Charter for the Independent Program Assessment Office

The Independent Program Assessment Office (IPAO), within the Office of Program Analysis and Evaluation, has the responsibility for enabling the independent review (an unbiased, objective review of the maturity, health and status) of the agency's programs and projects at life cycle milestones to ensure the highest probability of mission success. The IPAO ensures the objectivity, quality, integrity and consistency of the independent review process required by the NASA Space Flight Program and Project Management Requirements, NPR 7120.5, and NASA Systems Engineering Processes and Requirements, NPR 7123.1. This independent program and project review process is a collaborative effort between PA&E, the Mission Directorates, the Office of the Chief Engineer, Office of Safety and Mission Assurance, Chief Health and Medical Office (as needed), and the independent technical authority community at the NASA Centers and the NESC support of the Agency's Program Management Councils. The IPAO will ensure the review needs of each of these communities are met while maintaining the integrity and independence of the review process consistent with the agency's governance model as documented in the NASA Strategic Management and Governance Handbook, NPD 1000.0.

Specifically, the IPAO:

- Develops and maintains the agency handbook for the conduct of independent reviews;
- Provides Review Managers for programs, category 1 & 2 projects and special request reviews as assigned;
- Develops independent cost estimates for projects (particularly those requiring Congressional reporting) and independent cost analyses for all programs as part of the independent reviews, particularly at the preliminary approval (e.g. pre-non-advocate review) and approval (e.g. non-advocate review) key decision points, and to support congressional reporting requirements for the agency;
- Provides programmatic assessments of programs and projects, including compliance with NPR 7120.5, as a member of the independent standing review boards (SRB) and facilitates the reporting of independent review results to all involved parties;
- Provides agency licenses for industry standard cost models and oversees the incorporation of improvements in collaboration with the PA&E/Cost Analysis Division;
- Provides programmatic assessment tools, e.g., schedule assessment tools, to facilitate the highest quality independent review;
- Develops lessons learned and recommends independent review process improvements for incorporation in agency policies and guidance; and
- Performs other analyses, assessments and duties, as assigned.

To accomplish the above, the IPAO review manager has the responsibility to ensure the objectivity, quality, integrity and consistency of each assigned independent review and will: define the scope of the review (with the convening authorities); facilitate the identification and approval of the Chair and team members; participate on the SRB as an authority in the programmatic aspects (compliance to 7120.5 and generally accepted rules of good project management, cost, schedule, and risk), and in specific technical areas, if appropriate; facilitate the review process; ensure that the scope of the review is fully exercised; and be accountable for ensuring that the results of the review have been

properly vetted, documented and reported. The IPAO cost analyst, as a member of the SRB, will be responsible for developing an independent cost estimate/analysis for each designated review and facilitating the integration of the cost estimate/analysis into the overall program/project assessment. PA&E/IPAO may delegate these functions to qualified organizations if necessary or appropriate.

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