Biography

Image Credit: NASA

Parimal Kopardekar (PK)

Acting Director, Airspace Operations and Safety Program (AOSP)
NASA Aeronautics Research Mission Directorate (ARMD)

Parimal Kopardekar (PK) serves as the Acting Director of Airspace Operations and Safety Program (AOSP) within NASA Aeronautics Research Mission Directorate. The AOSP is responsible for creating visionary concepts and technologies to enable advanced air mobility and new airspace entrants such as electric, high speed, and autonomous aircraft, and to improve capacity, safety, throughput, predictability of national airspace system and its operations.

The program also is responsible for aviation safety research in the areas of aircraft state awareness, prevention of aircraft loss of control, verification and validation of complex systems, prognostic safety, and system-wide safety assurance.

Prior to that he served as the Director of the NASA Aeronautics Research Institute (NARI) where he was responsible for identifying new opportunities for aeronautics research, development, and technology transition. He is particularly passionate about identifying and initiating high-risk and high-reward, game-changing, and disruptive innovations.

Recently, he also served as the Mission Integration Manager for NASA's Advanced Air Mobility Mission where he was responsible for setting up NASA's vision and strategy in enabling advanced air mobility. Prior to that he served as NASA's Senior Technologist for Air Transportation System where he was responsible for developing concepts and technologies to increase efficiency of current operations and enabling future airspace operations.

PK also served as the Principal Investigator for Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) Traffic Management – known as UTM – a concept which he initiated, to safely enable large-scale UAS operations in the low altitude airspace.

He managed the Safe Autonomous System Operations project, which was focused on autonomy in civil aviation, as part of AOSP. The project's goal was to develop gate-to-gate concepts and technologies aimed at improving aircraft and airspace efficiency, capacity, mobility, throughput, reduce delays, and overall airspace operations productivity. His portfolio covered technologies for flight deck, airline operations center, and air navigation service provider.

PK has conducted research, development, technology transfer, and management activities related to airspace operations for more than 30 years. He is recipient of numerous awards: American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA) Hap Arnold Award for Programmatic Excellence, NASA Government Invention of the Year, Samuel J. Heyman Service to America Medal for Promising Innovation (often called the Oscar's of Public Service), ATCA President's Citation of Merit Award, NASA Exceptional Technology

Biography

Parimal Kopardekar (PK) (continued)

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Achievement Medal, NASA Outstanding Leadership Medal, NASA Ames Honors Award for Project Management, NASA Ames Engineer of the Year, and AIAA Distinguished Service Recognition Award.

He has published more than 60 articles with three best paper awards. He holds two patents on UTM and Space Traffic Management. He was also identified among 25 of the most influential people in the drone industry.

PK serves as an adjunct faculty and teaches operations management, supply chain management, leadership, and innovation related courses.

He holds a doctor of philosophy degree from the University of Cincinnati, a master's of science degree from the University at Buffalo in industrial engineering, and a bachelor's of engineering degree from the University of Bombay in production engineering.

PK also is known among his colleagues as a certified pickleball addict.