

NASA Advisory Council Recommendation

Space Act Agreement Internal Coordination 2013-01-05 (CSC-01)

Recommendation:

The Council recommends that NASA update its Space Act Agreement (SAA) process to be more transparent and efficient for those SAAs involving new policy issues between NASA and commercial partners which require broader coordination between Headquarters and a Center. The Council recommends: (1) designating a person responsible at Headquarters and the Center for resolving the issues; (2) establishing a timeline for a Headquarters decision; and (3) identifying to the potential commercial partner a person with sufficient authority to move the process toward resolution.

Major Reasons for Proposing the Recommendation:

Most ordinary SAAs are dispatched in a reasonable amount of time. However, SAAs presenting new policy issues require a broader coordination between a Center and Headquarters that can result in unusual delays without providing the commercial partner insight on when a decision will be made. The Council discovered that possible reasons for the delay included not identifying NASA personnel at Headquarters and the Center who are responsible for the decision, and not having an internal timeline to make a decision. Commercial partners seeking an SAA often do not have a point of contact from whom they can get actionable information.

Consequences of No Action on the Proposed Recommendation:

SAAs involving new policy issues will continue to face unnecessary delay and commercial partners will be frustrated when dealing with NASA.

NASA Response:

NASA agrees that these issues need to be addressed. The NASA Office of General Counsel has recently briefed this NASA Advisory Council (NAC) recommendation to the senior team leads in the Office of the NASA Administrator responsible for working this issue. This team reports to NASA Deputy Administrator Garver and Associate Administrator Lightfoot to address NASA Headquarters guidance, governance, and the process for partnership activities. The team is implementing a strategic approach to partnering, following a briefing Deputy Administrator Garver gave to the NASA Strategic Management Council (SMC) in January 2013. The NASA Executive Council (EC) is currently scheduled to review and approve some aspects of the team's recommendations early July 2013, with the remainder to be briefed to the SMC in late July 2013.

Because this activity is still being worked and has not yet been approved by the EC nor the SMC, NASA is currently not in a position to communicate its final response concerning this NAC recommendation at this time. NASA would be pleased to brief the NAC on this recommendation after July 2013.

Enclosure