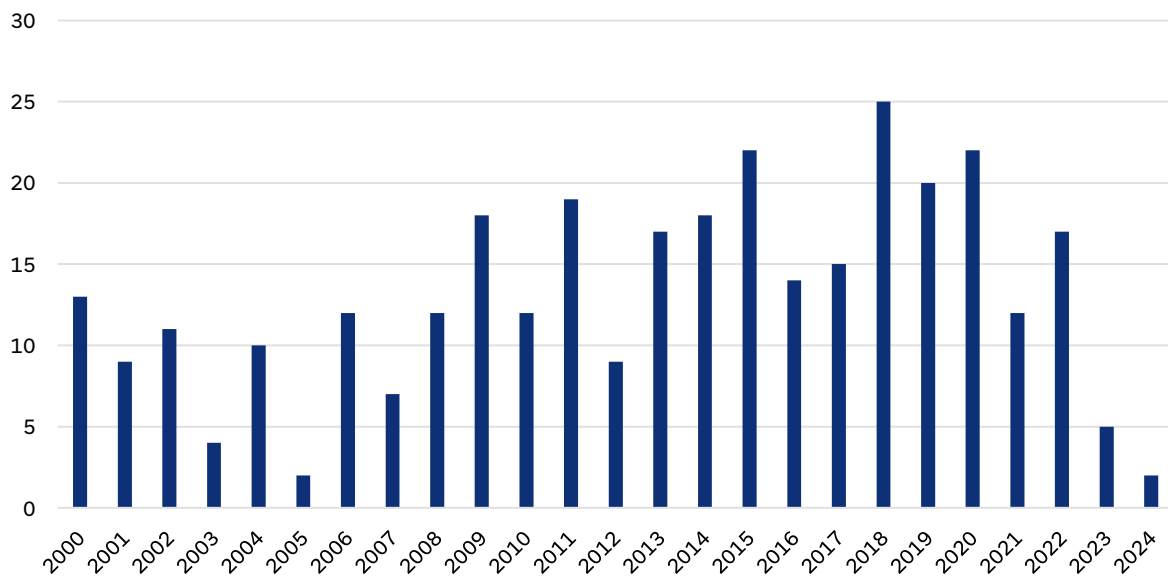


Figure 25: Number and Founding Period of African NewSpace Companies (2000–December 2024). Source: Space in Africa

Moreover, **disparities across the continent** further complicate this pattern. Late-adopter countries and those without government-led space programmes struggle with service gaps, underdeveloped regulatory frameworks, and insufficient technical infrastructure. Nevertheless, Space in Africa anticipates that the number of companies created will eventually increase again, particularly in late-adopter countries, as local markets develop sufficient scale to support innovation.

While companies typically reinvest profits for growth (especially during their early stages), Africa's NewSpace sector faces **unique funding challenges**. In 2024, 86% of companies relied exclusively on self-funding, navigating financial constraints through innovative survival strategies. Downstream companies leverage product revenues to expand services, while upstream companies often depend on anchor clients, particularly government contracts, to manage high operational costs. Despite these adaptations, limited access to external funding remains the primary constraint on industry growth.

Between 2015 and February 2025, 20 NewSpace companies successfully raised **\$201.6 million** across 35 investment rounds. The landscape reveals a growing investment pattern, with foreign institutions driving 64.3% of investments and African investors contributing 35.7%.

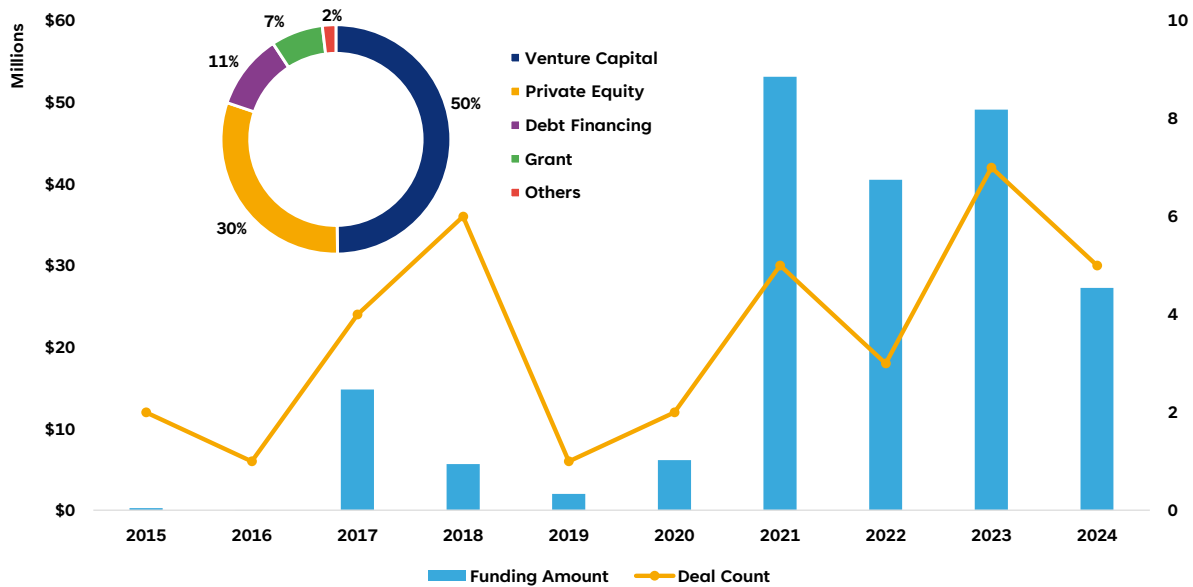


Figure 26: Total Funding, Deal Count, and Funding Type in African space startups. Source: Space in Africa

The African NewSpace market exhibits the **classic characteristics of an emerging market** with concentrated capital flows. The apparent decline isn't necessarily a market contraction but reflects the lumpy nature of early-stage market development, where a few anchor deals (like Africa Mobile Networks' \$36M and \$40M) can significantly skew annual totals. The data shows a "**long-tail distribution**" - where a few mature segments (satcom, Earth observation) capture most capital, while the broader ecosystem remains in its nascent stages.

6.1 2024 Funding Highlights

Between 2024 and February 2025, **\$30.3 million** was allocated across six funding rounds to four African companies: Simera Sense, Daka Space Technology, CubeSpace, and Apollo Agriculture. These investments are intended to support the companies in achieving their strategic objectives and scaling their operations to the global market.

Modern NewSpace enterprises demonstrate increasing sophistication in transitioning between **different operational models** – Business-to-Consumer (B2C), Business-to-Business (B2B), and Business-to-Government (B2G) – allowing for more dynamic market engagement.

Downstream companies predominantly operate in B2C, with occasional forays into B2B or B2G models. A strategic approach involves partnering with government institutions or international organisations to deliver solutions, such as agricultural productivity technologies, to remote farmers. Government agencies may subsidise or fully sponsor solutions in these scenarios, ensuring broader accessibility.

Upstream companies exhibit more complex operational strategies, often adopting a triple-model approach. Companies like Simera Sense, CubeSpace, Cubecom, and NewSpace Systems

demonstrate this flexibility by selling components to satellite manufacturers (B2C/B2B), engaging with government satellite missions (B2G), and navigating multiple market segments.

SIMERA SENSE		CUBESPACE		Apollo Agriculture	
Type	Funding	Type	Funding	Type	Funding
Optical Payload	\$14.2M	Satellite Control	\$2.5M, \$3M	Agri-fintech	\$10M
Lead Investors		Lead Investors		Lead Investors	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NewSpace Capital Knife Capital 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> University Technology Fund Savant Venture Fund Futuregrowth 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Swedfund Impact Connect 	
Key Achievements		Key Achievements		Key Achievements	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 70 payload planned for 2025 New facilities in Toulouse and Glasgow Focus on image calibration and processing 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4000+ components delivered 250+ global customers Serving spacecraft between 50-1000kgs 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 350000+ farmers supported Active in Kenya and Zambia \$67.5 M total funding raised over five rounds 	

6.2 Foreign Investments in the African NewSpace Industry

Since 2015, around **65% of the investment had its origin outside of Africa**, while 35% was intra-African. Interestingly, more than half of the investment came from European investors, while only 7% was from North American investors. The disparity can be attributed to several factors. First, Europe has long partnered with Africa, creating a more favourable investment environment. Key programmes include:

- The GMES and Africa initiative
- The Dunia project
- The recently announced €100 million Africa-EU Space Partnership Programme.

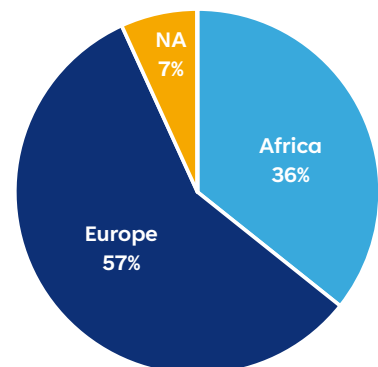


Figure 27: Regional Distribution of Investors in African space startups (2015-2/2025). Source: Space in Africa

These collaborations have enabled African companies to work directly with European counterparts, effectively **de-risking the market** for European investors. Strategic partnerships like the Square Kilometre Array Observatory (SKAO) have also been significant, disbursing substantial grants to qualified local companies.

For example, EMSS Antennas leveraged its South African location and expertise in astronomy infrastructure to secure SKAO funding. Additionally, some African companies have strategically expanded into Europe to access financing. Simera Sense exemplifies this approach, having established new offices in France and the UK while maintaining its primary production facilities in South Africa. Thus, it has strengthened its regional presence and funding opportunities.

7 SPACE VENTURE: JAPAN

Overall, the Japanese commercial space sector has seen **remarkable growth** over the past decade, increasing from €21 million in 2015 to €179 million in 2024. SPACETIDE has recorded a sustained investment growth trend up until 2023, driven by a surge in startups, which increased from a mere 17 in 2015 to 109 in 2024, and supportive policies, including the 2015 Third Basic Plan on Space Policy. These developments have improved the investment climate and lowered entry barriers to the space industry.

The data and analysis for this section were developed by **SPACETIDE Foundation** (SPACETIDE) in cooperation with ESPI. SPACETIDE is a non-profit organisation, headquartered in Tokyo, dedicated to orchestrating a sustainable ecosystem by connecting industries, communities, individuals and materialising the potential of the space industry. SPACETIDE has been publishing a bi-annual industry report under the name COMPASS since 2019. Numbers and outcomes can differ from the ESPI database/research.

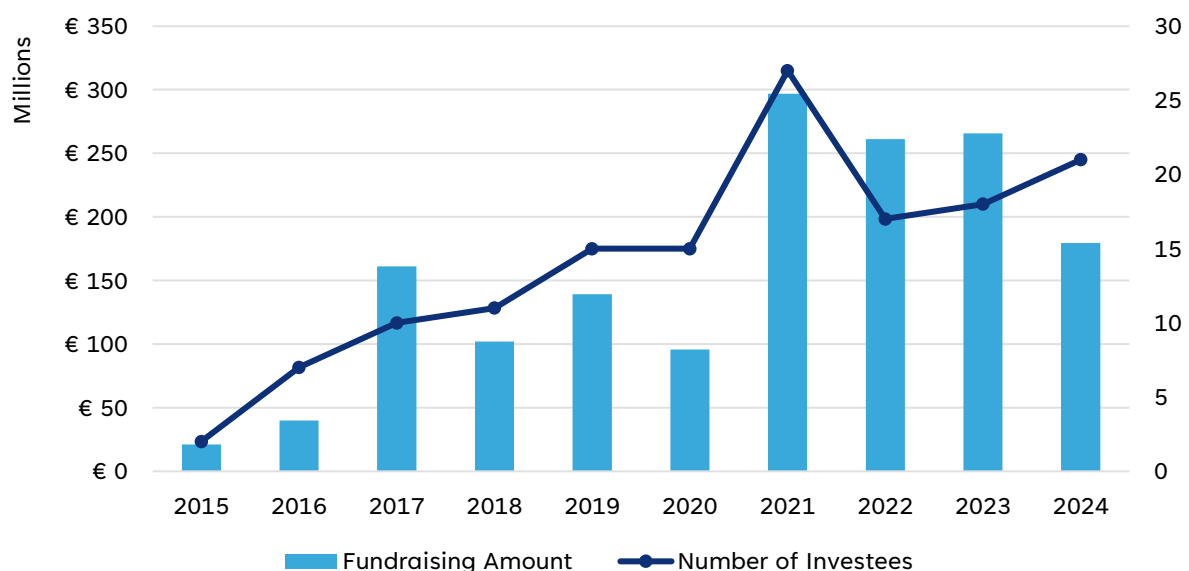


Figure 28: Japan's Fundraising Amount and Number of Investees³. Source: SPACETIDE

The trend, however, is not without fluctuations. The peak, recorded in 2021, is largely due to the space debris removal startup **Astroscale**, which conducted the largest domestic fundraising, exceeding €90 million. Moreover, the fact that 27 companies secured funding, the highest number recorded as of 2024, was also a contributing factor to this record.

Nevertheless, since 2023, SPACETIDE has recorded a substantial decline in funding, in large part due to continued **public listings of first-generation space startups** such as ispace, Astroscale, iQPS, and Synspecive. Nevertheless, since then, alternative funding methods beyond equity investments, such as Japan's Space Strategy Fund and various domestic subsidies (not captured in figure 27), have increased, and as a result, the amount of capital flowing into space startups is believed to be increasing in relative terms.

³ The investments are calculated based on "investment," "business tie-ups," "sponsorship," and "crowdfunding" in Japan, which are publicly available.

7.1 Growth and Maturity of Japan's Space Startup Funding

The Japanese space ecosystem is **increasingly maturing**, as highlighted by the comparison of funding rounds over the two five-year periods (2015-2019 and 2020-2024). In the space industry, hardware development often takes several years, and it is not uncommon for companies to raise funds even in later-stage rounds such as Series D and beyond before going public. Therefore, we categorise funding rounds as follows: Seed/Series A for initial investment, Series B/C for business expansion, Series D/E for market expansion and monetisation, and Series F/G for expansion into different segments and overseas business expansion.

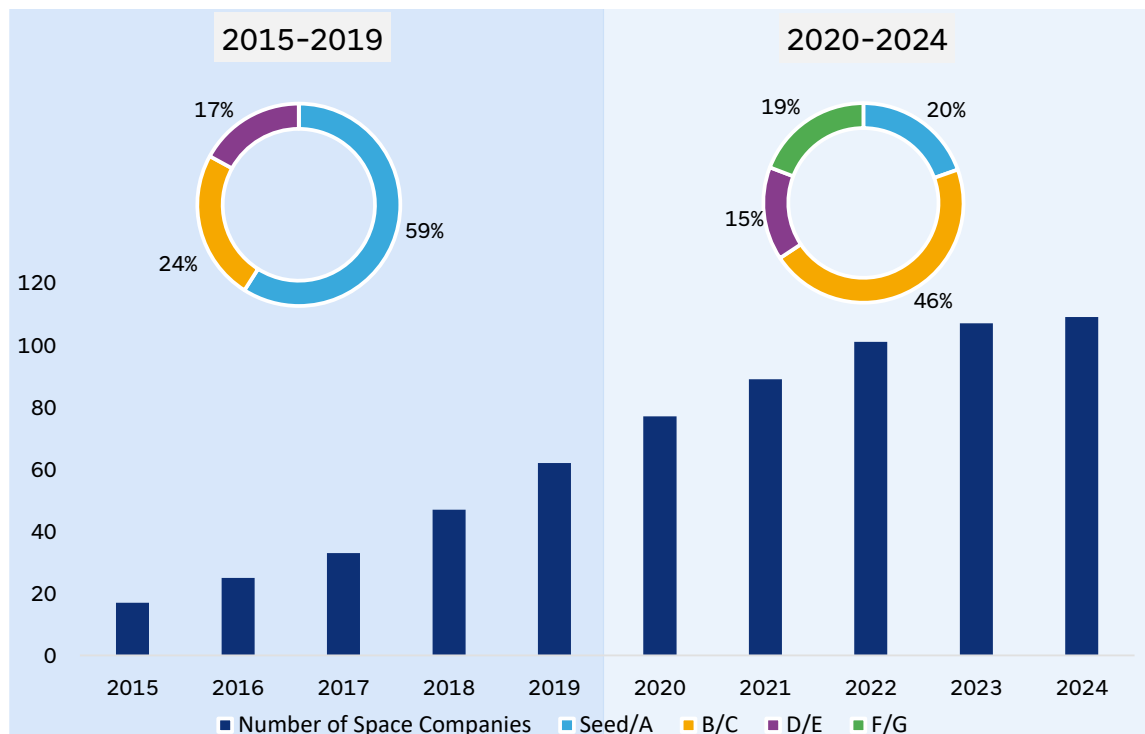


Figure 29: Number of Space Companies and Investment Ratio per Stage. Source: SPACETIDE

The first period (2015-2019) saw the emergence of many space startups. As a result, 59% of the investment ratio was allocated to early-stage funding, that is, Seed and Series A rounds. On the other hand, the proportion of later-stage rounds (Series D and beyond) was quite low, at less than 20%.

In contrast, **during the second period (2020-2024)**, 34% of funding occurred in Series D and beyond, indicating that companies founded before 2015 have entered later-stage funding rounds, potentially in preparation to go public. Meanwhile, Seed and Series A funding still remained significant around 20% of the total, signalling a new upcoming group of space startups. Additionally, Series B/C rounds make up the largest share at 46%, showing that companies founded before 2019 are accelerating their fundraising efforts for business expansion. At this stage, companies significantly expand in scale, leading to larger funding amounts per deal, significantly impacting the overall funding distribution.

7.2 Investors in the Japanese NewSpace Ecosystem: the role of Corporate VC

Similarly to other regions around the world, **venture capital firms represent the largest share of investors in Japanese space startups**, making up 40% of all deals. However, **in Japan, corporate venture capital plays a particularly important role**, with non-Space-Industry Companies accounting for the second-largest share at 36%. This level of activity in the space sector not only reflects their **high expectations for the space industry, but also opportunities for partnerships** such as talent exchange, technical collaboration with the automotive industry, partnerships with insurance companies and trading firms for risk hedging and securing commercial distribution for spacecraft and satellite development companies.

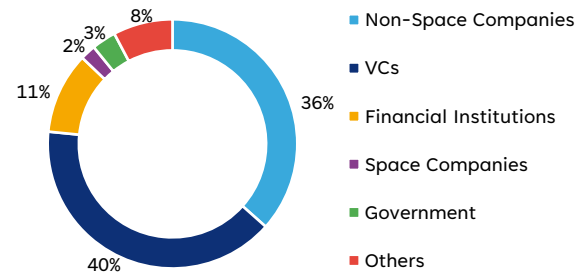


Figure 30: Share of Investors by Type in Japanese space startups. Source: SPACETIDE

Similarly to trends in general startup investments, **VCs account for over 30% in all segments**, suggesting a consistently high level of involvement. Notably, In-Orbit Services has the highest VC investment share at 46%. Across the **Satellite Data/Space Tech Application, Launch Services, and Space Tourism/Migration segments**, Non-Space-Industry Companies account for over 30% of investments, **indicating that these areas align well with terrestrial industries** and are easier to explore as business opportunities.

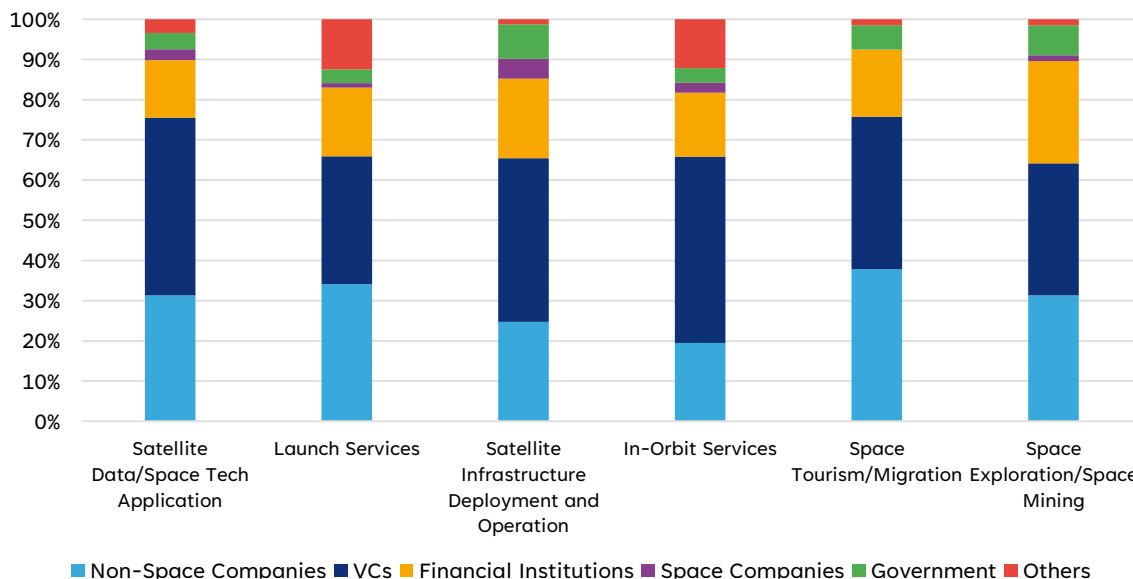


Figure 31: Investment Ratio by Segment since 2015. Source: SPACETIDE

On the other hand, in the **Space Exploration/Space Mining segment**, financial institutions account for 25%, a relatively high share. However, since the number of startups in this sector is limited, this may reflect the characteristics of specific companies rather than an overall trend.

For the **Satellite Infrastructure Deployment and Operation segment**, investments from Space-Industry Companies and the Government together account for more than 10%. This is likely due to **the presence of established players and the direct connection of this sector to national infrastructure**.

8 ANNEX A – METHODOLOGY

The below provides an overview of ESPI’s methodology, perimeter and definitions that should be understood before interpreting ESPI’s Space Venture data. The authors of this report are available to discuss the selection and criteria used in our analysis and research.

ESPI’s in-house database has been reviewed and enhanced with new metrics and now tracks both ventures (newly divided into startups and scaleups) and established companies. Investors are categorised into more groups, and all investors, not just leads, are now tracked. Notably, we matched over 1,000 space companies in our database with their relevant Earth Markets (e.g., Defence, Insurance, ...), something that will help better understand the relationship between the analysed ventures and Earth Markets they hope to serve. These changes may cause current data to differ from previous reports.

8.1 Dataset and sources

The assessment of investment statistics provided in this report is based on information collected by ESPI in its proprietary database. The ESPI Space Investment Database includes all deals from 2014-2024. The dataset includes publicly available data on announced operations and deals, and information is collected by screening a high number of sources, including investment firms’, incubators’ and accelerators’ portfolios, articles and specialised news outlets or specialised sources such as CrunchBase and Pitchbook. Furthermore, due diligence was made to appropriately filter all press and governmental releases as well as events. Cross-checking was systematically performed.

8.2 Perimeter and definitions

This study focuses on global space ventures and aims to collect data on investment received by these companies and to gather views of these companies on their business, the environment in which they operate. The following definitions and categories were applied to delineate the perimeter of the analysis.

Space Ventures		Established Companies
i) Raised VC or founded specifically as an innovation subsidiary. ii) Founded after 2000. iii) Did not exit (acquired or public offering).		Does not fit in the Space Venture conditions.
Startup	Scaleup	
Typical Funding stages: From Seed-Series B	Typical Funding stages: Series B+	
i) less than 250 employees <u>AND</u>	i) at least at Series B <u>AND</u>	
ii) max revenues €50 million.	ii) does not fit into the startup cumulative conditions <u>OR</u>	
	iii) reaches Series C.	

8.2.1 Space Ventures

There are now two overarching criteria: Space Ventures and Established Companies. This choice reflects the underlying motif of this report: to track innovative companies in a new phase of the global space sector. Moreover, **VC is used as a proxy** to capture novel products, services, and/or business models not previously available and their associated risk, that is, the qualitative side of evaluating what is a startup and what is just a company.

It does not mean there are no exceptions to these rules. For instance, although Firefly was already acquired, the fact that it continues to receive VC investment makes up for the exception in the exit condition.

8.2.2 Space company

A company is considered a space company if the main business of the company (in revenue share) is part of the space value chain. For this definition, the study followed the space market segmentation provided by Seraphim's Spacetech Market Map 2024, which divides space activities into three segments: Upstream, Downstream, and In-Space Economy.

8.2.3 Investor Categories

- **Angel Investors:** individuals or families (to include family offices) that have accumulated a high level of wealth and seek potentially high returns by investing in ventures during their early stages. Such investors may also operate with venture capital firms or other so-called angels. They will typically invest via straight equity, ranging in value from \$50,000 to over \$1,000,000. There is also a class of "super angels", who work in deals of \$100 million or more (Jeff Bezos, as one example).
- **Venture Capital Firms:** VC firms represent groups of investors that invest in startup, early-stage, and growth companies with high growth potential, and accept a significant degree of risk. The trade of risk for potentially high returns results in a high failure rate. Their investment form is equity, typically preferred stock, and comes in a series of rounds, traditionally Series A, B, C, etc.
- **Banks:** Financial institutions that can support investment through a variety of instruments including, in particular but not only, loans and debt financing.
- **Development Banks:** Financial institution that provides funding and financial services for projects aimed at promoting economic development, especially in underdeveloped or developing regions. These banks typically focus on long-term investments that support infrastructure, industrial growth, social programs, and sustainable development.
- **Sovereign Wealth Funds:** State-owned investment funds used to manage a country's reserves, typically derived from surplus revenues, such as those generated from natural resources (e.g., oil, gas) or foreign currency earnings.
- **Ministries & Agencies:** Governments and/or space agencies investing directly into companies.
- **Private Equity Firms:** Private equity firms or groups are formed by investors to directly invest in companies. They typically invest in established companies, rather than startups, through large transactions and often acquire an entire company or a group of related companies that can merge.
- **Pension Funds:** Financial institutions that pool and manage money on behalf of individuals or organisations to provide retirement benefits
- **Corporations:** Corporations have different methods of engaging in investment. They frequently provide the funding necessary to bring space-based programs to initial operating capability, as well as to sustain ongoing programs; they can also fund ventures, typically via straight equity, but also debt, and in the latter case with the option to convert to equity. Lastly, corporations may likewise acquire firms, including startup space ventures, of which there have been several examples in recent years.
- **Corporate VC:** Corporation acting via a corporate venture fund. ESPI also includes here corporate accelerator arms.
- **Accelerators & Incubators:** Although they are ultimately distinct types of actors, accelerators and incubators are similar in several core ways. Both aim to support startups, offer mentoring in developing their business, and both offer means to attract investment.

8.2.4 Investment categories

- **Acquisition:** A situation whereby one company purchases most or all of another company's shares in order to take control. An acquisition occurs when a buying company obtains more than 50% ownership in a target company.
- **Debt Financing:** Raising money by selling debt instruments to individuals and/or institutional investors (e.g. banks). In return for lending the money, the individuals or institutions become creditors and receive a promise that the principal and interest on the debt will be repaid.
- **Debt & Equity:** A mix of debt instruments with equity investment.
- **Private Equity:** Investment consisting of capital that is not listed on a public exchange. Private equity is composed of funds and investors that directly invest in private companies.
- **Public Offering:** Process of offering shares in a private corporation to the public. The first time, the operation is called an Initial Public Offering (IPO).
- **Venture Capital:** Funds invested by VC firms, usually with medium-term stakes, for high-profit, high-risk activities.

8.2.5 Space Value Chain Segmentation

ESPI updated to Seraphim's SpaceTech Map 2024 and made necessary adjustments. The upstream part of the space value chain includes all business activities related to the development, production, deployment and operation of space systems. This includes:

- **Build:** development and manufacturing of space systems (incl. sub-systems, equipment, components and materials) and/or provision of related software and engineering services;
- **Launch:** development and manufacturing of launch systems;
- **Platforms:** operation of space systems to lease or sell satellite capacity data.

The downstream part of the space value chain includes all business activities related to the exploitation of space systems' capabilities or data to provide space-enabled products and services to end users:

- **Downlink:** Provide the infrastructure and computing environment to help disseminate satellite data through enabling its accessing, processing and fusing of various sources of satellite data. This translates into the development and manufacturing of the ground support infrastructure and services required to exploit a space system (e.g. relay systems, communications, ground terminals, cryptography) and provision of solutions for satellite data storage and processing.
- **Analyse:** Transform data into useful information. This translates into the usage of value-adding solutions for satellite capabilities and data exploitation (e.g. big data analytics, machine learning and artificial intelligence, algorithms) which can lead into processing information for more than one vertical (vertical agnostic).
- **Product:** provision of space-enabled products to end-users (e.g. location and mapping, climate, logistics, insurance), usually by blending different data streams (including space data) to produce actionable insights for specific verticals (vertical specific).

In-Space Economy includes activities beyond Earth including space services, space infrastructure, space R&D and manufacturing, and space exploration.



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