



NASA Space Flight Program and Project Management Handbook (NASA SP-2014-3705) - Accumulated Knowledge from NASA's Human, Robotic, and Scientific Missions, Decisionmaking Lessons, Project Life Cycles

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This handbook is the companion document to NPR 7120.5E and represents the accumulation of knowledge NASA gleaned on managing program and projects coming out of NASA's human, robotic, and scientific missions of the last decade. At the end of the historic Shuttle program, the United States entered a new era that includes commercial missions to low-earth orbit as well as new multi-national exploration missions deeper into space. This handbook is a codification of the "corporate knowledge" for existing and future NASA space flight programs and projects. These practices have evolved as a function of NASA's core values on safety, integrity, team work, and excellence, and may also prove a resource for other agencies, the private sector, and academia. The knowledge gained from the victories and defeats of that era, including the checks and balances and initiatives to better control cost and risk, provides a foundation to launch us into an exciting and healthy space program of the future.

This handbook provides implementation guidance for NPR 7120.5E, NASA Space Flight Program and Project Management Requirements, which changed and streamlined key procedural requirements across the Agency for space flight program and project management. The goal of the NPR requirements is to ensure programs and projects are developed and successfully executed in the most cost-effective and efficient manner possible. This handbook provides context, rationale, and explanation to facilitate the application of requirements so that they make sense and to pass on some of the hard-won best practices and lessons learned.

While thoughtful planning and execution is important in all phases of a program or project, the Agency is placing particular emphasis on activities during the Formulation Phase of the life cycle. This focus is needed to:

Accurately characterize the complexity and scope of the program or project;

Increase understanding of programmatic requirements;

Better identify and mitigate high safety, technical, acquisition, cost, and schedule risks; and

Improve the fidelity and realism of cost and schedule commitments made when the program or project is approved to transition from Formulation to Implementation.

NPR 7120.5E changes also reflect a strengthening of the elements of Governance, which include the independent role of the Technical Authority and an expanded role for Center Directors as full partners. To support these policy changes, NPR 7120.5E defined a new structure for formulating, base-lining, and rebaselining (if necessary) the agreements that set the parameters within which programs and projects work.

These concepts are explained in more detail in this handbook.

The handbook also provides additional details on the cost and schedule estimates, probabilistic assessments, and earned value management as it applies at NASA. As applicable to some programs and projects, it also provides information and discussions on developing confidence levels leading to the formal joint cost and schedule confidence level established at the transition from Formulation to Implementation.

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Vicki Head:

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