



Space Sustainability, a multidisciplinary approach- ENG- 587

20.03.2024

OUR MISSION

Encouraging space actors to **design & implement sustainable & responsible space missions for the long-term sustainability of the space environment**



A GLOBALLY SHARED RESOURCE UNDER PRESSURE



Space infrastructure & services are essential to **life on Earth**



A growing number of objects are **orbiting around earth**

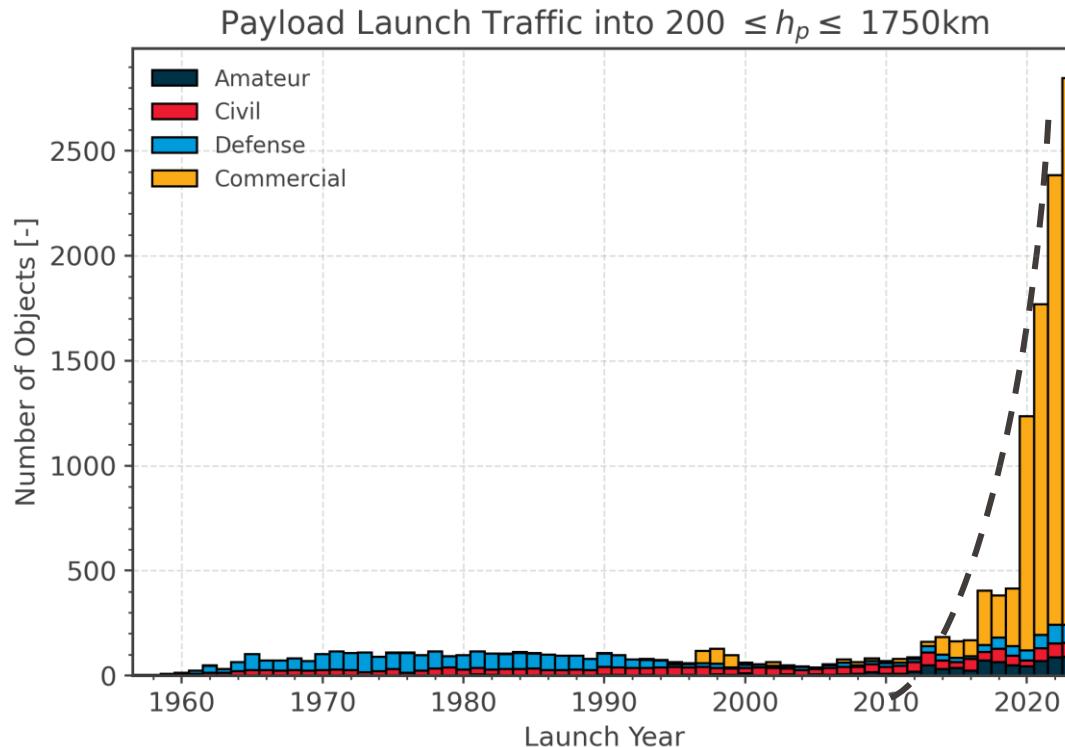


Increasing awareness on the challenges raised by **space debris & unsustainable space operations**



A number of existing **international guidelines** are not enforced

AN INCREASINGLY CROWDED SPACE ENVIRONMENT...



Launch traffic, 1960-2022



x10

In the last decade

Launch traffic forecast, 2022-2031

24,500

Satellites to be launched in the coming decade

+327%

Of active satellites the next decade

Source: ESA, [Space Environment Statistics](#)

Source: Euroconsult [Satellites to be Built & Launched, 25th edition](#)

... THREATENING OPERATIONAL SAFETY

40,500

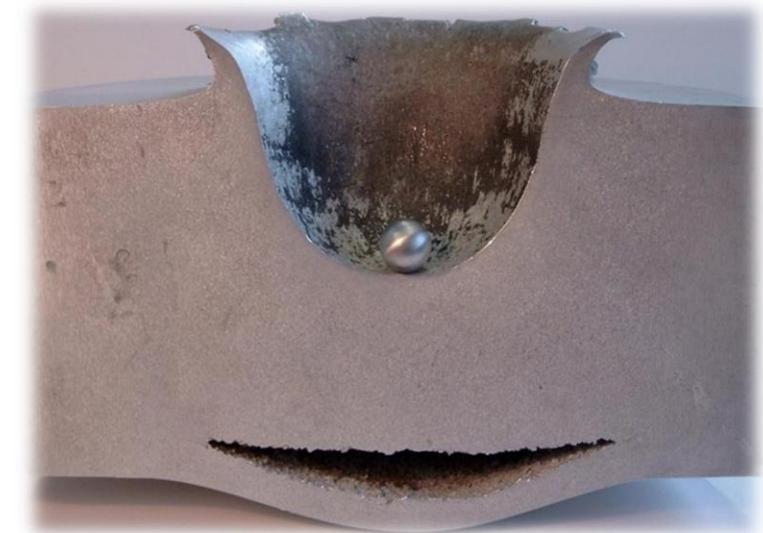
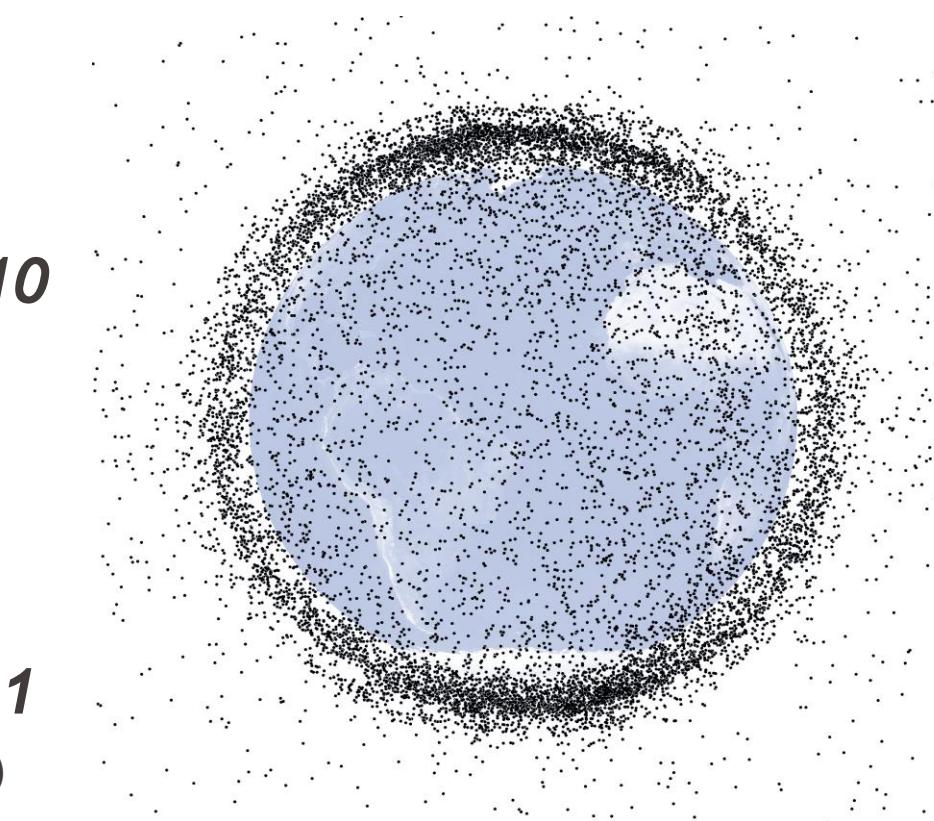
Debris greater than 10 cm in size in 2024 ⁽¹⁾

1,100,000

Debris greater than 1 cm in size in 2024 ⁽¹⁾

Source: ESA, [Space Environment Statistics](#)

Source: NASA Orbital Debris Program Office, image based on models (debris size not to scale), 25 August 2009

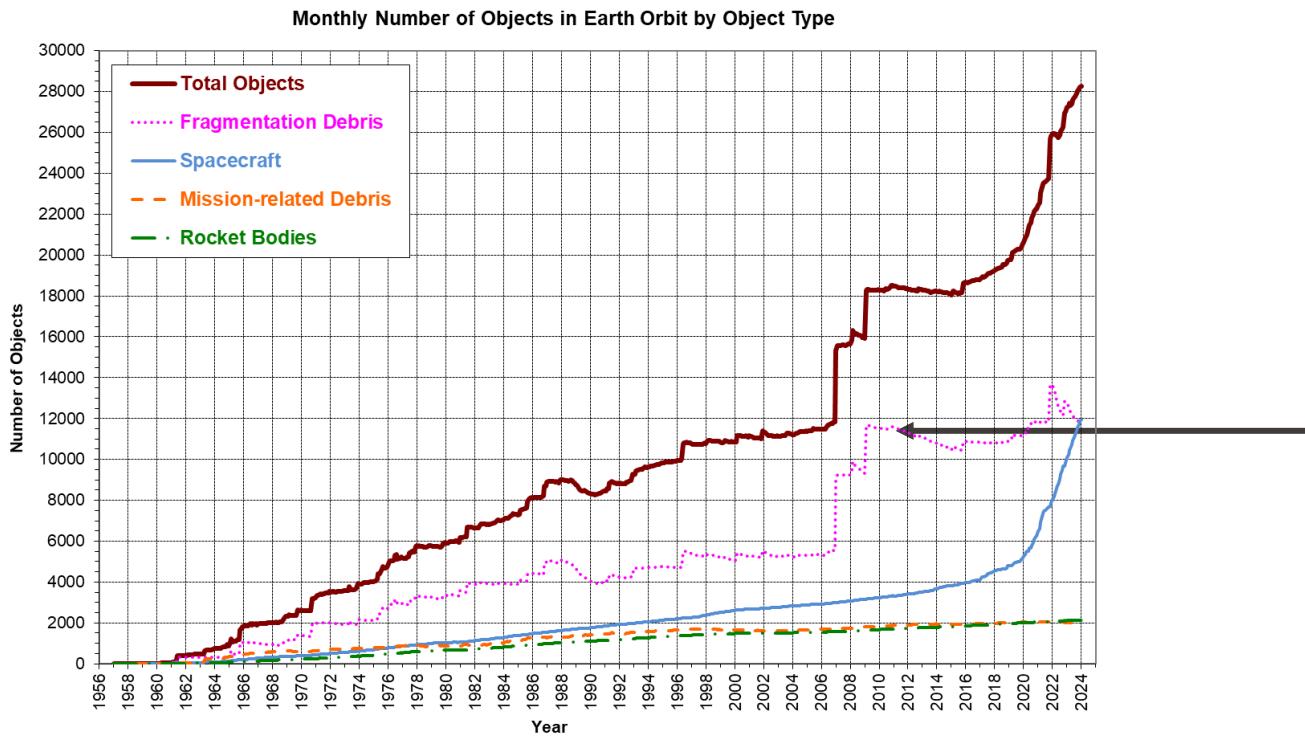


1 cm ≈ 

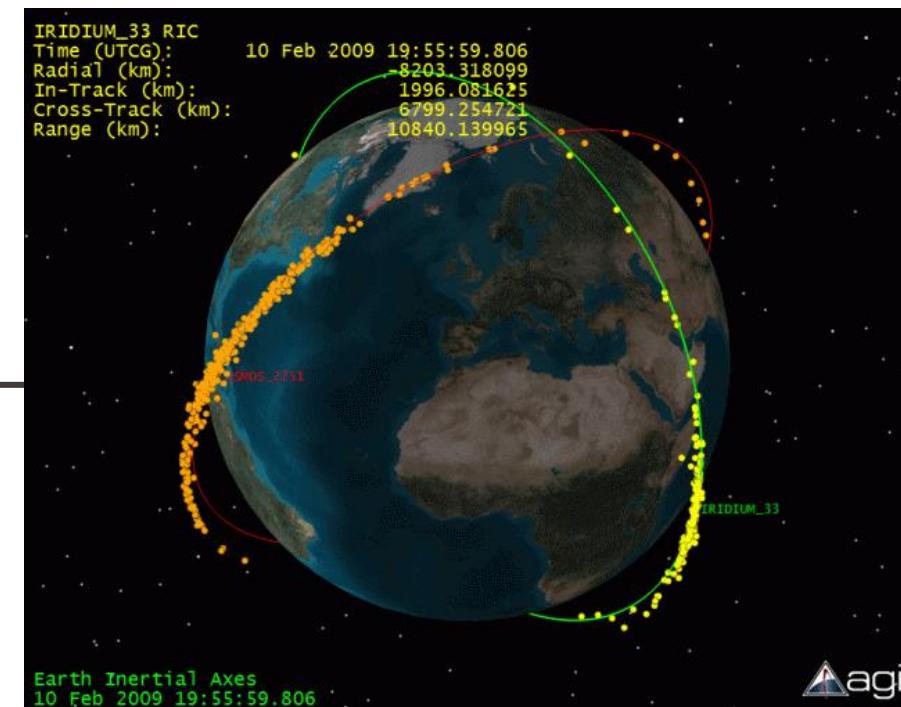
Source: ESA, [effects of hypervelocity impacts](#)

CATASTROPHIC COLLISIONS

cause **significant financial losses**, create **thousands of new debris objects** and **endanger the long-term use of orbits**

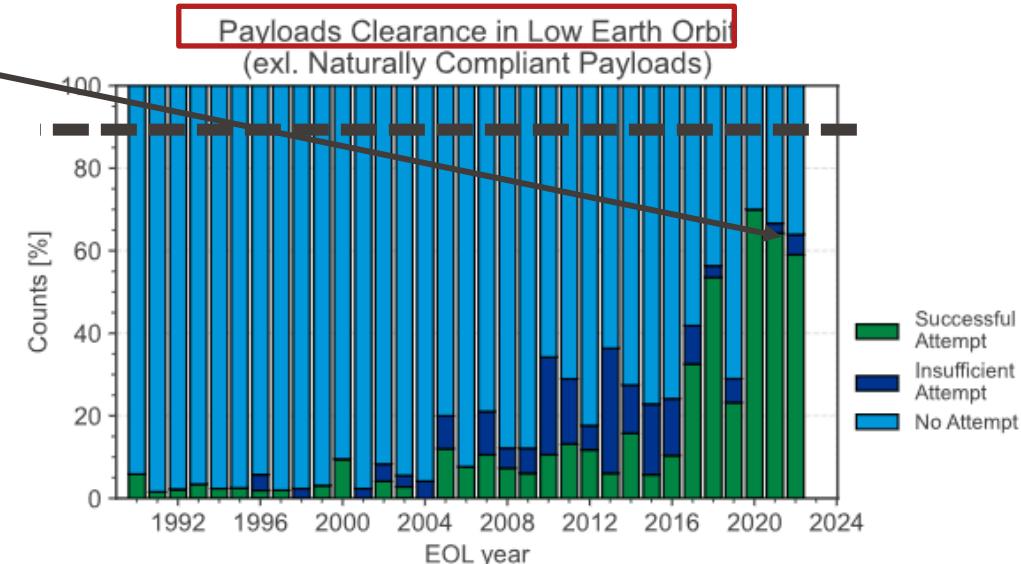
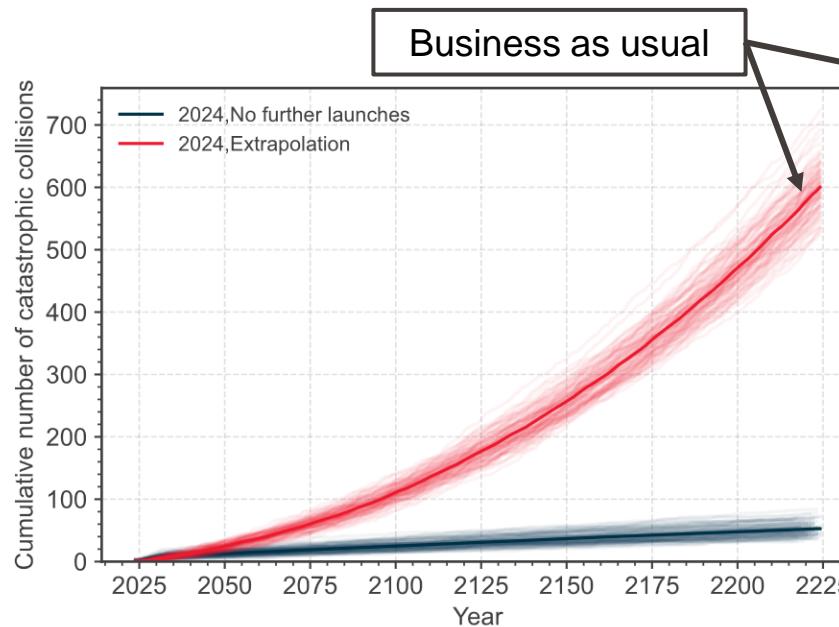


Source: NASA [Orbital Debris Charts](#), April 2024



Source: AGI 2009 [Iridium-Cosmos Satellite Collision](#)

BUSINESS AS USUAL IS RECKLESS



(a) Relative clearance of LEO_{IADC} by payloads.

Figure 7: Number of cumulative collisions in LEO_{IADC} in the simulated scenarios of long-term evolution of environment.

Low level of compliance

To mitigation measures for spacecraft disposal in the LEO region

Source: ESA's [ANNUAL SPACE ENVIRONMENT REPORT](#)

BRACE FOR CHANGE



Anticipate a more **stringent regulatory landscape**

SPACE NEWS

FCC approves new orbital debris rule

Jeff Foust September 29, 2022

ESA seeks global adoption of "zero debris" policy

Jeff Foust January 20, 2023

Updated space safety document outlines rules of the road for avoiding collisions

Jeff Foust April 5, 2023



Growing importance of **public perception & protect reputation**

IMPLEMENTING A FUTURE-PROOF VISION

— Take an active role in making space safer
& more sustainable, for all —

Design missions compatible with **responsible** operations



Operate missions minimizing **impact** on the orbital environment & other operators



Communicate on space sustainability & debris mitigation efforts



REWARDING RESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOR IN SPACE



A **rating system** informed by **transparent, data-based assessments** of the level of sustainability of space missions



Practical guidance on how to **improve** sustainability performance & practices



A **platform for action-focused collaboration** centered on the rating system to support research and leverage best practices

SUPPORTING SPACE ACTOR'S SUSTAINABILITY JOURNEY



A **SINGLE SCORE** TO MEASURE SPACE SUSTAINABILITY



SPACE SUSTAINABILITY **RATING**

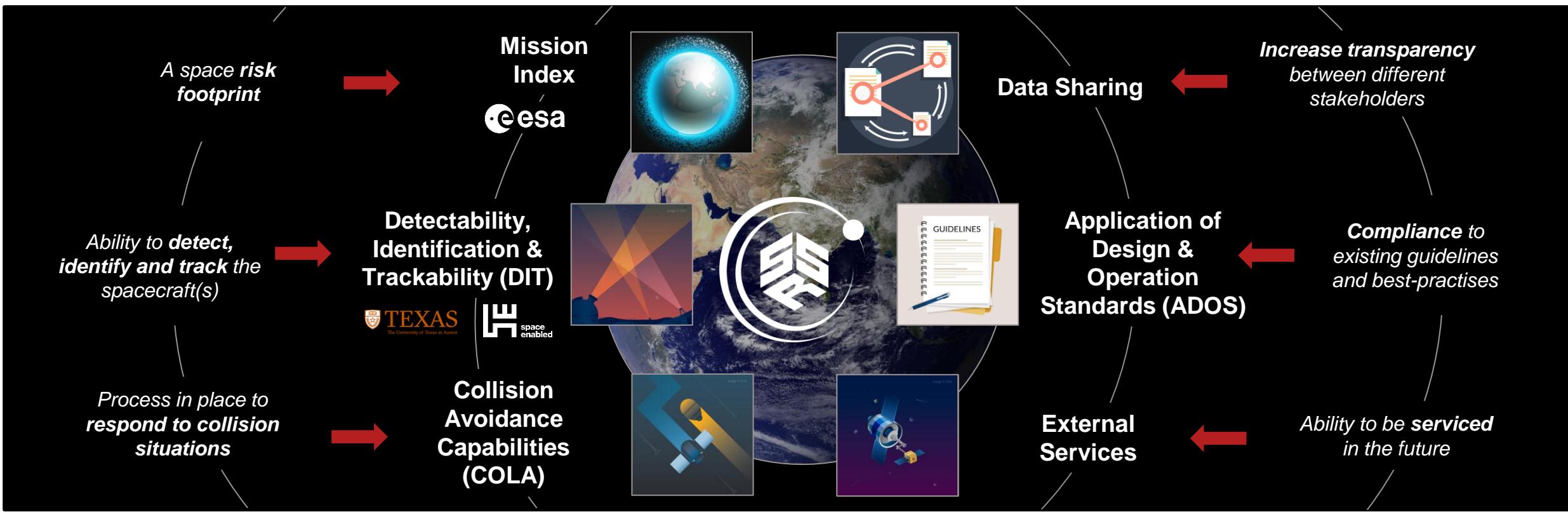


RATING SCOPE

- **Satellite** missions in **near earth orbits**
- A mission can consist of a **single satellite**, a **satellite and launch vehicle**, or **larger combinations of these elements**, e.g. several satellites and launch vehicles
- A rating is valid for **12 months**, upon its finalization (regular reassessments are needed to ensure the rating trustworthiness)
- A rating can be performed at **any mission phase**, including in preliminary design and in orbit phases

SPACE SUSTAINABILITY RATING

A MODULAR RATING



SPACE
SUSTAINABILITY
RATING

CONFIDENTIAL 14

IN A NUTSHELL

- **Collision probability** over the entire mission lifetime
- **Risk reduction** thanks to collision avoidance strategy
- **Post mission disposal** efficiency and reliability
- **Collision avoidance** capabilities (processes)
- **Transparency** when it comes to spaceflight safety data sharing
- **Compliance with existing design and operation standards** for debris mitigation (i.e., guidelines, best-practices)
- Ability of spacecraft to be **detected, tracked**
- Readiness to be **removed or serviced**

HOW IS A MISSION RATED?

1.

**Data collection
and verification**





THE SSR DATA VERIFICATION ASSESSMENT

Level of verification	Factor
Assertion Affirmative statement by the applicant is provided, without supporting documentation	0.5
Technical documentation supporting the assertion Supporting technical documentation on the mission design is disclosed to the SSR entity	0.6
Public release of the technical documentation Supporting technical documentation is submitted to a government or non-profit available for public review	0.8
Authority – independent technical review An independent technical review or confirmation of compliance by a third-party technical expert is provided	1

Each information provided shall be associated with a confidence level

Number of satellites

Positive Integer only

Verification is a required field

Mass (kg) i

Positive Float only

Verification is a required field

Select a verification level

Select a verification level

N/A

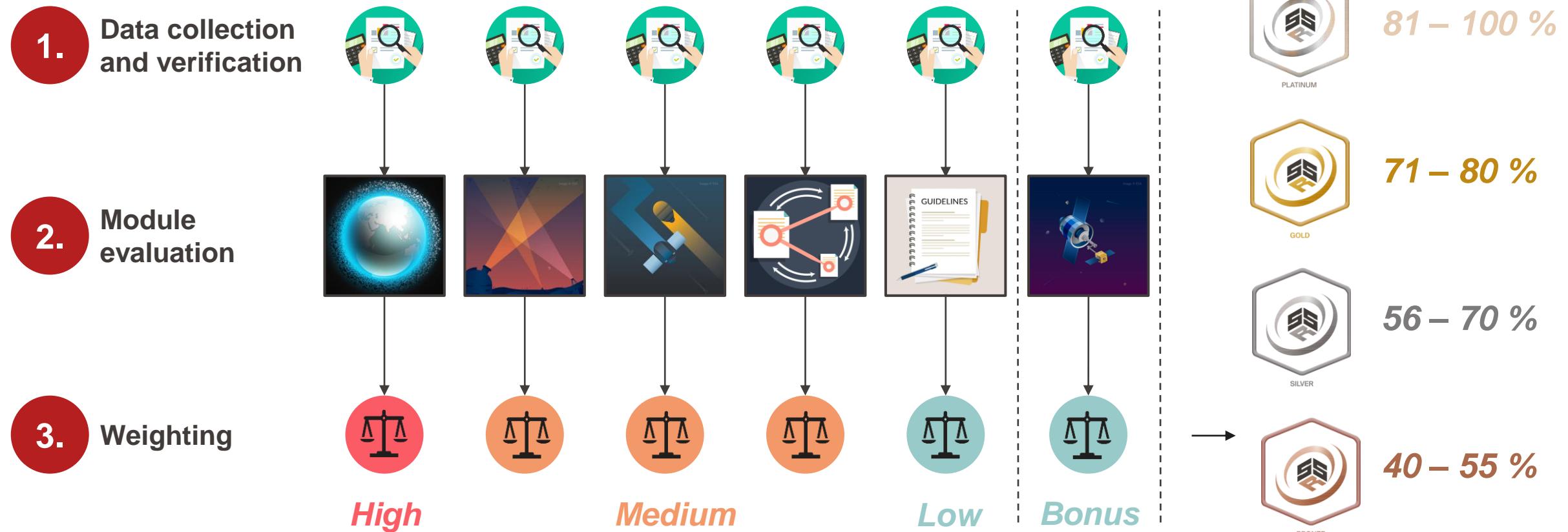
Assertion

Assertion+Documentation

Public Release

Authority



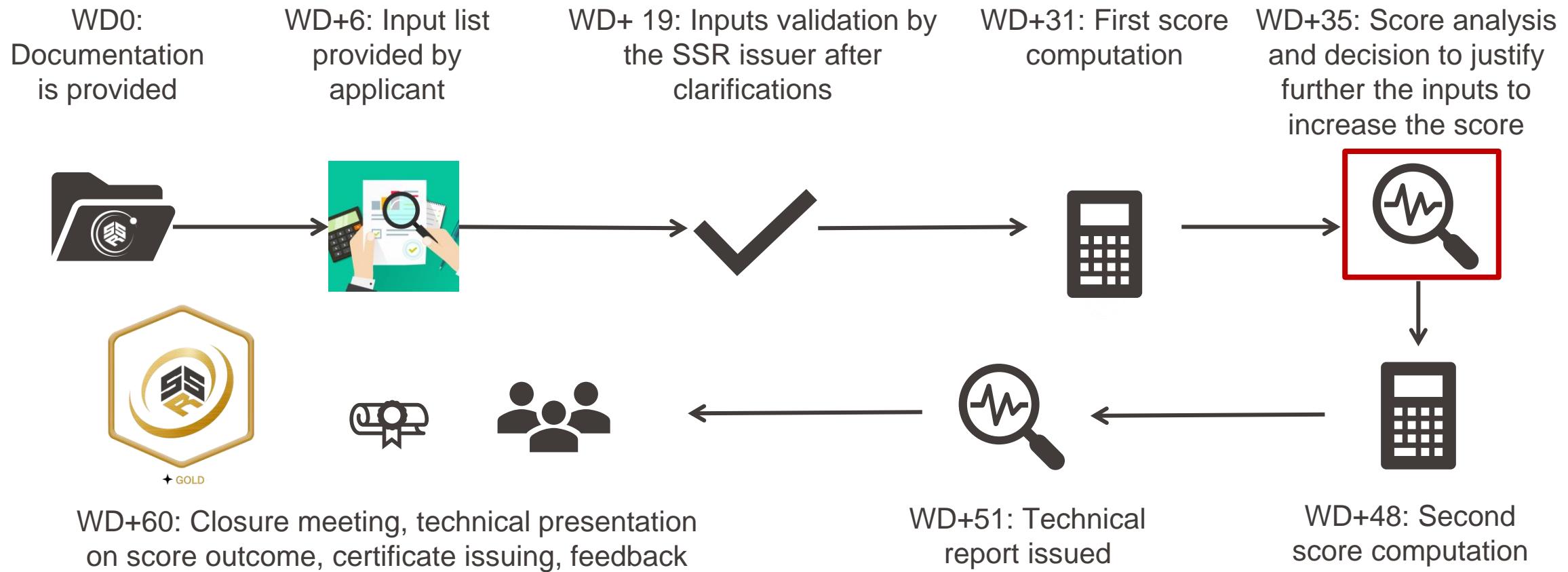
HOW IS A MISSION RATED?



COMMUNICATE YOUR *SUCCESS*

- There are three possible ways of communicating your rating:
 1. The SSR announces collaboration with your company, but no rating performed nor results shared
 2. The SSR announces collaboration with your company, and that it has been rated
 3. The SSR announces collaboration with your company, that it has been rated and the final score

EXAMPLE OF A RATING PROCESS TIMELINE



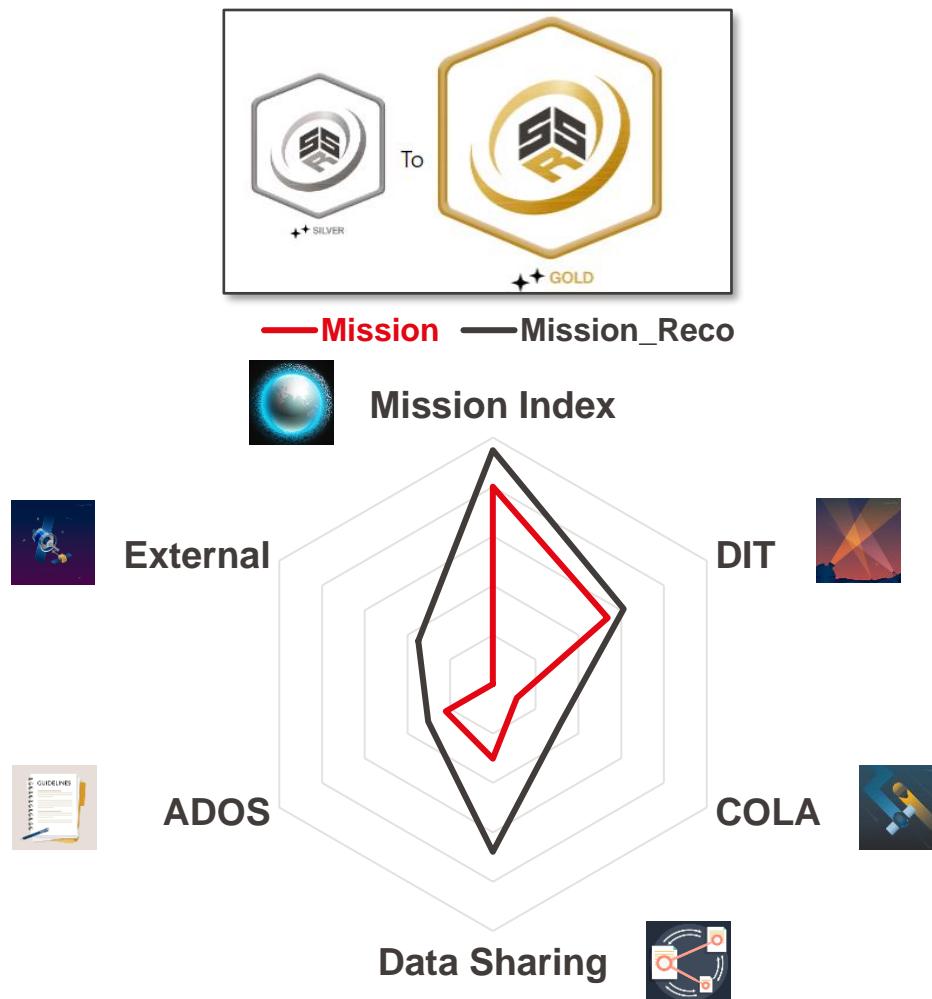


FEEDBACK LOOP

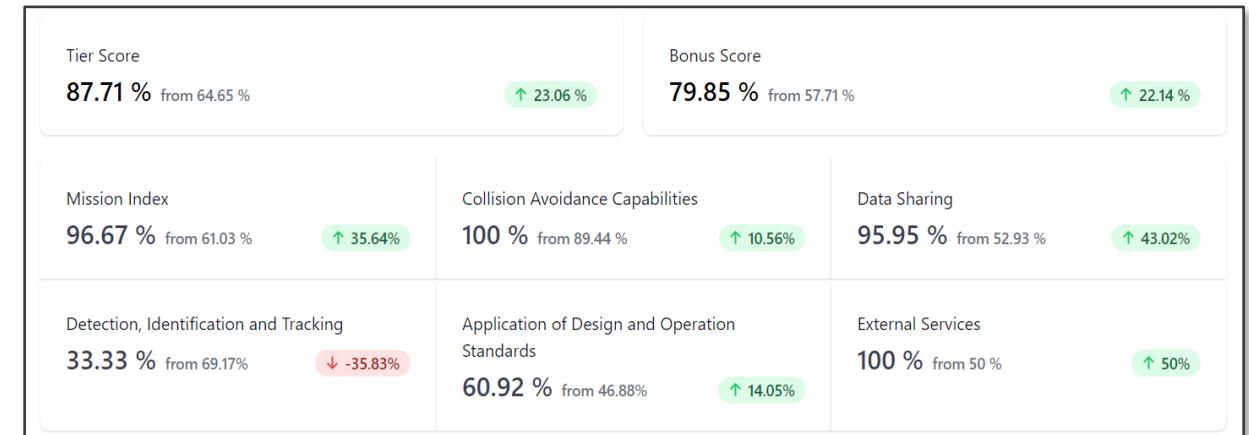
- After first computation, the score is communicated, with an **analysis** including the identification of the main **mission strengths and weaknesses** (score-wise)
- A feedback is provided under the form of **written recommendations** and the projected score including the recommendations is computed
- An operator can implement the recommendations and ask for **one score recomputation**

SPACE SUSTAINABILITY RATING

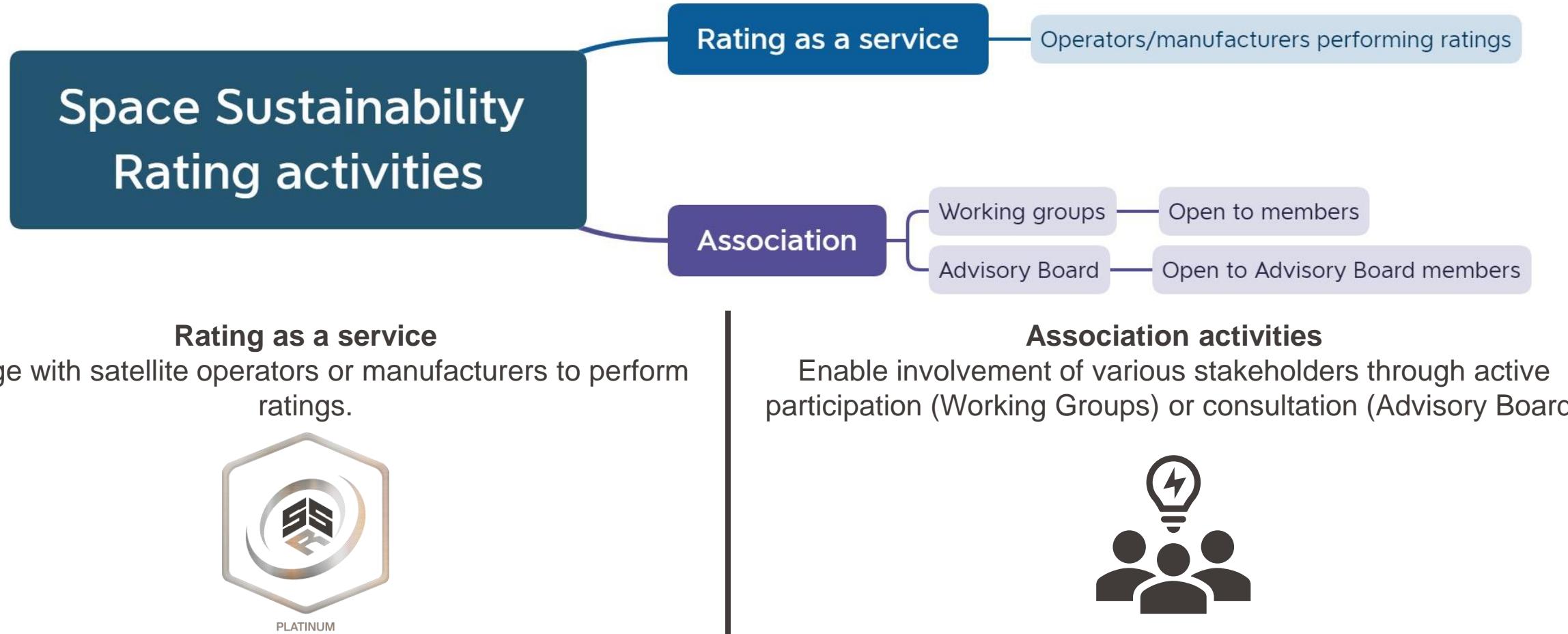
INCREASE YOUR SUSTAINABILITY PERFORMANCE



Reco. *	Description	Score increase (module)	Score increase (Tier)
MI_1	Comment	+3.5%	+1.75%
DS_1	Comment	+4%	+0.66%
COLA_1	Comment	+12%	+1.98%
DIT_1	Comment	+5%	+0.6%
...
Total SSR Score increase			+8.29%
New tier			Gold



THE SSR ACTIVITIES





RATING AS A SERVICE

- Assess the mission's level of sustainability based on third party assessment, without disclosure of sensitive mission data
- Demonstrate compliance to international policies and standards for space debris mitigation
- Publicly communicate around effort implemented for improving space sustainability
- Improve current practises based on recommendations issued from an SSR assessment



Interested in knowing more from a rated entity ? Read [IAC-23,A6,8-E9.1*](#) on general perspective from a rated entity: EnduroSat

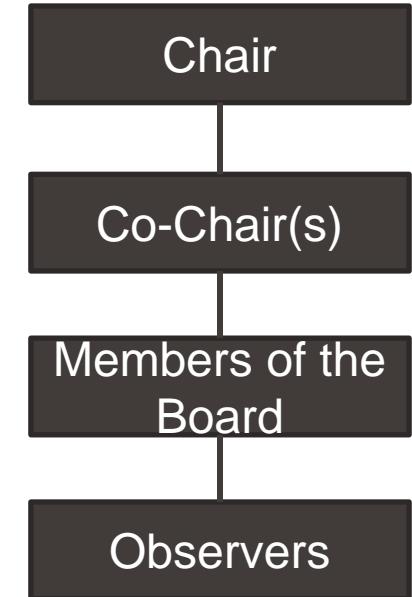


SSR ASSOCIATION BODIES

SPACE SUSTAINABILITY RATING

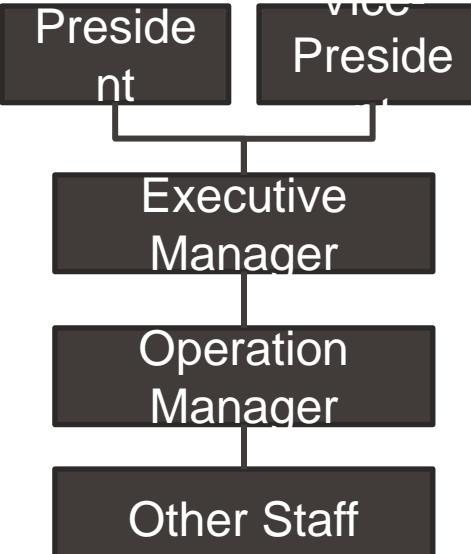
CONSULTATIVE BODY

Advisory Board



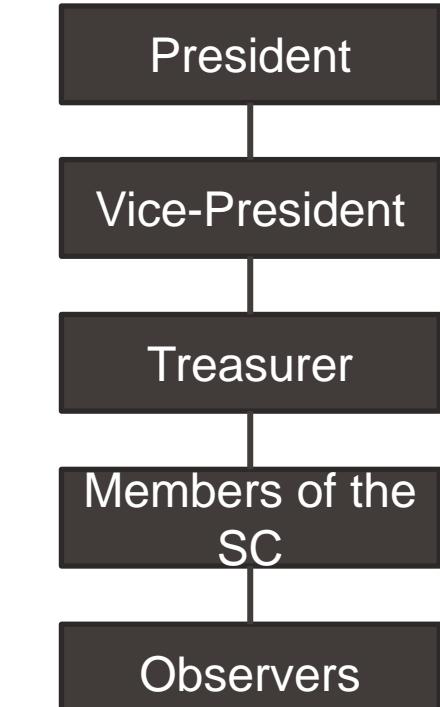
EXECUTIVE BODY

Executive Committee



GOVERNING BODY

Steering Committee





SSR ASSOCIATION: MEMBERS

- Participate in working groups of the SSR association
- Be actively involved in future evolution of the rating
- Support the establishment of the rating as an internationally recognized system
- Support the development of the rating certification scheme
- Be visible as an SSR member (SSR website, communications...)
- Global networking with organizations and individuals who are internationally recognized experts on space sustainability

RATING-USERS

Official ratings*

stellar



Computation partner



Beta-testing

AIRBUS



EPFL
SPACECRAFT
TEAM



planet.



MORE THAN 20 MISSIONS RATED (08/12/2023)

6

OFFICIAL
Ratings

Rating as a service
including score
analysis and
recommendations

8

BETA
Tests

Streamlining the
rating process with
satellite operators
and manufacturers

7

ALPHA
Tests

Rating computation
methodology fine
tuning using publicly
available data

+1 rating being performed (contract signed)
+2 rating prospects (strong interest, no contractual commitment)

SSR MEMBERS: A GROWING COMMUNITY



ENDUROSAT



SECURE
WORLD
FOUNDATION



FOR SATELLITE
MANUFACTURERS &
OPERATORS

1
GET
A
RATING
»»»

Flat fee of **CHF 20,000.-**
per rating

SPACE SUSTAINABILITY **RATING**

GET A RATING

Benefits:

- **Individualized and continuous support** from the SSR team, focusing at maximizing value, providing:
 - Up to two computations (i.e. one initial rating, one feedback and re-computation loop before final submission)



FOR SPACE AGENCIES,
INSTITUTIONS, LARGE
INTEGRATORS



- Customized package for multiple ratings

SPACE SUSTAINABILITY RATING

GET A RATING

Benefits:

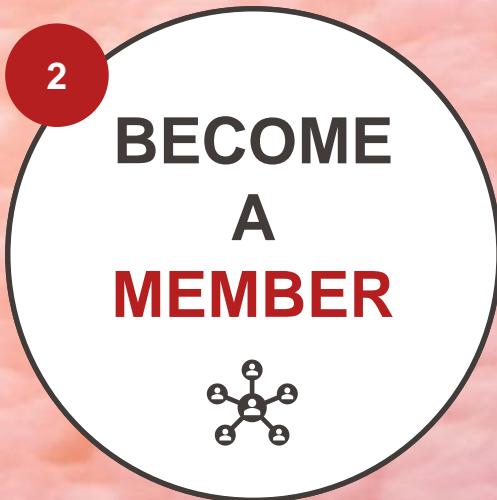
- **Multiple missions** being rated.
- **Customized agreement** based on the needs.
- Possibility to set up more than two computations per rating (enabling using SSR for **sustainability trade-offs** during a design phase for instance)



SPACE
SUSTAINABILITY
RATING

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BECOME A MEMBER



Membership fees:

- **CHF 5,000.-**
- **Valid one year upon joining**

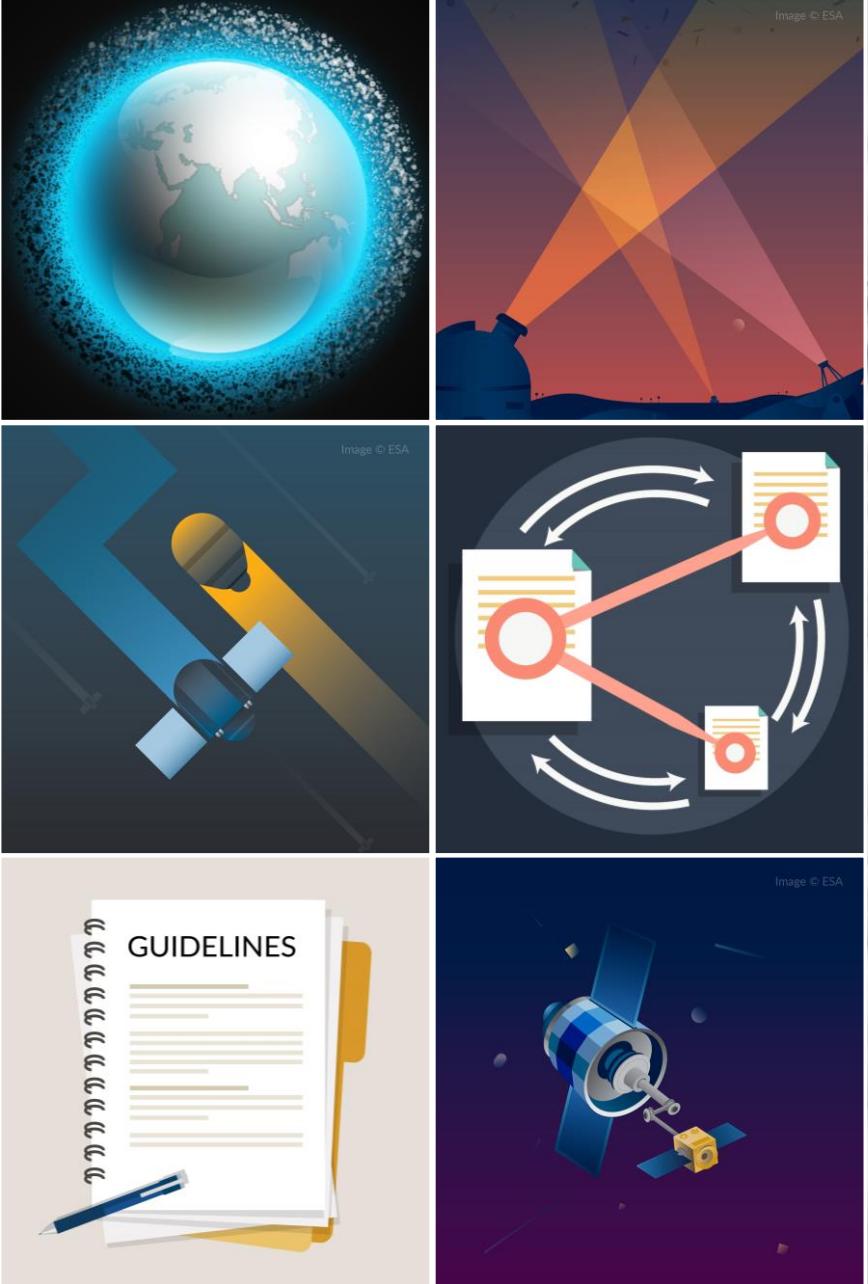
SSR Association provide the following benefits:

- Be part of the SSR Association
- Participate in the General Assembly
- **Visibility:** be featured on the SSR Website, presentations & other communications
- Get involved in the **Working Groups (2025)**



1. Outreach & Policy

- Write a white paper on the rating benefits



What's inside?

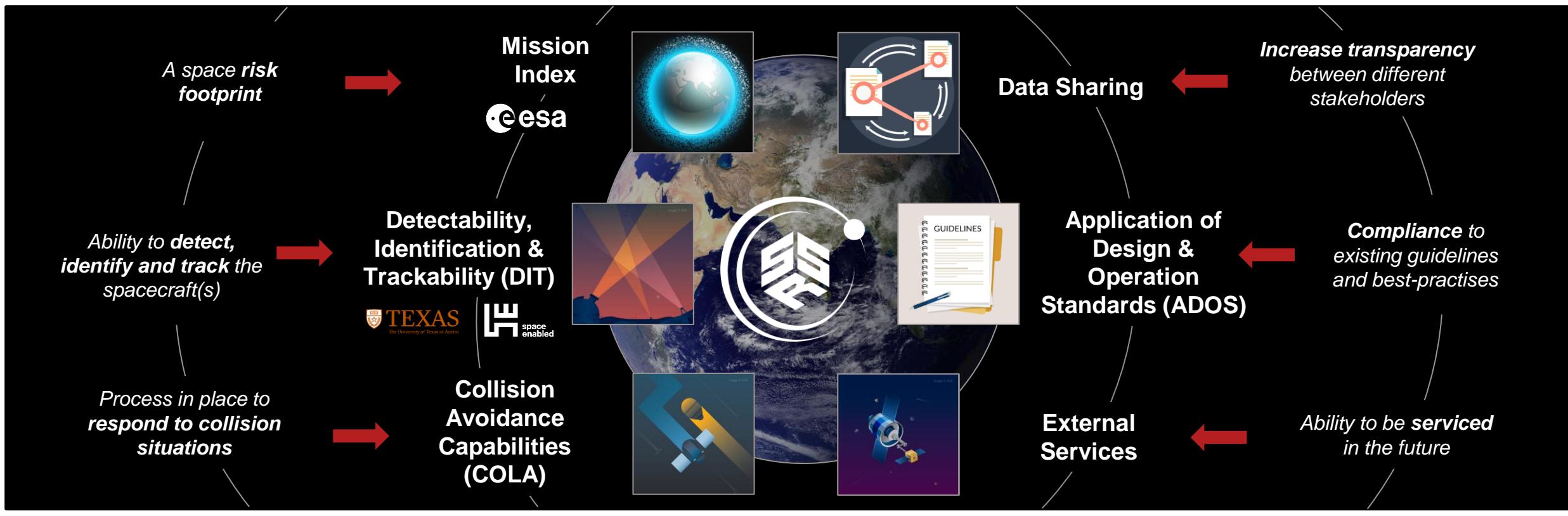
A deep-dive into the SSR Modules



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RATING

SPACE SUSTAINABILITY RATING

A MODULAR RATING



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RATING

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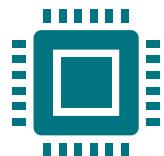
THE SSR MODULES

Modular evaluation based on a set of different criteria (modules)

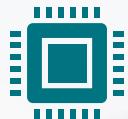
Modules	Weight	Type
Mission Index	50%	Quantitative
Collision Avoidance Capabilities	16.5%	Qualitative
Data Sharing	16.5%	Qualitative
Detectability, Identification and Trackability	12%	Quantitative
Application of Design and Operation Standards	5%	Qualitative
External Services	Bonus	Qualitative



Qualitative:
Compliance based



Quantitative:
Model based



Model based

50%

SPACE SUSTAINABILITY RATING

MISSION INDEX

A *space risk footprint*

- Quantifies the **collision risk** using an index metric;
- Evaluates the risk contribution of a mission to the debris environment **compared to a capacity target**;
- Uses **high level parameters** that can be obtained early in the mission development;

Satellite & mission design

- Number of satellites
- Spacecraft mass
- Cross-sectional area
- Operational lifetime
- Deployment duration

Orbital parameters (at deployment epoch)

- Semi-major axis
- Eccentricity
- Inclination

Collision avoidance strategy

- Accepted collision probability level
- Lead time

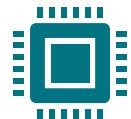
Disposal strategy

- Success rate
- Target apogee and perigee
- Description



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RATING

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Model based



50%

SPACE SUSTAINABILITY **RATING**

MISSION INDEX - FORMULATION

Index formulation for one object, at a given epoch

Probability of collision p_c

$$I = \overbrace{p_c}^{\text{Probability of collision}} \cdot \underbrace{e_c}_{\text{Severity of collision}}$$

Severity of collision e_c

High $I \Leftrightarrow$ High risk \Leftrightarrow Low Score

I depends on orbital parameters and spacecraft physical properties

Environment simulated with



Cumulative collision probability

$$p_c = 1 - e^{-\rho \cdot \Delta V \cdot A \cdot \Delta t}$$

- ρ the density of object large enough to trigger a catastrophic collision (1)
- ΔV the relative impact velocity
- A the cross-sectional area
- Δt the timestep increment value

Collision severity (2)

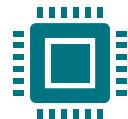
- Synthetic fragmentation triggered and modelled (reformulated NASA breakup model)
- Propagation of the debris cloud (phase space density)
- Quantification of the **increased probability of collision for a set of representative objects**



(1) collisions with an energy-to-mass ratio above the 40 J/g threshold

(2) Colombo et al. [Tracking the health of the space debris environment with THEMIS](#), section 2.1

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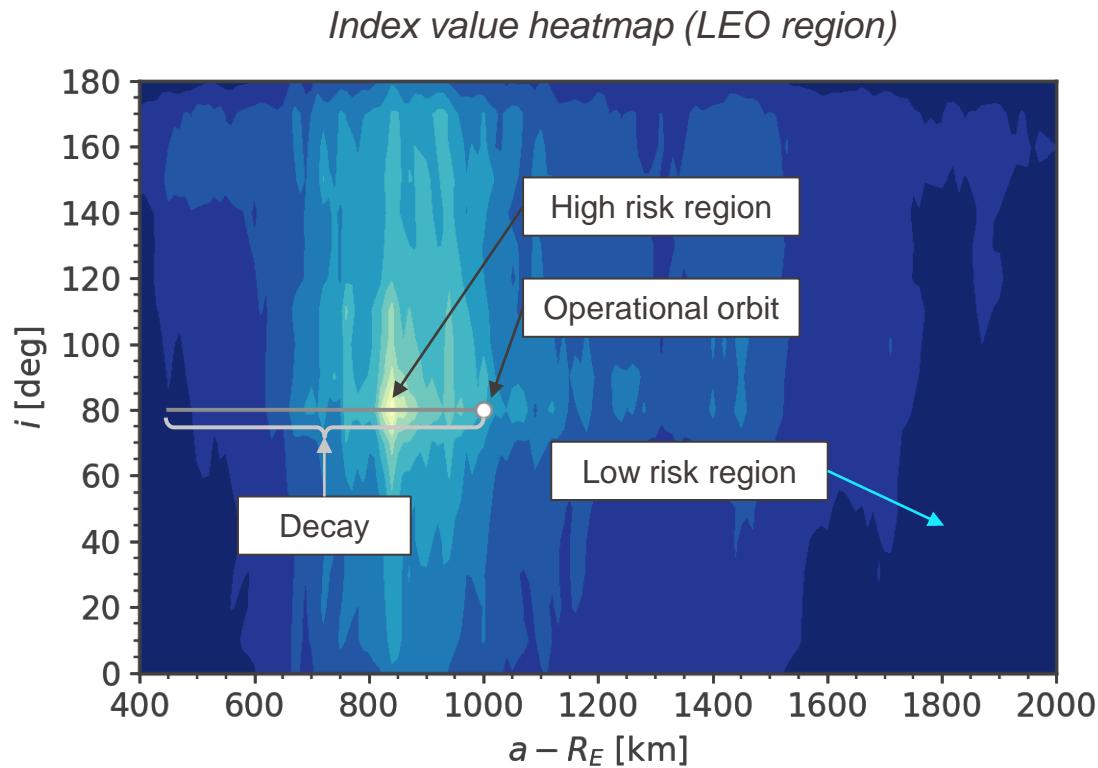
Model based



50%

SPACE SUSTAINABILITY **RATING**

MISSION INDEX – INDEX MAPS



The index value is discretized, and integrated over the object's lifetime

$$I = \int_{t_0}^{t_f} (p_c \cdot e_c) dt$$

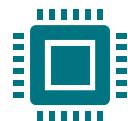
Discretized index allows to account for the spacecraft trajectory evolution (e.g. orbit raising, disposal manoeuvres, orbital decay)



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RATING

Courtesy: [debris index frontend](#), ESA space debris office

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Model based



50%

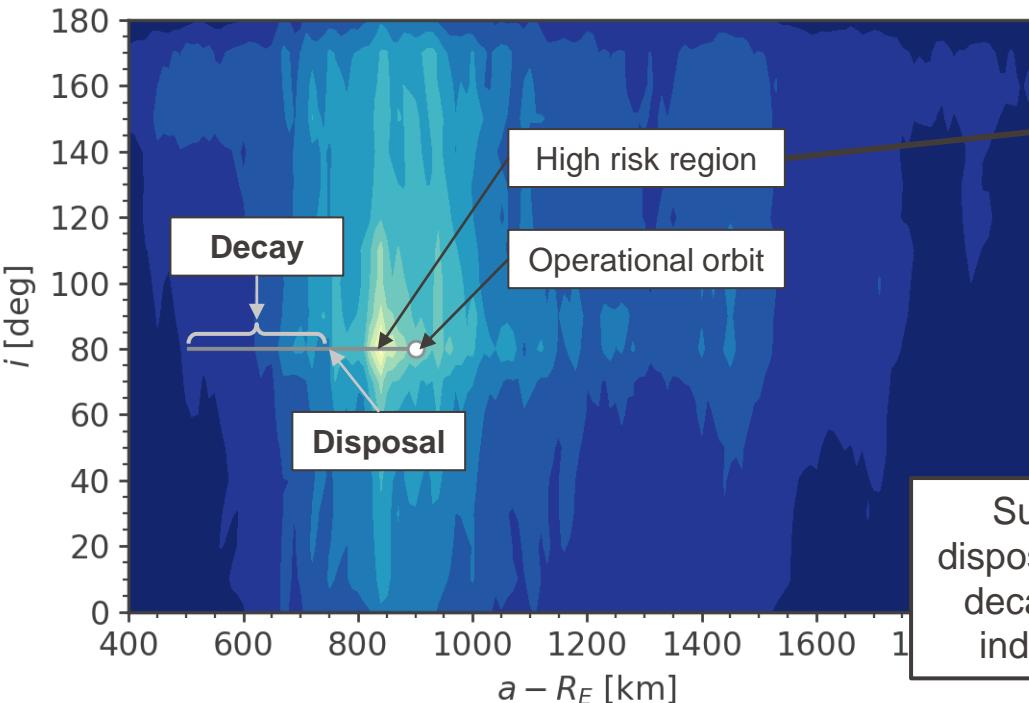
SPACE SUSTAINABILITY **RATING**

MISSION INDEX – TRAJECTORY EVOLUTION PMD

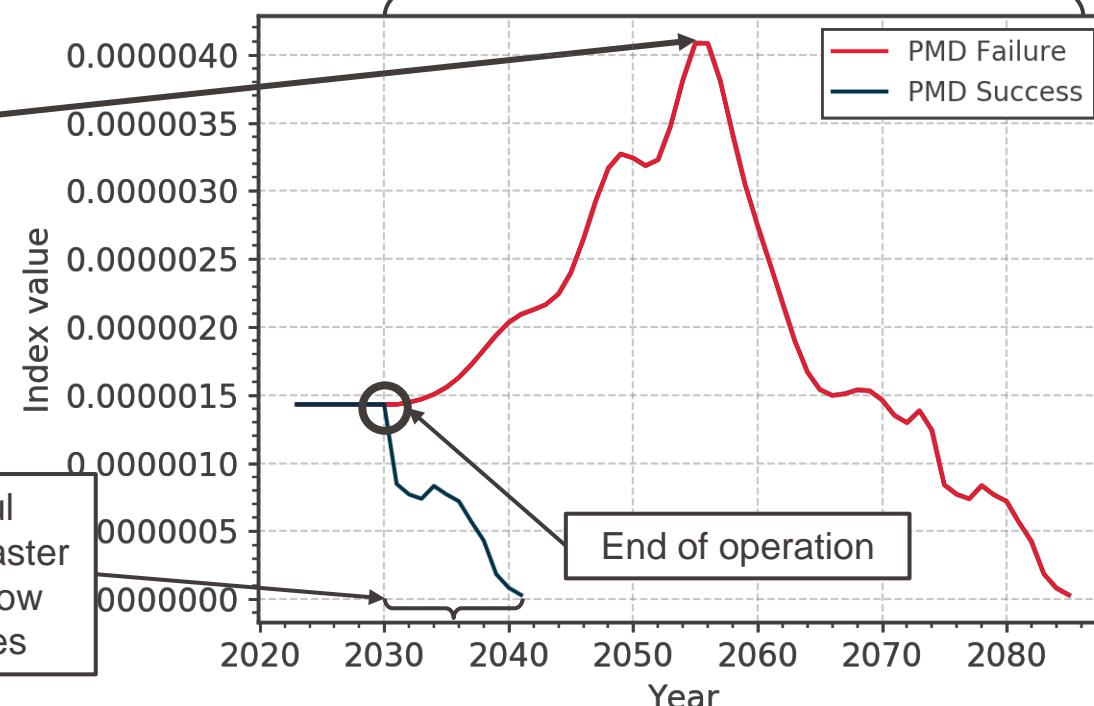
Mock mission data:

$A/m = 0.1$ (to highlight impact of trajectory evolution)
Initial altitude 900km

Post mission disposal to a 750 km altitude



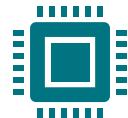
Failure \Leftrightarrow Long natural decay from failure altitude and higher index values



SPACE
SUSTAINABILITY
RATING

Courtesy: [debris index frontend](#), ESA space debris office

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Model based

50%

SPACE SUSTAINABILITY **RATING**

THE MISSION INDEX

Impact of the disposal strategy:

$$I_{disposal} = \underbrace{\alpha \int_{t_{EOL}}^{t_{fD}} I_{disposal} dt}_{\text{PMD Success}} + (1 - \alpha) \int_{t_{EOL}}^{t_{fND}} I_{abandonned} dt$$

PMD Failure

α : Post Mission Disposal Success Rate*

Before launch:

α is obtained from spacecraft reliability analysis

During operation

α is set to 0 if a spacecraft fails
 α is set to 1 if a spacecraft is successfully deorbited



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RATING

* For a constellation, the value of α is aggregated for the entire fleet (i.e. weighted average)

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MISSION INDEX – DISPOSAL RELIABILITY

Accounting for disposal failure scenario:

$$I_{disposal} = \underbrace{\alpha \int_{t_{EOL}}^{t_{fD}} I_{disposal} dt}_{\text{PMD Success}} + (1 - \alpha) \int_{t_{EOL}}^{t_{fND}} I_{abandonned} dt$$

PMD Failure

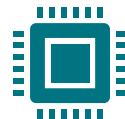
α : Post Mission Disposal Success Rate*

Before launch:

α is obtained from spacecraft reliability analysis

During operation

α is set to 0 if a spacecraft fails
 α is set to 1 if a spacecraft is successfully deorbited



Model based

50%

SPACE SUSTAINABILITY RATING

MISSION INDEX – COLLISION AVOIDANCE

$$I_{phases \ COLA} = \int_{t_0}^{t_{E0phase}} \left[(1 - \gamma) (p_{c_{trackable}} \cdot e_c) + p_{c_{non-trackable}} \cdot e_{c_{non-trackable}} \right] dt$$

γ : Mitigated Collision Risk

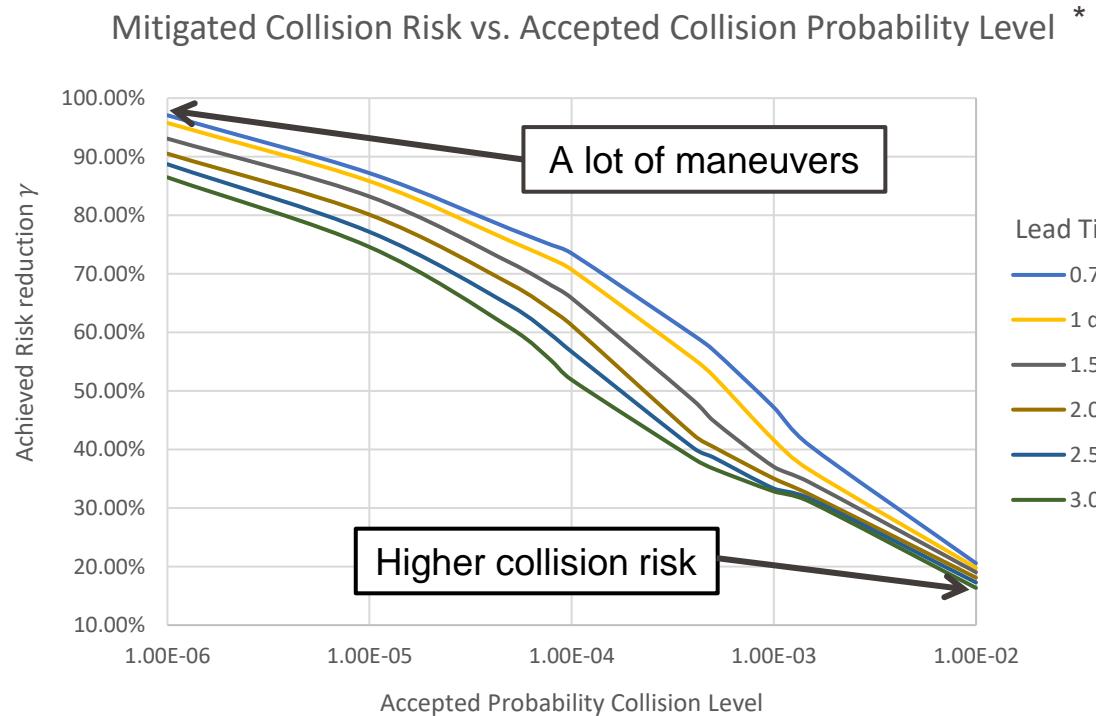
Collisions with trackable debris can be avoided

Risk reduction achieved by the implemented collision avoidance strategy **with respect to the case where no maneuver is performed**

mainly driven by two parameters:

Time required to perform a maneuver

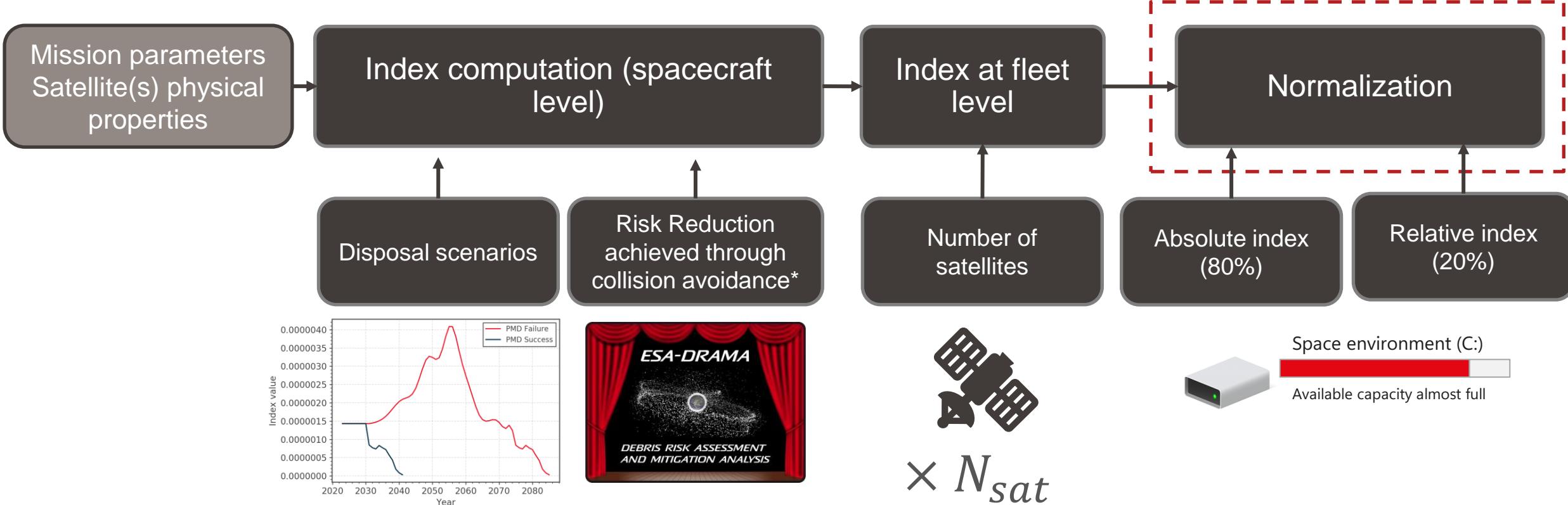
Accepted Collision Probability Level



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Test case used: 0.5m radius spacecraft operating at a near circular, near sun-synchronous, 400km altitude orbit

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MISSION INDEX – NORMALIZATION*How to output a score?*



What is “full”?

Capacity identified from long term extrapolation scenarios (the “capacity” C)

A normalized score is computed based on the **share of yearly available capacity consumed** by the mission

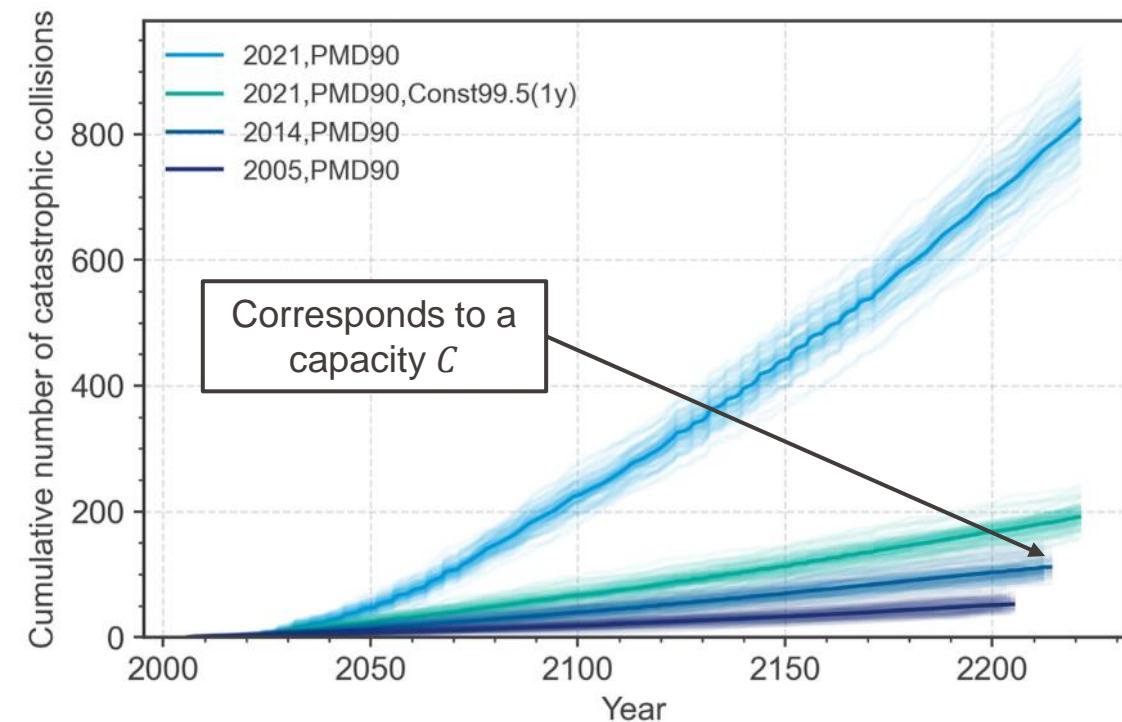
$$\hat{I} = I_{mission}/(C - I_{already\ used})$$

$$S_{abs} = 0.5 - \frac{1}{10} \log_{10}(\hat{I}) - \frac{\hat{I} - 1}{50} \leftarrow$$

SPACE SUSTAINABILITY RATING

MISSION INDEX – NORMALIZATION

(1)



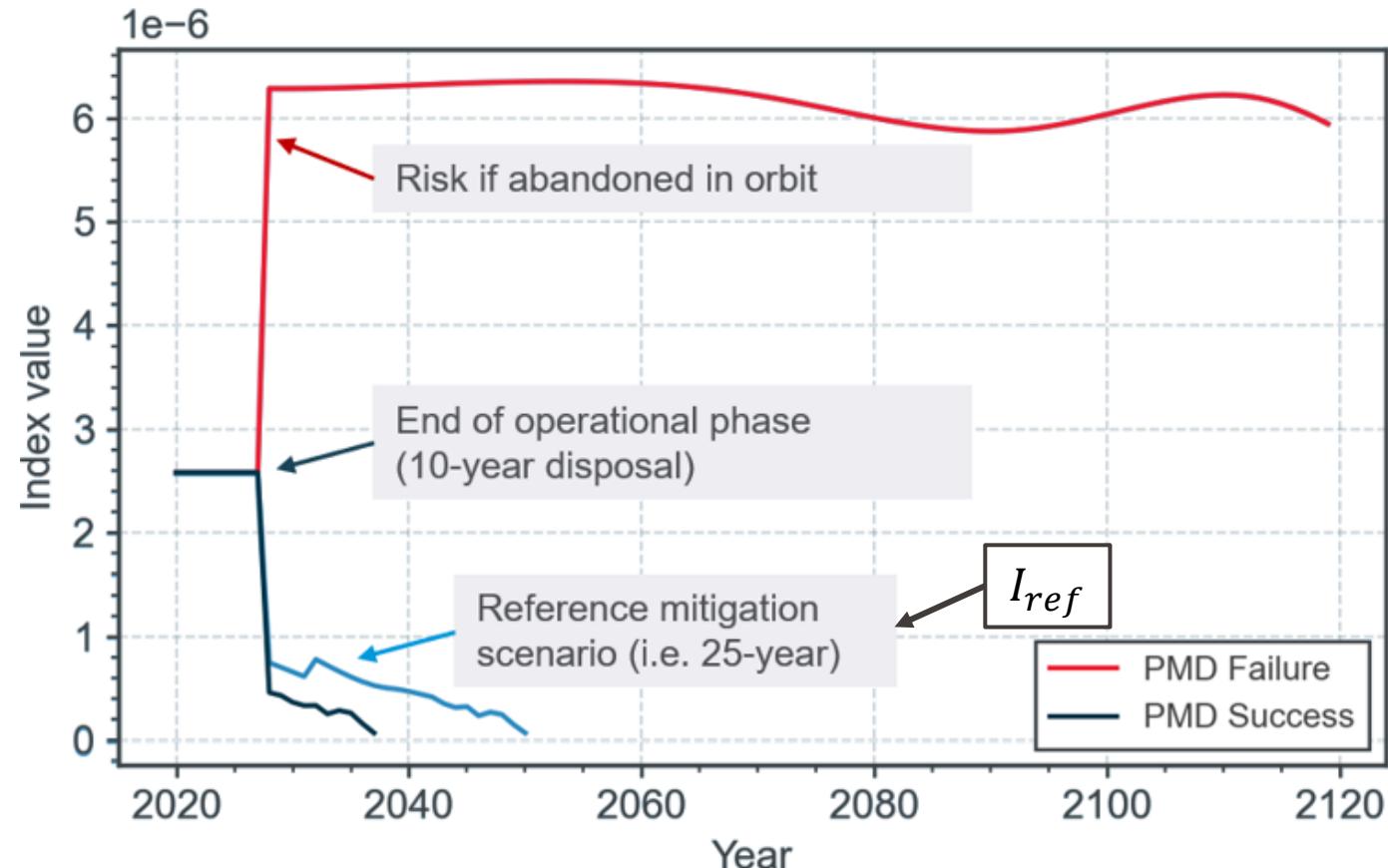
“Absolute” index score, 80% of the mission index score (2)

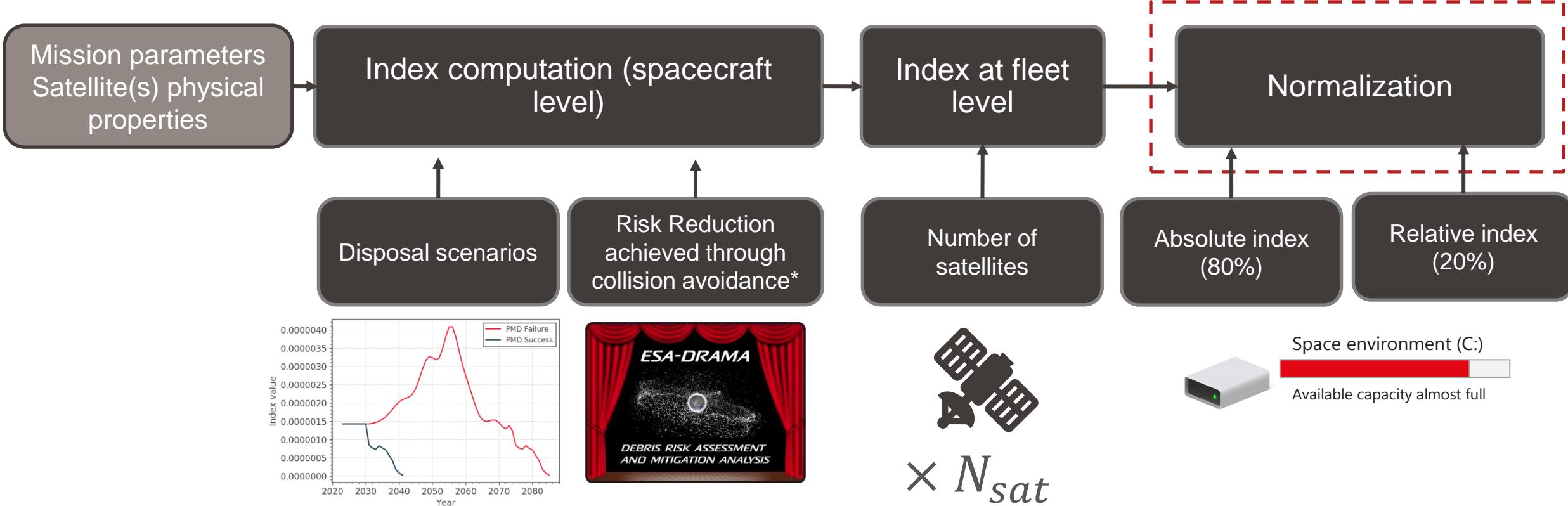
MISSION INDEX – NORMALIZATION**“Relative” mission index: going beyond recommendations**

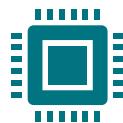
- Definition of a reference case
- Comparison to the reference case

$$I_{relative} = I_{mission}/I_{ref}$$

$$S_{rel} = 1 - (I_{rel})^3 \quad \leftarrow \quad \text{“Relative” index score, 20% of the mission index score}$$



MISSION INDEX – NORMALIZATION*How to output a score?*



Model based



12%

SPACE SUSTAINABILITY **RATING**

DETECTABILITY, IDENTIFICATION AND TRACKABILITY

Detectability allows traffic management

Satellite physical properties

- Geometric shape
- Dimensions
- Face pointing Nadir

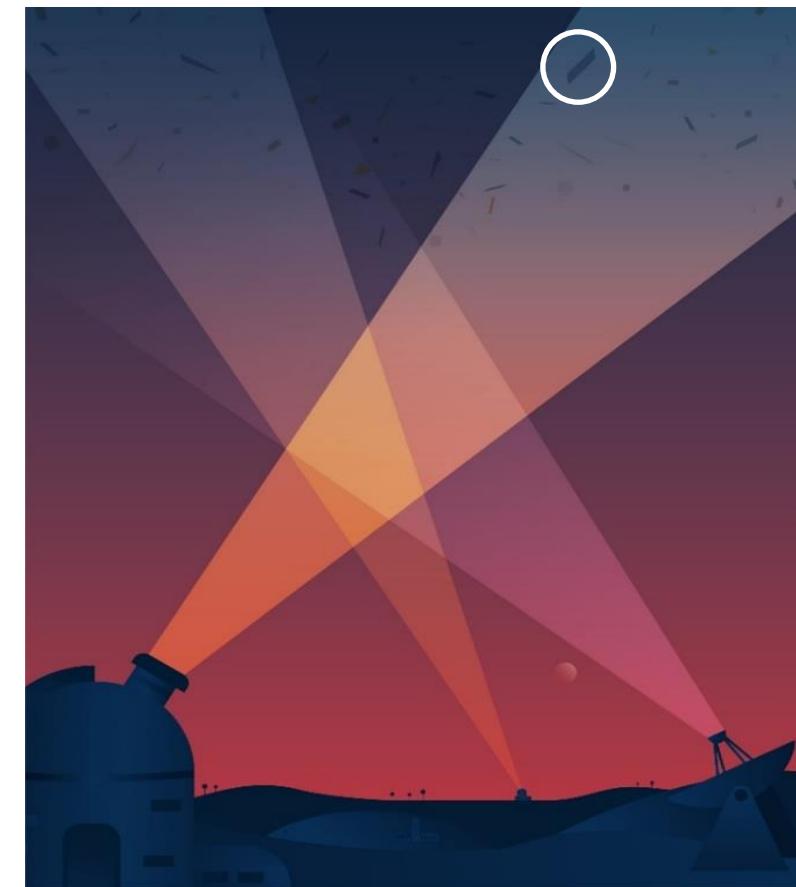
Orbital parameters

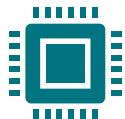
- Semi-major axis
- Eccentricity
- Inclination

Simulation of a ground sensor network (optical and radar), propagation of the satellite(s), compute access periods

Likelihood that an object can be **observed** by ground surveillance systems (without prior knowledge)

Feasibility of **orbit evolution** prediction for a detected objects (for an agent different from the operator)





Model based



12%

SPACE SUSTAINABILITY RATING

DIT Module normalization

Detectability Score

Sub-components	Metrics	Scoring thresholds		
		0	0.5	1
Optical Detectability score ($S_{D_{opt}}$)	Visual Magnitude		>15	<15
Radar Detectability score ($S_{D_{rad}}$)	Probability of Radar detection	<50%	50-75%	>75%

$$S_D = 0.5 \times S_{D_{opt}} + 0.5 \times S_{D_{rad}}$$

Trackability Score

Metrics (computed for both optical and radar)	Scoring thresholds			
	0	0.25	0.5	1
Pass duration ($Pass_d$)	<120"	120-180"	180-400"	>400"
Orbital coverage (O_c)	<10%	10-25%	25-60%	>60%
Interval duration (Int_d)	>12h		12h-6h	<6h

$$S_{T_{opt,rad}} = \frac{1}{3} Pass_d + \frac{1}{3} O_c + \frac{1}{3} Int_d$$

$$S_T = \max(S_{T_{opt}}, S_{T_{rad}})$$

DIT SCORE:

$$S_{DIT} = \frac{1}{3} S_D + \frac{1}{3} S_T + \frac{1}{3} S_{Questionnaire}$$





Qualitative:
Compliance
based

SPACE SUSTAINABILITY **RATING**

QUALITATIVE MODULES SCORE COMPUTATION



Type of data shared	Points earned for sharing with:			
	SSA providers	Other operators	Network of operators	Public
Publish and update collision avoidance contact information	10	10	12	12
Publish and update collision avoidance contact time zone/hours of operation	3	3	3	4
Publish and update COLA contact/coordination request response time guarantees	1	2	2	1

Level of verification	Factor
Assertion	0.5
Supporting technical documentation	0.6
Public release	0.8
Authority – independent technical review	1

$$S_{module} = \frac{\sum_{j=1}^n p_{input_j}}{Available\ points_{module}}$$



SPACE
SUSTAINABILITY
RATING

* All modules points can be found on the [SSR rating webpage](#), or in previous academic papers (Ref [4], [5], [6] provided at the end of the slide deck)

CONFIDENTIAL 54



Qualitative



16.5%

SPACE SUSTAINABILITY **RATING**

COLLISION AVOIDANCE CAPABILITIES

Evaluation of the capabilities and processes to follow-up orbital state and be able to prevent collisions

Operator Action	Orbital State Knowledge	Availability to Coordinate	Capability to Coordinate		Maneuver capabilities
Lowest Performance	Rely on third party public SSA provider	Not able to coordinate	Operator has no dedicated process for conjunction screening, assessment, or mitigation.		No maneuver capabilities
Highest Performance	Maintain/update orbital state knowledge of object to within < 1km	Has a system for routine conjunction assessment and capability to respond to concerns 24 hours	Has documented procedures for collision screening, assessment, and mitigation;	Regularly screens operational spacecraft and planned manoeuvres against SSA sharing organization catalogue	Reaction (at least $\Delta v=1$ cm/s) within one orbital revolution

SPACE
SUSTAINABILITY
RATINGSSR [Collision Avoidance Capabilities webpage](#)**CONFIDENTIAL 55**



Qualitative



16.5%

SPACE SUSTAINABILITY **RATING**

DATA SHARING

Increase transparency between stakeholders

What information are you sharing?

- Ephemerides
- Covariance information
- Contact of person in charge for collision avoidance (and list objects by NORAD ID)
- Covariances
- Maneuvrability of the spacecraft(s)
- ...

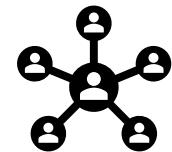
With whom?



SSA Providers



Other operators
upon request



Network of operators



Public



SPACE
SUSTAINABILITY
RATING

SSR [Data Sharing Webpage](#)

CONFIDENTIAL 56



Qualitative

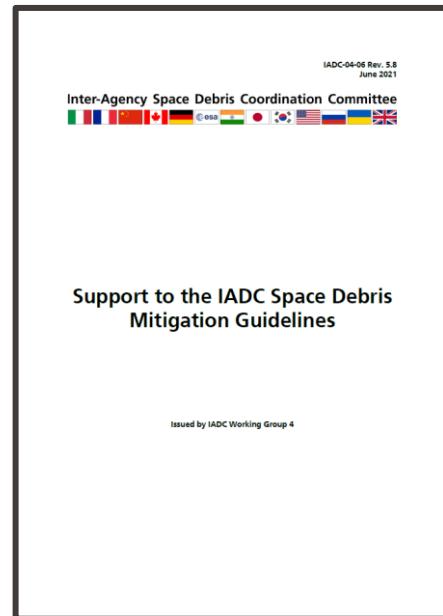


5%

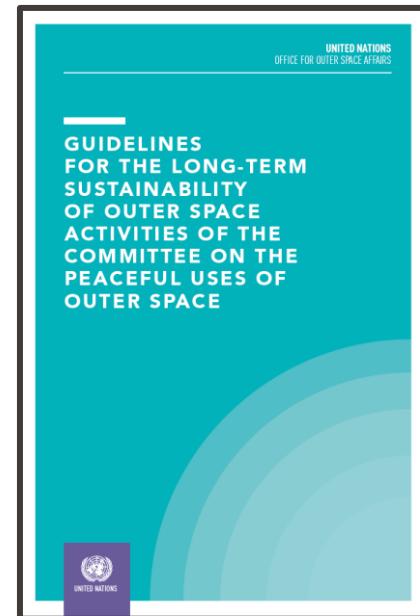
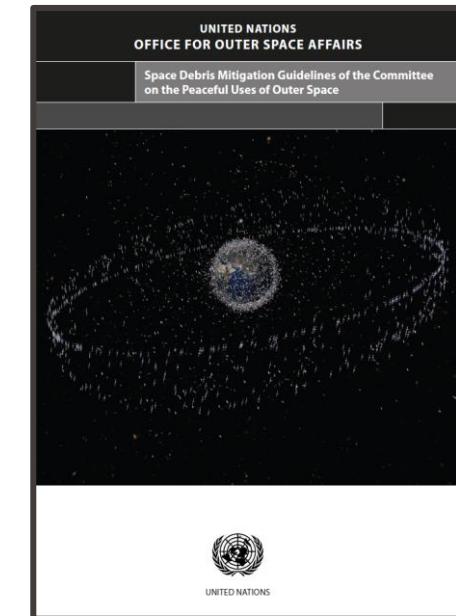
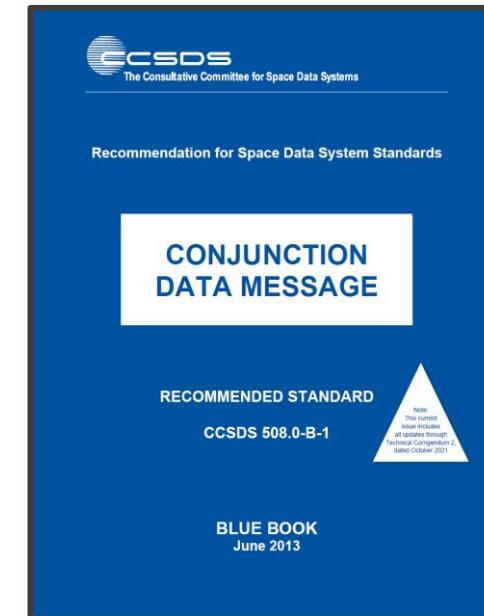
SPACE SUSTAINABILITY **RATING**

APPLICATION OF DESIGN AND OPERATION STANDARDS

Incentivize further adoption of well-recognized standards, norms, guidelines for sustainable practises



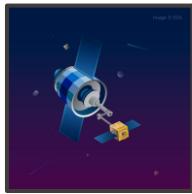
Support to the IADC Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines



SPACE
SUSTAINABILITY
RATING

SSR [Application of Design and Operation Standards Webpage](#)

CONFIDENTIAL 57



Qualitative

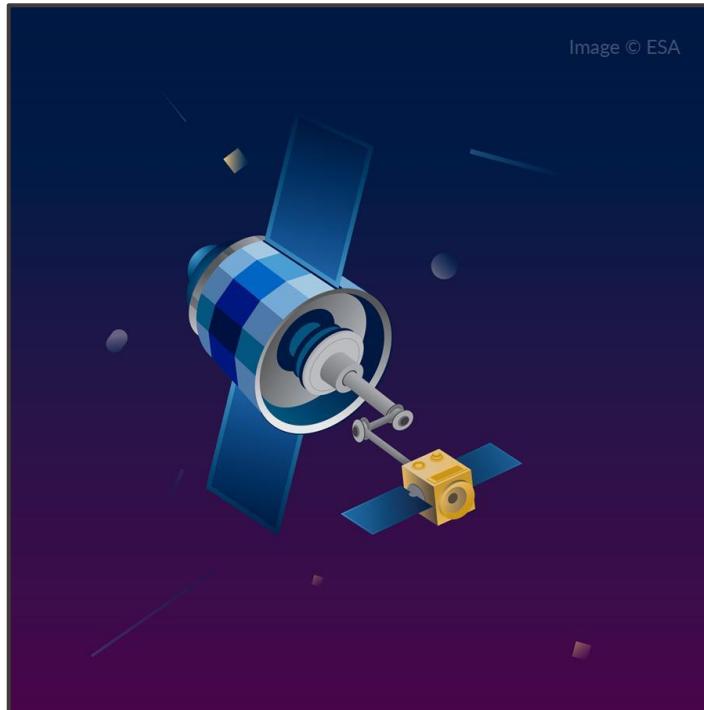


Bonus

SPACE SUSTAINABILITY **RATING**

EXTERNAL SERVICES

Prepare for removal!



Standardized
interface for
removal

Active debris
removal service
in case of
failure

Visual fiducials

Grappling
fixtures



NOT INTEGRATED IN THE SCORE TODAY BECAUSE SUCH EXTERNAL SERVICES ARE NOT
AVAILABLE AS OF NOW
SSR [External Services Webpage](#)

CONFIDENTIAL 58



GET IN TOUCH

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spacesustainabilityrating.org



SPACE
SUSTAINABILITY
RATING

Exercise

- Primary task: Compute index values and understand risk profile for different set of scenarios to understand risks associated with
 - Operational orbit
 - CAM/No CAM scenarios
 - Disposal trajectory
 - Disposal reliability / no disposal scenarios
 - Spacecraft size

