

France, Japan Talks of Expanding into 61 Cygni Cluster

Leaks from a recent high-level meeting between the French and Japanese space exploration agencies suggests that the nations are planning a joint exploration mission to the 61 Cygni Cluster. The Cluster of 48 stars starting merely 11 light-years from the Sun has so far been unreachable due to the 7.7-lightyear limit of the stutterwarp drive. Using newly developed tugs it can be reached, and would constitute a potential new arm of development.

“We are merely exploring future options” Japanese Space Minister Sugase Tatsui explained. “While we are interested both in international collaboration and long-range exploration, the Cygni Cluster is just one of many options”. His French counterpart Jacques-Jérémie Renaud was unavailable for comment but his administration acknowledged that the Cluster “had been on the agenda”.

In order to explore the cluster France and Japan would need to acquire or build stutterwarp tugs. Should the Cygni Cluster be opened up, it would enable France and Japan to circumvent much of the Manchurian arm. Analysts suggest that as tugs become more available there will be a race to explore the Cluster, which is believed to hold several habitable worlds.

The French colonial welfare organisation Organisation Coloniale D'Assistance Sociale criticised the putative plans on the grounds that “going to the Cygni Cluster is merely an expression of nationalist hubris and populist expansionism, while the needs of the existing colonies are overlooked because of the unglamorous problems they pose for the colonial administration”.