

**Tracking Number: 2011-01-02 (EC-01)**  
**NASA Advisory Council Committees Should Meet as a Group at Least Once a Year**

**Recommendation:** The Council recommends to the Administrator that its nine committees meet as a group and/or in selected groups, at least once a year, with an agenda that cuts across the interests of the committees and with an opportunity to hear from the Administrator and share their perspectives on issues related to NASA activities.

**Major Reasons for the Recommendation:** The previous NASA Administrator had a NASA Advisory Council that operated as one unit, with all members attending the Advisory Council meeting. The current NASA Administrator has chosen to organize the NAC into nine NAC committees that operate somewhat independently and are represented at the Advisory Council only by committee chairs. Prior experience indicates that potential efficiencies are gained by shared deliberations and “cross pollination” of information and expertise among disciplines. Some committees have met jointly to share their experience with each other and have brought forward joint observations, findings and recommendations. It would be beneficial to NASA to have committees come together to integrate efforts, hold cross-discipline meetings and explore systems approaches that can potentially lead to increased quality, efficiency, cost reduction, risk reduction, etc. that might not be apparent when working separately. Further, this would allow NASA leadership to efficiently communicate priorities, introduce new directions, and receive feedback.

**Consequences of No Action on the Recommendation:** Without this coordination, the various committees may perform redundant work, offer advice that fails to recognize unintended consequences, or provide recommendations that are not well informed.

**NASA Response:**

NASA concurs and will implement this recommendation. We believe that there are benefits to having a meeting once per year in which the Council’s nine committees meet in the same location. Such an approach would permit the committees to conduct discussions on cross-cutting topics, resulting in recommendations that can be fully vetted by a broad range of subject-matter experts across disciplines, prior to submission for Council consideration. Moreover, this approach would offer an opportunity for the Administrator to share his views with the committee members simultaneously, covering such areas as NASA’s current and future programs, priorities, and budget outlook.

To this end, NASA is planning the first such meeting of all nine Council committees to take place just before the August 3-5, 2011, Council meeting at the Ames Research Center.

Enclosure