

NASA Advisory Council Recommendation

NASA Collaborations with Department of Defense / Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency 2014-01-02 (AC-02)

Recommendation:

The Council endorses NASA – Department of Defense (DOD) / Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) collaboration on programs of mutual interest and recommends that NASA engage DOD/DARPA leadership to identify and explore opportunities where commercial technology can benefit future military missions and/or where military technologies can benefit civil and commercial applications. Current technology areas of mutual interest include (but are not limited to) hypersonic flight, autonomous/unmanned air systems, vertical lift technology, rocket propulsion development, collaborative vehicle operations for enhanced airspace/mission management, and related data analysis tools.

Major Reasons for Proposing the Recommendation:

The collaborative relationship that existed between NASA and relevant DOD/DARPA organizations is not as strong as it has been at certain times in the past. Collaborative partnerships have the potential to enable faster progress towards technology advancement in mutual areas of interest. In a constrained budget environment, the Council feels that this relationship should be reinvigorated to provide the most responsible use of Government resources.

Consequences of No Action on the Proposed Recommendation:

Without renewed emphasis on NASA/DOD/DARPA collaborations, rewarding areas of technology synergy between civil and military applications will remain bifurcated and progress will be slower.

NASA Response:

NASA concurs with the Council on the importance of Federal agency collaborations to foster research of mutual benefit. Within the space and aeronautics domains, NASA agrees that continuing to engage DOD/DARPA in areas of convergent interest can have the ability to provide more rapid infusion of dual-use technologies that serve both civil and military interests. NASA will proactively engage DOD/DARPA officials in those areas of convergence either through existing mechanisms and agreements, or through yet-to-be established means, as necessary.