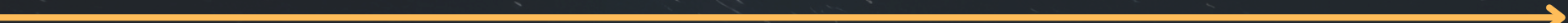




Real people. Real science. Real space impact.



# Iodine, Thrusters & Thoughts





## *From Curiosity to Cosmos:* Gerrit Kottke's Journey to Space Engineering

Gerrit Kottke originally set out for a career in the automotive sector – until a moment in 2012 changed everything. "The landing of the *Curiosity* rover was a turning point for me," he recalls. That awe-inspiring event rerouted him toward space engineering, eventually leading him to *Airbus* and his current role as *Engineering Project Manager in electric propulsion*.





## *Coordinating Cosmos: Gerrit's Role in iFACT-MP*

As **project coordinator**, Gerrit serves as the main interface between teams, managing progress and de-risking the activity. With his team's deep heritage in **iodine propulsion**, they are leading development of the thruster unit – **the very heart of the subsystem**. Gerrit's hands-on focus? The krypton neutraliser – an essential electron source for the thruster.



## *Design to Delivery: The Thrill of Making Space Hardware Real*

**The most exciting part for Gerrit?**

It's watching all components come together – from specification to design, and finally, to testing.

Despite tight timelines and long lead items, Gerrit highlights **how careful planning and collaboration push the mission forward.**

## *Turning Points: Building Blocks in Motion*

Following the Critical Design Review at the end of 2024, all building blocks of the iFACT-MP are either under assembly or already successfully tested. **The propulsion system is truly taking shape.**







## *First Mission, Big Lessons*

"This is my first project as project manager – and it's been a **tremendous learning experience**," Gerrit shares. From proposal phase to full implementation, he's grown into the leadership role, bridging technical depth with team coordination.

## *Life Beyond Propulsion*

*Mountains, Espresso, and Advice for the Next Generation*

When not engineering space propulsion systems, Gerrit finds peace outdoors – **trekking, climbing, skiing – or perfecting his espresso**. His advice to aspiring space engineers? "If you're studying, pursue an internship or thesis in the field". It's the ideal entry point.







Behind every thruster test and  
subsystem review, there's a human  
story – full of curiosity, ambition, and  
perseverance.

