NASA Interim Directive

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NASA Conference Approval and Reporting

Responsible Office: Office of the Chief Financial Officer

NID 9770.1 NASA Conference Approval and Reporting

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PREFACE

P.1 PURPOSE

This National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Interim Directive (NID) provides the financial management requirements for conference planning, approval, attendance, and reporting.

P.2 APPLICABILITY

a. This NID is applicable to NASA Headquarters and all NASA Centers, including Component Facilities and Technical and Service Support Centers. This NID also applies to the Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL), contractors, recipients of grants and cooperative agreements and parties to agreements; but only to the extent specified or referenced in the applicable contract, grant, cooperative agreement or other agreement type.

b. In this NID, all document citations are assumed to be the latest version unless otherwise noted.

c. In this NID, all mandatory actions (i.e., requirements) are denoted by statements containing the term "shall." The terms: "may" or "can" denote discretionary privilege or permission, "should" denotes a good practice and is recommended, but not required, "will" denotes expected outcome, and "are/is" denotes descriptive material.

P.3 AUTHORITY

a. 51 U.S.C. § 20101 et seq., National Aeronautics and Space Act

b. Public Law 112-55, Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2012

c. 5 U.S.C. 4101, Government Employees Training Act

d. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Memorandum M-11-35, Eliminating Excess Conference Spending and Promoting Efficient Government

e. OMB Memorandum M -12-12, Promoting Efficient Spending to Support Agency Operations

f. NPD 1000.3, The NASA Organization w/Change 37 (May 25, 2012)

g. NPD 9010.2, Financial Management

P.4 APPLICABLE DOCUMENTS AND FORMS

a. 5 U.S.C. § 3371-3376, Intergovernmental Personnel Act

b. 41 CFR Part 304, Payment from a Non-Federal Source for Travel Expenses

c. NPD 8610.24 Launch Services Program Pre-Launch Readiness Reviews (Revalidated May 12, 2010)

d. NPR 9700.1, Travel w/ change 2 2/23/10

e. NPR 7120.5, NASA Space Flight Program and Project Management Requirements

f. NPR 7120.7, NASA Information Technology and Institutional Infrastructure Program and Project Management Requirements

g. NPR 7120.8 NASA Research and Technology Program and Project Management Requirements (w/change 1 dated 11/24/10)

h. NF 1784 Conference Approval Form

i. NF 1785 Conference Expense Report

j. Administrator's Memo on Authorize Promotional and Personal Use Items, April 16, 2012

P.5 MEASUREMENT/VERIFICATION

Quality assurance reviews and analysis of financial and budgetary reports and data submitted through the continuous monitoring program will be used to measure compliance with this NPR.

P.6 CANCELLATION

NPR 9700.1, Travel, Chapter 2

/S/
NASA Deputy Chief Financial Officer

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 General

Sponsorship and attendance at a wide range of scientific, technical, and other conferences is necessary for NASA to coordinate efforts with various partners, keep abreast of the latest technological advances, and disseminate information NASA has acquired during the execution of its various programs. In order to ensure the most cost effective use of the resources NASA expends on conference sponsorship and attendance, and to satisfy the external requirements relating to conferences, NASA has implemented a comprehensive conference approval and reporting process. The process covers both conferences sponsored by NASA and attendance at conferences sponsored by others, and addresses all external requirements relating to conferences.

1.2 Source of Requirements

1.2.1. Prior Review and Approval.

1.2.1.1. OMB Guidance. OMB has issued two memoranda concerning conferences. Memorandum M-11-35 required NASA and other Federal Agencies to review their policies and controls associated with conference-related activities, and imposed interim procedures requiring prior approval of all conference-related activities by the Agency Deputy Administrator until the Agency could certify that appropriate policies and controls are in place. OMB Memorandum M-12-12 established a permanent requirement for Deputy Secretary prior approval whenever the total agency expenses for a single conference exceeds $100,000. This memorandum also generally limits Agency spending for a single conference to $500,000, while permitting a case by case waiver by the head of each Agency following determination that "exceptional circumstances exist whereby spending on a single conference is the most cost effective option to achieve a compelling purpose."

1.2.2. Foreign Conference Attendance Limit. Recent appropriations acts governing NASA, including the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2012, P.L. 112-55, limit NASA attendance at any one foreign conference to 50 NASA employees.

1.2.3. Reporting on Conference Related Expenditures.

1.2.3.1. Reports on NASA-Sponsored Conferences. P.L. 112-55 also requires NASA to provide quarterly reports to NASA's Office of Inspector General (OIG) on conferences held by the Agency costing more than $20,000. This requirement has been in NASA's appropriations or authorization acts, or by direction in committee reports thereto, since FY 2008.

1.2.3.2. Annual Reporting. OMB Memorandum M-12-12 requires Federal Agencies to post on their public websites specific information for each conference where the Agency's total expenditures exceed $100,000. In addition, NASA is required to include information about the Agency's net conference expenses for the fiscal year as well as a general report about conference activities throughout the year.

1.2.4. FY 2009 Funding Cap. NASA's 2008 Authorization Act, P.L. 110-422, also limited NASA's 2009 conference-related expenses to $5 million. This funding limit was not extended and thus applies only to any program year (PY) for which PY 2009 funds still remain available for use.

Chapter 2 Conference Identification

2.1 Definition

2.1.1. For purposes of this directive, the term "conference" means a "meeting, retreat, seminar, symposium, or event that involves attendee travel." See the Federal Travel Regulations (FTR), 41 CFR 300-3.1.[1]

2.2 Exclusions

2.2.1. Operational Meeting. The term conference does not include Mission (Operational) meetings[2]. A Mission (Operational) Meeting is a meeting necessary to perform agency managerial or operational activities, as part of day-to-day operations. For purposes of this policy, there are two types of Operational Meetings:

2.2.1.1. Formal Operational Meeting. These are Operational Meetings required under a NASA Policy Directive (NPD) or Procedural Requirement (NPR) for project management or agency governance purposes, including:

a. Governance Meeting: A meeting held for Agency governance by one of the Councils or Advisory Committees set forth in NPD 1000.3.

b. Program and Project Management Meeting: A meeting required for program and project oversight, planning, review and approval. Examples of these include meetings of the oversight bodies and reviews set forth in NASA's project management NPRs (NPR 7120.5, NPR 7120.7, and NPR 7120.8), and program readiness reviews (NPD 8610.24 Pre-launch readiness reviews). Also included are all meetings with the Executive Office of the President or Congress.

2.2.1.2. Other Operational Meetings. These are meetings, other than Formal Operational Meetings, held in furtherance of NASA's missions and operations. Other Operational Meetings include the following (but exclude meetings under the Special Cases in section 2.2.1.3):

a. Other Programmatic and Institutional Meeting: A meeting necessary for NASA management or operational activities as part of routine Agency business. Included are activities such as project planning and prioritizations, project development work or operations, property management, reviews, audits, investigations, and inspections.

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[1] This definition is from the Federal Travel Regulations ("FTR"), 41 C.F.R. 300-3.1. The exclusions in section 2 are based on FTR sec. 301 App. C. Both the FTR and OMB M-12-12 recognize there is an overlap between the term "conference" and terms like "training," but unlike the FTR, OMB M-12-12 requires reporting of all conference costs regardless of its additional purpose as training. In view of this, the scope of section 2.2.1.2 has been narrowed to exclude activities that might be reasonably considered "conferences" in terms of usage under the FTR.

[2] The FTR sec. 301 App. C defines "Mission (Operational)" travel as follows: "Travel to a particular site in order to perform operational or managerial activities. Travel to attend a meeting to discuss general agency operations, review status reports, or discuss topics of general interest. *Examples*: Employee's day-to-day operational or managerial activities, as defined by the agency, to include, but not be limited to: hearings, site visit, information meeting, inspections, audits, investigations, and examinations."

b. Interagency Meetings: A meeting with officials of another governmental agency (federal, state, local or international) on mission or operational matters of mutual interest to NASA and the other governmental agency, such as hearings, technical coordination, joint operations, or programmatic planning.

2.2.1.3. Special Cases. There is an inevitable overlap between the terms "operational meeting" and "conference" as used in the FTR. Notwithstanding the operational focus of Other Operational Meetings under sections 2.2.1.2, one can become a "conference" depending on how the event is structured. In view of this, to the extent an "other operational meeting" also meets the following criteria it will be considered a conference for purposes of this directive.

a. Open Participation at an Onsite Meeting—where NASA sponsors a meeting on one of its facilities with multiple speakers that is open to external participants (i.e., persons other than those working directly for or with NASA on the missions or programs being discussed), and the purpose of the meeting is to promote general awareness or to disseminate or exchange information about NASA missions or programs with the participants. This does not include news events, such as press conferences and launch viewings, coordinated by the Office of Communications to announce research results, mission milestones, annual budget releases, and the like to Congress or the media.

b. Large Offsite Meetings - where NASA pays for a rented facility to host an offsite meeting to accommodate 30 or more participants[3].

c. Conference Determinations by Other Agency - where another U.S. Government agency is hosting the meeting, NASA will adopt the other agency's determination and only report those events considered a "conference" by the host agency under OMB M-12-12. Where the event is hosted by a non-federal governmental agency, conference determinations will be made using this section applied from the perspective of the host of the event - for example, applying section 2.2.1.3.a. to meetings held onsite at a facility of the host agency, and section 2.2.1.3.b. to meetings not held at a host agency's facility.

2.2.2. Training. The term "training" is defined in the Government Employees Training Act, 5 U.S.C. 4101, as a "planned, prepared, and coordinated program, course, curriculum, subject, system, or routine of instruction or education in scientific, professional, technical, mechanical, trade, clerical, fiscal, administrative, or other fields intended to improve individual and organizational performance and assist in achieving the Agency's mission and performance goals." The implementing regulations distinguish between other forms of training and training at a conference. *See* 5 C.F.R. 410.101 et seq. Examples of non-conference training include "classroom training, on-the-job training, technology-based training, satellite training, [individual] coaching, mentoring, career development counseling, details, rotational assignments [and] cross training," 5 C.F.R. 410.203. These are not within the meaning of "conference." However, where the training

[3] As a general matter, offices are encouraged to carefully review the justification for renting offsite facilities for meetings. However, small meetings typically do not meet the indicia of a formal conference and would cause over-reporting of non-conference meetings. By contrast, a 30-person event is recognized in FTR sec. 301-74.19 as the threshold for requiring more formal conference site comparisons and records.

is imbedded within a broader event that otherwise meets the definition of a conference[4], it should be reported as such, regardless of whether some portion of the activities qualifies as "training."

2.2.3. Special Agency Mission. This includes unique activities outside NASA's normal course of day-to-day business. Examples include reimbursable details, security missions, and agency emergency preparedness/response/recovery.

2.3 Conference Determination Chart

2.3.1. Appendix B of this directive provides a decision tree for aiding in the determination of whether an event is a conference and required approvals. If unsure whether an event is a conference, consult your Center/Office Conference Reporting POC. The POC may ask you to submit a Conference Determination Request Form (CDRF) to facilitate the decision. A list of POCs and the CDRF form are available at the Conference resource Web site, www1.nasa.gov/conferences.

[4] While conferences may take on many forms, it is helpful to consider recognized indicia of a formal conference when determining whether a uniquely structured event that includes training is also a "conference." These indicia include (1) participants from multiple agencies or organizations, (2) discussions involving topical matters of interest to the participants, (3) scheduled speakers or discussion panels, (4) published substantive agenda, and (5) registration. Since most federal agencies lack the authority to charge registration, this last indicia would not apply to conferences they sponsor. But, to the extent there is a substantive agenda with discussions on topical matters, with multi-entity participation, it is more likely that reasonable persons would consider such an event a conference, notwithstanding special training or strong programmatic focus.

Chapter 3 Review and Approval of Proposed Conference Sponsorship and Attendance

3.1 Conference Advance Review and Approval

3.1.1. NASA uses a four tiered advance review and approval process that is based on NASA's estimated total expenditures for both sponsorship and attendance. Tier 1 includes those conferences estimated to exceed $500,000. Tier 2 includes all conferences with total costs greater than $100,000 and less than $500,000. Tier 3 includes both conferences primarily sponsored by NASA with total costs between $20,000 and $100,000, as well as conferences not primarily sponsored by NASA with estimated costs between $75,000 and $100,000. Tier 4 includes all other conferences with total costs less than $75,000, including those with no or only minor sponsorship costs. The justification and approval requirements are summarized in Table 3-1.

3.1.2. All Tier 3, 2 and 1conferences ("Reportable Conferences") require approval by an Official-in-Charge (OIC) of all of NASA's planned costs using an NF 1784, Conference Approval Form. Tier 2 conferences additionally require approval by the Deputy Administrator, and Tier 1 conferences also require a waiver by the Administrator per OMB M-12-12. All other approved sponsorship costs, not otherwise documented on a NF 1784, shall be documented using a local Conference Cost Form or CCF (see Appendix C).

3.1.3. All NF 1784s and sponsorship costs shall be fully approved at least 6 months prior to the start date of the conference, or as soon thereafter as practicable (e.g., when the conference is organized with less than 6 months notice). Once approved, the Conference Reporting POC shall promptly input all estimated costs in NCTS.

3.1.4. The NSSC shall maintain an up to date listing of all approved Reportable Conferences at its conference resources site, www.nssc.nasa.gov/conferences.

3.1.5. Responsibility for preparation and submission of an NF 1784 shall be assigned to a single Center or HQ Office as the responsible lead office.

a. When NASA is the primary sponsor of a Tier 3 conference, absent other agreement the NASA Center or HQ Office that is providing the largest portion of the sponsorship funding shall be the sponsoring office responsible for the NF 1784.

b. For Tier 1 or 2 Conferences, and Tier 3 Conferences not primarily sponsored by NASA, absent other agreement, the NASA Center/Office with the largest amount of planned costs shall be responsible for coordinating preparation and approval of the NF 1784.

c. All OICs and their Senior POCs share responsibility for controlling their respective Center/Office costs to stay within overall approved limits for a conference, but the OIC signing an NF 1784 has lead responsibility for monitoring and controlling overall costs.

d. In the absence of a fully approved NF 1784, no one may incur any conference cost that will cause the total Agency costs to exceed $75,000.

Table 3-1 Justification and Approval Thresholds

Approval Tiers	Total NASA Cost	NF 1784 and NF 1785 Required?	Additional Justification (Format and Submitting Office(s))	Approved By
Tier 4	$0 - $75,000 (NASA is not a primary sponsor)	No	• Each sponsorship must have prior OIC approval; reported via Conference Cost Form to local Conference Reporting POC	No approval of the conference is required, but OIC approval is needed for all sponsorship costs
Tier 3	(a) $20,000 - $100,000, and NASA is a primary sponsor OR (b) $75,000 - $100,000	Yes	• An NF 1784 is required and the Approving OIC must ensure that total costs are maintained at less than $100,000 and within 25% of the approved amount.	Center or HQ Office OIC
Tier 2	$100,000 - $500,000	Yes	• An NF 1784 is required and the Approving OIC must ensure that total costs are maintained at less than $500,000 and within 25% of the approved amount. • The approving OIC shall also (a) include with the NF 1784 a justification / recommendation for the Agency's proposed level of participation and costs, and (b) obtain concurrence on the justification from each OIC with a Center/Office having estimated costs over $50,000.	Center or HQ Office OIC AND Deputy Administrator
Tier 1	>$500,000	Yes	• Requirements for Tier 2 AND • The approving OIC includes a formal memo requesting the Administrator's waiver per OMB M-12-12, stating why exceptional circumstances exist, such that spending over $500,000 is warranted as the "most cost-effective option to achieve a compelling purpose."	Center or HQ Office OIC, Deputy Administrator AND Administrator

3.2 Preparing and Approving the NF 1784

3.2.1. Forms and Instructions. The NF 1784, detailed instructions, and further guidance are available at http://www.nssc.nasa.gov/conferences.

3.2.1.1. The Event POC shall prepare and review the NF 1784 for completeness and accuracy, sign it, and be prepared to substantiate the cost estimates and any supporting documentation to the satisfaction of the approving official. Other Center/Office Conference Reporting and Senior POCs shall assist the Event POC as needed in preparing the NF 1784.

3.2.1.2. The responsible Center/Office OIC shall sign an NF 1784 as the approving official for any Reportable Conferences (i.e., Tier 3, 2 and 1 conferences). Promptly following approval by the OIC, the Conference Reporting POC shall submit the approved NF 1784 to the NSSC (at NSSC@NASA.gov, cc to the Agency Conference Reporting Coordinator) in PDF form, with a subject line containing "NF 1784:" followed by the event's official Conference Code and name. The POC shall also input the approved total overall and travel costs in NCTS.

a. All recommendations for Tier 2 and 1 conferences must include the OIC's justification for NASA spending over $100,000, including a brief explanation how the conference advances NASA's mission. The OIC shall also confirm that conference attendance and expenses are limited to levels required to carry out the mission of the conference, and applicable FTR and FAR provisions were followed. In addition, the OIC must also obtain concurrence from each OIC whose Center/Office has estimated costs exceeding $50,000.

b. All recommendations for Tier 1 conferences must also include the OIC's justification for why exceptional circumstances exist, such that spending over $500,000 is warranted as the "most cost-effective option to achieve a compelling purpose," along with a request for waiver by the Administrator.

3.2.1.3. The Agency Conference Reporting Coordinator will coordinate further review and approval by the Deputy Administrator for Tier 2 conferences, and both the Deputy Administrator and Administrator for Tier 1 conferences. Following approval, the Agency Conference Reporting Coordinator shall promptly submit confirmation of approval to the NSSC (at NSSC@NASA.gov, cc to the submitting Conference Reporting POC), noting any special limitations with the approval.

3.3 Commitment and Obligation of Funds

3.3.1. Non-refundable funds shall not be committed or obligated for Tier 3, NASA sponsored conferences, or sponsorships of any other conference prior to approval by an OIC and assignment of an NCTS conference Code by NSSC. For Tier 3 conferences, the event POC shall ensure that the signed NF 1784 has been submitted to Conference Reporting POC and NSSC, before they request any contracting officer to execute funding documents, or otherwise incur purchase card expenses, with conference facilities or anyone providing conference support services to the Agency.

3.3.2. Non-refundable funds shall not be committed or obligated in excess of the amount approved (and $100,000 if no approved amount) for Tier 1 or 2 conferences. All OICs and their Senior POCs shall implement controls necessary to ensure that proposed costs and attendance from their

Center/Office are consistent with levels approved by the Deputy Administrator for Tier 2 conferences, and by the Administrator for Tier 1 conferences, before any agreements or contracts are executed, or non-refundable purchase card transactions incurred, with conference facilities or anyone else providing conference-related services to the Agency.

3.3.3. An OIC may approve limited conference support contractor costs reasonably required for preparations leading up to and including event site selection and preparing the NF 1784 for approval. If the conference is approved, these costs are included as part of the reported costs of the conference.

3.3.4. Amending an NF 1784. Because of the importance of early approval for Reportable Conferences, reasonable changes in planning can be managed without requiring formal re-approval of the planned total costs. However, as soon as conference plans change such that anticipated costs increase more than 25% over the total cost of an approved NF 1784 the NF 1784 shall be revised and resubmitted to the OIC for approval as an amended NF 1784. If the revised cost now exceeds a higher approval threshold (i.e., $100,000 or $500,000, or any other limit imposed in a prior approval), the amended NF 1784 shall be submitted for the additional approvals required (e.g., for Deputy Administrator approval if now a Tier 2 conference). The Conference Reporting POC shall promptly submit the amended NF 1784 to the NSSC (at NSSC@NASA.gov, cc to the Agency Conference Reporting Coordinator), and input the amended total overall and travel costs in NCTS.

3.3.5. Reportable Conferences should be approved by an OIC at least six months prior to the date of the conference, and each OIC shall manage their approved conference to stay within approved limits (e.g., no more than 25% of the estimated cost per Section 3.3.4). When approving a NASA Sponsored Conference, or other Reportable Conference that is a continuation of a series of earlier Reportable Conferences, less than six months before the conference date, the NF 1784 shall also include a justification for the delay. Similarly, when final costs exceed approved limits, the NF 1785 shall include a justification why. In order to help improve timeliness and accuracy throughout the agency, a discussion about the justification, together with lessons learned and recommended approaches to mitigate the causes of the delay or spending above approved limits, shall be shared at the Agency Baseline Performance Review.

Chapter 4 Preparing Conference Travel Authorizations, Vouchers, and other purchases

4.1 Travel Authorizations

4.1.1. "Conference" as Trip Purpose.

4.1.1.1. Persons preparing travel authorizations involving any conference attendance shall select "conference" in the FedTraveler Trip Purpose field.

4.1.1.2. Users (travelers or their preparers) shall select the "conference" purpose only for trips that include events meeting the definition of "conference" in Chapter 2. "Conference" shall be selected, even if that trip includes conference attendance, but has other purposes that are not conference-related.

4.1.2. NCTS Conference Code as Function Code. Users shall select the conference's NCTS Conference Code when preparing travel authorizations by using the drop-down menu in the FedTraveler's function code field.

a. If the conference they are planning to attend is not in the dropdown list the user shall search NCTS for the conference code. If the conference has not been loaded into NCTS, the user will contact their Center/Office conference Reporting POC (or other local procedure published for their Center/Office) and request that the conference be added to NCTS and a Conference Code assigned. The NCTS Moderator will review the add request and add the conference to NCTS. The requester will receive an email notification containing the official conference name and NCTS Conference Code when the conference has been loaded.

b. The travel authorization cannot be completed until the proper NCTS Conference Code has been entered in the function code field on the authorization. If the Conference Code was not entered in the traveler's initial authorization, it is the traveler's responsibility to ensure that before creating the voucher an amended authorization is entered replacing the incorrect function code with the correct NCTS Conference Code. This code facilitates accurate, immediate tracking of conference attendee numbers via Business Warehouse (BW), as well as cost and attendance reports for preparing NF 1785s, and quarterly and annual conference reports.

4.1.3. Attendance Description. In order to facilitate the review and approval process, additional information is required when requesting to attend a Reportable Conference. This information includes the conference name, the attendee’s position title, the purpose of attendance (i.e., presenter, attendee, display team), and estimated registration fees (if any).

4.1.4. Travel Approval. As part of the normal travel approval process, all travel approvers are required to ensure that all conference attendance is identified with the correct trip purpose and function code, so the attendance associated costs of a conference can be retrieved directly from the Agency’s financial system.

4.1.5. Travelers shall also ensure that all requests for non-travel charges (e.g. conference fees, site rental, booth expenses, copying services, etc.) are clearly identified as being related to a conference

and be accompanied by the NCTS Conference Code so the costs can be recorded in the financial system with the appropriate order field number (Conference Code)

4.1.6. NASA Travel Offices Entering Attendee Data into NCTS for Reportable Conferences. The Center/Office CTO Processor(s) shall maintain a current list of Reportable Conferences (i.e., a Tier 1, 2 or 3 conference). When approving authorizations to travel to a Reportable Conference, the CTO Processor(s) of the Center/Headquarters NASA travel offices shall update NCTS under the Conference Attendees table for the requested conference by adding the traveler's name and all other required attendee information.

4.1.7. Timely Submission. In order to facilitate agencywide planning, all travel to conferences should be submitted and approved well in advance of the conference, preferably at least three months prior. Any person's travel request which has not been approved by two months prior to a Reportable Conference may be considered lower priority than those already approved or pending in NCTS, when attendance is restricted to stay within an approved cost or attendance level.

4.2 Non-Travel Purchases

4.2.1. Non-Travel Costs. To ensure that accurate estimates of non-travel costs are tracked in NCTS, and automated reporting can be done from NASA's financial system, persons requesting or incurring non-travel costs connected with a conference shall use the applicable NCTS Conference Code in connection with all non-travel charges. As much as practicable, the transactions should be structured so the NCTS Conference Code can be used in the order field to permit accurate reporting from the financial systems. In order to allow up to date tracking of estimated costs in NCTS, all non-travel transactions (excluding registration fees) shall also be reported as early as practicable, and in no event later than funds obligation, to a Center/Office CTO Processor using a Conference Cost Form (CCF)(see App. C).

4.2.1.1. P-Card Transactions. Whenever a Government purchase card is used for costs associated with a conference, the transaction shall be promptly recorded using the applicable NCTS Conference Code in the internal order field of the Order Log entry. For all non-registration fee transactions, a CCF for the conference transaction(s) and their associated charges shall be prepared and forwarded at the same time to the Center/Office CTO Processor for entry into NCTS.

4.2.1.2. SATERN Training Requests. All SATERN external training requests for attendance at a conference shall identify the conference using the NCTS Conference Code and name. When the external training request is processed by NSSC to pay approved registration fees, the Conference Code will be entered in internal order field of the P-Card Order Log entry.

4.2.1.3. Purchase Requisitions (solely conference costs). When a purchase requisition (PR) is used solely for costs associated with a conference, the PR shall use the applicable NCTS Conference Code in the order field when all PR costs are to be reported as conference costs. A CCF for all conference transaction(s) and their estimated costs shall be prepared and forwarded by the PR originator to the Center/Office CTO Processor for entry into NCTS as soon as the PR is approved.

4.2.1.4. Purchase Requisitions (non-conference costs included). When a PR is used for a transaction including both conference and non-conference costs, all conference costs shall be separately tracked

by the PR originator or the responsible COTR, and a CCF prepared and forwarded to the Center/Office CTO Processor with the approved amount of conference costs as soon as the PR is approved. If the estimate for conference costs subsequently changes by a significant amount (i.e., the lesser of 10% or $2,000), an amended CCF shall be promptly forwarded to the Center/Office CTO Processor for updating NCTS. A final CCF shall also be prepared and forwarded to the Center/Office CTO Processor when all costs are incurred, and in any event no later than 30 days after the end of the quarter in which the conference occurred. The Center/Office CTO Processor shall ensure all such CCFs showing final costs are also timely forwarded to the Center/Office Conference Reporting POC for use in quarterly reporting.

4.2.2. Timely Submission. In order to facilitate agencywide planning, all non-travel costs for conferences should be approved well in advance of the conference. All non-travel costs for Reportable Conferences shall be coordinated with the Event POC prior to conference approval as much as possible, and if later, prior to commitment to ensure the proposed costs are consistent with the conference as currently approved. Registration fees for Reportable Conferences should be paid in time to take advantage of early discounts when available, but only for attendees shown as approved in NCTS. For other conferences, non-travel costs should be processed so they can be entered into NCTS at least two months prior to the conference as much as practicable.

4.3 Conference Expenses

4.3.1. Reportable Expenses. The following conference expenses are reportable and must be identified with the appropriate Conference Code:

a. Travel costs. These include transportation, lodging, per diem, and other travel expenses authorized and paid using NASA's travel system.

b. Registration fees. These are always tracked as conference costs, and are typically reported as non-travel costs. However, when a registration fee is paid by a traveler and reimbursed under a travel voucher, it will be reported together with other travel costs

c. Non-travel costs. These include all other costs, including registration fees paid other than through the travel system, costs of developing conference materials such as handouts, exhibit costs, and all other costs associated with supporting or sponsoring a conference, such as facility rental, sponsorship fees and support service contractor costs.

4.3.2. Non-Reportable Expenses. The following expenses are not reportable as conference expenses:

a. Pay and Benefits. Civil Service Employee Salaries and contractor labor are generally excluded, in view of system limitations and the expense of such reporting. An exception is for conference support service contractors; all their costs shall be reported, including labor and burden, in connection with support contractor services for NASA sponsored conferences.

b. Conference costs paid by a recipient of financial assistance, i.e., using grant or cooperative agreement funds from NASA. To ensure proper use, cooperative agreements should limit the use of funds for conference activities directed at a public purpose like technical assistance to presenters. To the extent a proposed grant or cooperative agreement also supports NASA mission needs and

objectives related to hosting or assisting another to host a conference, the proposed use shall be reviewed with procurement and legal to determine whether a procurement contract should be used in lieu of all or part of the proposed grant or cooperative agreement.

4.3.3. Other Information on Reportable Costs. The frequently asked questions (FAQs) in Appendix A, of this directive provides further information on conference reporting requirements. In addition, the NASA Conference Resource Web site, http://www.nssc.nasa.gov/conferences, provides more information on reporting, including instructions and sample reports, and a list of the Center/Office conference reporting POCs.

Chapter 5 Foreign Conference Attendance

5.1 General

5.1.1. The requirements of this NPR do not replace, but are in addition to, other Agency or Center foreign travel approval requirements.

5.1.2. Attendance Limit. In recent years, NASA's annual Appropriations Acts, most recently the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2012, have stated that no more than 50 NASA employees may be funded to attend a conference held outside the U.S. This limitation includes employees whose travel is fully reimbursable.

5.2 Definition of Foreign Conference

5.2.1. United States. "United States," as defined in the Federal Travel Regulations (FTR), means the 48 contiguous states, the District of Columbia, and the states and areas defined under the term "Non-Foreign Area." Non-Foreign Area includes Alaska and Hawaii, the Commonwealths of Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Northern Mariana Islands, and the territories and possessions of the U.S. (excluding the Trust Territories of the Pacific Islands). (See FTR § 300-3.1)

5.2.2. NASA Facilities Outside the U.S. For purposes of this attendance limit, an event that would normally not be considered a "conference" because it is held entirely at a NASA facility shall be considered a "foreign conference" if the facility is outside the U.S., provided all other elements of the "conference" definition are met.

5.2.3. Non-Program Travel. Foreign conferences are "non-program" foreign travel. (See Appendix A.) If a trip combines travel to a foreign conference with other purposes, the procedures for "non-program" travel shall be followed.

5.2.4. Foreign Conference POCs.

5.2.4.1. To better coordinate NASA's foreign conference-related travel, each Center and HQ Office shall designate a single POC to coordinate and monitor such travel.

5.2.4.2. All foreign travel and foreign conference POCs shall be identified to OIIR.

5.2.5. NCTS and Foreign Conferences. NCTS is an automated Web-based system that assigns each foreign conference a unique Conference Code to facilitate cost and attendance tracking. NCTS also enables foreign conference travel approvers to register the name of a prospective attendee and receive automated verification that the attendance limit has not been reached prior to approving that attendee's travel. NCTS automatically accepts requests up to an Agency moderator-established first threshold, permitting NCTS to automatically designate requests as tentatively approved for the substantial majority of conferences that only a small number of NASA employees are expected to attend. For conferences for which a larger NASA attendance appears likely, once the initial threshold has been reached, the moderator manually accepts registration for the remaining spaces and amends NCTS as approved by OIIR, working with other offices and Centers to determine Agency-wide allotments, never exceeding 50 total.

5.3 Process

5.3.1. NCTS Conference Code. All persons preparing travel documents for foreign conference attendance shall include the NCTS Conference Code on all associated travel documents, and all approvers should only approve travel authorizations that include the NCTS Conference Code and other required information.

5.3.2. Travel Approvers. In the case of travel to foreign conferences, travel authorizations shall only be finally approved if the traveler is listed as an "approved" attendee in NCTS. This helps insure that NASA remains within the threshold of 50 employee attendees (NASA-wide) to any one foreign conference.

a. The Center Travel Office (or other final approver, for Centers without a Travel Office) shall ensure entry of the traveler's name into NCTS and wait until the foreign conference travel approval is shown in NCTS before approving the travel. The approver shall work with the CTO Processor to ensure prompt entry into NCTS' attendee information. There are less than five conferences per year where travel exceeds the automatic approval threshold (typically set at 35 attendees), and for all others NCTS automatically enters the travel as approved.

b. Whenever foreign travel requests exceed the automatic approval threshold or total costs exceed $75,000 (i.e., for a Tier 3, 2 or 1 foreign conference), OIIR shall facilitate the final approval process and may, at its discretion, be the approving office for any NF 1784. OIIR, the Center Foreign Travel Coordinators, together with Senior POCs as needed, shall work together to facilitate prompt decisions confirming which travelers are approved to attend. OIIR shall work together with the Center Foreign Travel Coordinators to oversee NCTS entries and insure NCTS is timely updated with any change in attendee approval status. When attendee approval status is changed, the Center Foreign Travel Coordinators and Center Travel Offices shall work together to make any timely changes in travel authorizations (e.g., from pending to approved, or approved to denied status) and promptly notify the traveler of the same.

5.3.3. OICs and Foreign Travel Coordinators shall ensure that:

a. Foreign travel authorizations are submitted at least eight weeks before the planned departure date.

b. Foreign travel reports are submitted weekly to OIIR.

c. The NCTS is used consistently.

5.3.4. Center or Office Foreign Travel Procedures. Once approved in NCTS, travel authorizations associated with foreign conferences shall be processed for approval in accordance with other established Center or HQ procedures for foreign travel.

5.3.5. Supervisor Approval Required. NCTS approval pertains only to the 50-person limit; it in no way removes the need for travelers to secure their supervisor's approval to attend a given conference nor supersedes a supervisor's disapproval of a request to attend a given conference.

5.3.6. Any traveler who attends, or any travel approver who approves a travel request for a foreign conference without first getting official approval through NCTS, may be responsible for committing an Anti-Deficiency Act (ADA) violation if more than 50 NASA employees attend the conference.

Chapter 6 The NASA Conference Tracking System (NCTS).

6.1 Overview

6.1.1. Purpose. NCTS is an automated web-based system that facilitates cost reporting for NASA-funded conference expenses and tracking of Agency-wide attendance. Tracking estimated total cost is required in order for NASA to comply with its new conference approval requirements and cost limitations from OMB. The attendance tracking is required for foreign conferences to ensure that NASA does not exceed the Congressionally established ceiling of 50 NASA attendees at any one foreign conference. Also, domestic conference attendance tracking supports NASA's policy of limiting conference attendance to the minimum number of attendees required to accomplish its various missions.

6.1.2. Usage. NCTS assigns a unique identification (Conference Code/name) to each NASA-sponsored conference as well as each non-NASA sponsored conference attended by at least one NASA employee. All NASA employees and NASA conference support contractors can access NCTS's searchable list of these conferences and their Conference Codes at http://ncts.nasa.gov. Directions for its use are provided in detail at the NASA Conference Resource Web site, www1.nasa.gov/conferences. All travel authorizations and all travel vouchers (i.e., expense reports) for conference attendance shall include the NCTS Conference Code.

6.2 NCTS Roles and Responsibilities for Conferences

6.2.1. Reportable Conferences. An Event POC shall be designated for each Reportable Conference. The Event POC will assist the approving OIC in preparing the required NF 1784 and NF 1785 for the conference, as well as ensuring the conference is maintained within approved attendance and cost levels. The Senior POC of any NASA organization proposing to provide conference sponsorship funding shall assist the Event POC in coordinating with other Centers/Offices in obtaining necessary input from other Centers/Offices in planning for a Reportable Conference and timely preparation of an NF 1784. The Conference Reporting POCs and CTO/Processors shall assist the Event POC as needed, including by keeping NCTS attendance and other cost data up to date, and promptly forwarding any final cost reports (CCFs) to the Event POC for their Reportable Conference(s).

6.2.2. NCTS Moderator. Upon receiving a request for a new conference, the NCTS moderator shall:

a. Confirm the request is proper and complete, and input the conference to NCTS.

b. Notify the requesting POC of the conference's NCTS Conference Code.

c. When an NF 1784 is first filed, change the conference status to "Reportable," update the listing of Reportable Conferences on the NSSC conference page (www.nssc.nasa.gov/conferences), and notify all Center/Office POCs and alternates that the event has been added to the list of approved Reportable Conferences.

6.2.3. Entry of a new conference into NCTS. If a prospective attendee thinks that an event may be a conference as defined in Chapter 2 of this directive, the prospective attendee (or their travel preparer) shall search NCTS for the conference.

a. If the conference is in NCTS, the prospective attendee (or their travel preparer) shall include its NCTS Conference Code on the travel authorization. Any travel authorization processed without the NCTS Conference Code must be amended to include it prior to submitting the travel voucher.

b. If the event is not in NCTS, the prospective attendee (or their travel preparer) shall notify the Center/Office conference reporting POC (listing can be found at www1.nasa.gov/conferences). The Center/Office conference reporting POC may request that the traveler prepare a NASA Conference Determination Form if it is unclear whether the event is a reportable conference. The POC shall submit the request to NSSC for entry into NCTS. The traveler should check NCTS again three business days later for the assigned NCTS Conference Code. Note: three business days is the target for entry of a conference into NCTS and subsequent uploading of the NCTS Conference Code into the travel system. Check your local center guidance for any additional processing required at your Center. A week or more additional time can be anticipated if a conference determination is required.

6.2.4. Center/Office conference reporting POCs. Upon receiving notification that an event that may be a conference has not been entered into NCTS, Center or Office conference reporting POCs shall determine whether the event is a conference and if it is, request entry in NCTS. In the case of a potentially Reportable Conference not yet in NCTS, the POC shall attempt to identify which NASA Center/Office is most likely the lead for the event (i.e., most likely sponsor) as follows:

a. If the sponsoring Center/Office is the conference reporting POC's own Center or office, the conference reporting POC shall ensure the sponsor organization timely prepares and submits a NF 1784 as required.

b. If the Center/Office conference reporting POC believes that the conference is being sponsored by an organization within a Center/Office other than his or her own, the Center/Office conference reporting POC shall notify the sponsoring organization's Center/Office conference reporting POC for further processing

6.2.5. Conference Determinations. Prospective attendees of conferences and NASA organizations sponsoring events can usually determine, without assistance, whether an event is a conference per the criteria in this directive. However, in instances where it is unclear whether an event is a conference or not, users or their preparers or supervisors shall fill out and send to their Center conference reporting POC a Conference Determination Request Form (CDRF). The list of POCs and the CDRF are available at www1.nasa.gov/conferences. Where there is a disagreement between Conference Reporting POCs about whether an event is a conference, a CDRF may be submitted to the Agency Conference Reporting Coordinator for a determination by the Headquarters Team. The Agency Conference Reporting Coordinator may refer special cases to the OCFO Director for Policy who, in consultation with the Office of General Counsel and one or more Mission Directorate representatives, shall make the final determination.

6.2.6. Local Procedures. Most Centers have additional local procedures relating to conference approval. Prospective attendees shall follow their local Center process. General agency procedures are described at the Conference Resource Web site, http://conference.nasa.gov; Center-specific

procedures are available from Center foreign travel coordinators and Center conference reporting POCs.

Chapter 7 Conference Planning

7.1 Cost-Effective NASA-Sponsored Conferences

7.1.1. Use of NASA or other Federal Sites.

7.1.1.1. For both conference and non-conference events sponsored by NASA, NASA sponsor organizations shall take reasonable efforts to determine if there is a NASA or other Federal facility available for the event on a more cost-effective basis that satisfies the event objectives.

7.1.1.2. If a NASA conference sponsor organization selects a non-Federal facility as the conference site, the NASA sponsor shall clearly explain on the NF 1784 the reason for this choice.

7.1.2. Additional Considerations Regarding Cost and Appropriateness.

7.1.2.1. NASA sponsors shall comply with Government-wide regulations on conference planning. (See FTR, 41 CFR 301-74).

7.1.2.2. Being mindful of cost considerations, planners shall give precedence first to hold events onsite, and second to sites within the proximity of a NASA Center meeting "local" travel requirements for local attendees, whenever such sites would meet the event objectives and to reduce the number of attendees requiring TDY travel and lodging accommodations.

7.1.2.3. In addition to cost considerations, NASA organizations planning to sponsor an event shall be conscious of appearances in selecting the event site. Planners shall take care to select event locations that are cost-justified and appropriate to the purpose of the event and that minimize, to the greatest extent possible, any appearance of impropriety.

7.1.2.4. NASA event sponsor organizations shall also be cognizant of and take steps to minimize the appearance concerns inherent in some forms of entertainment at potential sites, such as golf tournaments, hospitality suites, and onsite gambling facilities. Also, collateral activities should not be reflected on the agenda and should be scheduled only during off-duty hours and clarify that they are voluntary and that participants are responsible for their own associated costs.

7.2 Limitations on the Cost of NASA Sponsored or Attended Conferences

7.2.1. NASA shall limit the total cost it incurs for an individual conference to the minimum amount necessary to reasonably meet NASA's overall mission requirements for holding the conference. NASA shall also not incur costs in excess of $500,000 for an individual conference except in compelling circumstances. The total cost of an individual conference includes all sponsorship, exhibit and travel/attendance costs funded by NASA. This limitation is applicable to both NASA sponsored conferences and conferences sponsored by others.

7.2.2. All conference costs shall be identified using the NASA Conference Tracking System (NCTS) Conference Code assigned to the conference.

7.3 NASA Conference Sponsorship

7.3.1. Sponsorship Costs. NASA sponsorship of a conference may range from hosting and solely-sponsoring a conference to minor sponsorship support for another entity's conference. NASA is considered a "sponsor" if it funds costs for hosting (e.g., facility rental) or underwriting (e.g., supporting the host of the conference, or sponsoring for brand awareness). Examples of sponsorship costs include:

b. Hosting costs such as conference space rental (excluding exhibit booth rental fees), and facilities services costs incurred for generally supporting all conference sessions such as audio visual and information technology services,

a. Conference planning and support costs, including support services contractor costs, and

b. Sponsorship fees paid by NASA.

7.3.2. Exhibition and Presentation Costs. Exhibit and presentation costs are reportable conference costs. Also, absent an agreement or other sponsorship criteria such as the costs identified in Section 7.3.1, these do not represent sponsorship costs. However, if the primary sponsor(s) structure it so exhibitors are "sponsors" by agreement and gives more than just booth rental/space to the exhibitor, NASA is considered a sponsor and these costs are treated as sponsorship costs.

7.3.3. Attendance Costs. Attendance Costs such as registration fees for employees are reportable, but do not represent sponsorship costs.

7.3.4. Grants and Cooperative Agreements. Conferences that are independently proposed and sponsored solely by a recipient of NASA financial assistance (i.e., grants and cooperative agreements) are not considered to be funded using NASA sponsorship costs. However, to validate and ensure proper compliance and reporting, if the proposed research or project effort and the related budget under a grant or cooperative agreement proposal supports, directly or indirectly, NASA mission needs and objectives related to hosting (or assisting another entity) to host a conference, this proposed use shall be reviewed and approved by the appropriate NASA Office of Procurement and legal office prior to award. As part of this review, the Office of Procurement with the concurrence of the legal office, will issue a determination as to whether a procurement contract should be used as the appropriate instrument in lieu of all or part of the proposed grant or cooperative agreement. This review shall also ensure that all costs for conferences are properly approved and reported pursuant to this NID. Under no circumstances shall NASA personnel use a grant or cooperative agreement to solicit or direct an existing or prospective grant or cooperative agreement recipient to host a conference for the direct benefit, need, or requirement of NASA in order to circumvent or avoid compliance with the reporting and approval requirements prescribed by this NID.

7.3.5. Primary Sponsor. NASA is considered a "primary sponsor" only if it is the sole sponsor of the event or one of the principal cosponsors if there are multiple sponsors. In comparing co-sponsors' costs to determine whether NASA is a primary sponsor versus a minor sponsor, only sponsorship costs, not travel or exhibit costs, shall be considered. NASA is not considered a primary sponsor if its sponsorship contribution is significantly less (e.g., half or less) than the

leading co-sponsor or if its relative contribution is minor (e.g., less than 25 percent of the total contributed).

7.3.6. Multiple NASA Organizations Co-Sponsoring One Conference. If multiple NASA Offices or Centers fund an event, the Office or Center responsible for the event's overall planning and sponsorship shall be responsible for determining whether it is a conference, and as applicable, approving the site selection, contracting for facilities and services, and preparing and submitting required approvals and post-conference reports, including the NF 1784 and NF 1785.

7.4 Conference Funding and Collection of Fees

7.4.1. NASA does not have authority to collect registration fees for conferences or other events they sponsor.

7.4.2. NASA shall not supplement its appropriated funding for an event by collecting conference fees, exhibitor fees, attendance fees, or sponsorship fees from other persons or entities.

7.4.3. Accordingly, NASA shall not use contractors to accomplish what the Agency is prohibited from doing, in this regard.

a. Conference planners shall not collect fees to offset the Agency's costs of hosting a conference.

b. Before retaining a professional conference planner, the Agency shall ascertain that enough appropriated funds are available to pay the contractor's costs.

c. Even if a Space Act Agreement allows the partner to collect registration fees, doing so may raise other fiscal concerns, such as augmentation of Agency appropriations; in such situations, planners shall consult with their appropriate local counsel before proceeding.

d. NASA shall not solicit NASA contractors or other non-NASA entities to contribute to NASA events without prior consultation with their local CFO's and counsel's offices.

7.4.4. Outside sponsorship does not become allowable simply because there are no or insufficient appropriated funds for an event.

7.4.5. Corporate sponsorship may raise appearance or gift issues. NASA event planners shall refrain from making arrangements involving corporate sponsorship until local counsel has fully reviewed and approved the sponsorship and associated arrangements.

7.4.6. Certain circumstances may afford cost-sharing opportunities or complimentary activities in connection with NASA conference. For instance, in some cases, NASA and a co-sponsor or organizer may sign a no-cost agreement under which each party bears its own costs in connection with their agreed areas of responsibility; in these circumstances the co-sponsor may be able to collect fees to offset its costs and NASA bears no liability for the partner’s costs. Similarly, in some cases NASA may chose to limit the scope of its support to certain core aspects needed for the success of its conference (for example, the presentations and meetings); it may be permissible to enter into a full or partial no-cost contract with another entity to provide some complimentary activities (e.g., exhibit halls, meal packages). However, no NASA sponsor organization shall enter

into any such agreements or structure an event to permit acceptance of fees or services before providing a full description of the circumstances, and proposed agreements, and seeking concurrence from their local CFO's and counsel's office.

7.5 Food at NASA Conferences

7.5.1. NASA shall no longer provide food at its conferences, or otherwise use its direct appropriated funds to pay for food or light refreshments at conferences it is sponsoring. This does not prohibit individuals from paying directly for food outside of a support contract (see Section 7.4.6). This restriction on food does not apply to non-conference events like training (as narrowly defined under Section 2.2.2) or awards ceremonies that are separate from a conference primarily sponsored by NASA.

7.5.2. Widely Attended Gatherings (WAGs). The Agency will no longer issue widely attended gathering (WAG) determinations for events at or held in conjunction with conferences primarily sponsored by NASA.

7.6 Business Supplies and Promotional Items

7.6.1. Appropriated funds may be used to purchase appropriate business items for attendees that are necessary for the proper functioning of a conference, such as nametags, notepads, and pens.

7.6.2. Promotional materials (branded items, clothing, mementos, toys, bags, etc., also known as “swag”) shall not be distributed except as authorized by Agency Promotional and Personal Use Items policy.

7.6.3. NASA may provide NASA employees appropriate recognition, including official awards for performance of their official duties, as determined by their supervisors in accordance with NPR 3451.1, NASA Awards and Recognition Program.

7.6.4. Gifts for speakers or guests shall not be purchased using normal appropriations. Official representation funds may be used for presentation items to non-NASA speakers or guests if the requirements of NPD and NPR 9050.1, Official Representation Fund, are met.

7.7 Advertising

7.7.1. NASA necessarily uses various methods to publicize an event. In so doing:

7.7.1.1. NASA employees shall avoid giving the appearance that the Agency is endorsing an outside entity, such as posting corporate logos on a NASA Web site.

7.7.1.2. The NASA Insignia (including "the Meatball"), initials, or name may be used only in accordance with Federal law and regulations and with the approval of the Associate Administrator for the NASA Office of Communications.

7.7.1.3. No NASA employee shall permit an outside entity to use the NASA Insignia without first obtaining permission from the NASA Office of Communications to do so.

7.8 Using Appropriated Funds to Pay Travel Expenses for Non-Federal Participants

7.8.1.1. General Prohibition. NASA is prohibited by law from using appropriated funds to pay for the travel, transportation, and/or subsistence of non-Federal attendees at meetings. "Meetings" in this context includes NASA-sponsored events, such as conferences.

7.8.1.2. Exception: NASA may pay for travel, transportation, and subsistence of persons who meet the definition of "employee" under FTR Section 301-1.2 (for example, invitational travelers and special Government employees) that perform a direct benefit for NASA. In such cases, an official NASA travel authorization shall be required.

Chapter 8 Post Conference Reporting

8.1 Post-Conference Report Forms (Including the NF 1785)

8.1.1. Purpose. The Post-Conference Report records a conference's actual costs, attendance data, contract features, and other related information. It is used for internal management reviews and made available as appropriate for external reviews. The NF 1785 is a key summary document that forms part of this report and is signed by the sponsor organization POC and the approving official as described below. It is not the entire report, but rather summarizes estimates developed in other parts of the report.

8.1.2. Required Use. A Conference Expense Report, NF 1785 is required whenever a NF 1784 is required and the NF 1785 must be signed by the same approving official that signed the NF 1784.

8.1.3. Preparing the Conference Expense Report/NF 1785.

8.1.3.1. Forms and Instructions. Detailed instructions, samples, and templates (where practicable) for the Post-Conference Report, including the NF 1785 and other required displays, are available at http://www.nssc.nasa.gov/conferences.

8.1.3.2. A searchable database of NF 1784s and Post-Conference Reports (including NF 1785s) of previous conferences is available as examples to Conference Reporting POCs at https://search.nssc.nasa.gov/search/general.html. Documents for a conference can be found by using the first "Text" search field and inputting between asterisks the NCTS Conference Code of the conference for which you wish to search, e.g. *13544-09.*

8.1.4. NF 1785 Required Signatures.

8.1.4.1. Event POC. The event POC within the sponsoring office shall prepare the NF 1785, attaching all required backup documentation, review it for completeness and accuracy, sign the NF 1785, and be prepared to fully explain the report's contents to the satisfaction of the approving official.

8.1.4.2. Approving Official. The Center Director or OIC of the HQ office who signed the event's NF 1784, shall review the NF 1785 and the required backup documentation and when satisfied with its accuracy and completeness, sign the NF 1785.

8.1.5. Conferences costing less than $20,000. If the final cost to NASA of the conference is determined to be less than $20,000, an NF 1785 must still be submitted, but should only include the conference title, Conference Code, the estimated cost to NASA clearly showing such is less than $20,000, and must be signed by either the Event POC or approving official that signed the NF 1784.

8.1.6. Submitting the Post-Conference Report. The Event POC shall submit a complete and final Conference Expense Report, including the signed NF 1785 to the NSSC (NSSC@NASA.gov) and the sponsoring organization's Center or Office conference reporting POC in PDF form, with the e-mail subject line "Post-Conference Report" followed by the event's NCTS Conference Code

(number and name). The final post-conference report, including the signed NF 1785, shall be submitted no later than 45 days after the end of the event. The event POC may submit a draft Post-Conference Report, or portions thereof, before this deadline to the Agency Conference Reporting Coordinator (but not to the NSSC) to discuss progress on the report and obtain guidance.

8.2 Quarterly Report of NASA Sponsored conferences to the NASA OIG

8.2.1. The Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2012, P.L. 112-55, required that NASA provide quarterly reports to NASA's Office of Inspector General (OIG) for NASA-Sponsored Conferences costing more than $20,000.

8.2.2. NASA Centers or Headquarters Offices that primarily sponsor or host a conference shall ensure their Event POCs submit the NF 1785 and supporting documentation to the NSSC, with notification to the Agency Conference Reporting Coordinator. Each Center/Office Conference Reporting POC shall also gather all conference costs at their Center/Office not otherwise entered in NASA's financial system with associated Conference Codes as function or order codes, and submit these costs to the Agency Conference Reporting Coordinator. The Agency Conference Reporting Coordinator shall review the NF 1785s and report the summary information and costs on a quarterly basis to OIG.

8.3 Annual Posting of NASA Conference Expenditures

8.3.1. In accordance with OMB Memo 12-12, the Agency Conference Reporting Coordinator shall coordinate the approval and posting by January 31 on its public web site the following information concerning NASA's conference expenditures for the prior fiscal year:

a. Identification of each conference with total NASA costs in excess of $100,000, using the approved NF 1784s and NF 1785s, including :

(1) Total conference expenses incurred by the agency for the conference;

(2) The location and date of the conference;

(3) A brief explanation how the conference advanced the mission of the agency; and

(4) The total number of individuals whose travel or other conference expenses were paid by NASA.

b. The NASA Administrator's waiver, identifying the exceptional circumstances that necessitated exceeding $500,000, for any conferences that exceeded that threshold.

c. Information about NASA's net conference expenses for the fiscal year as well as a general report about conference activities throughout the year.

Chapter 9 Records Management

9.1 Records Retention

9.1.1. Sponsoring Organization. The sponsoring organization shall maintain copies of the NF 1784, the NF 1785, the Conference Expense Report, and any other materials that might be necessary to substantiate them and make them available for inspection as requested by appropriate oversight organizations.

9.1.2. NSSC. The NSSC shall maintain searchable electronic records (e.g., PDFs) of all submitted NF 1784s and NF 1785s and a PDF archive of complete Post-Conference reports and quarterly summaries.

Chapter 10 Roles and Responsibilities.

10.1 Roles and Responsibilities

10.1.1. The NASA Administrator shall:

a. Serve as the approving official on all requests for waivers when NASA reportable funding of a single conference is estimated to exceed $500,000.

10.1.2. The NASA Deputy Administrator shall:

a. Serve as the final approving official on all requests for NASA funding of a single conference when NASA's reportable funding is estimated to exceed $100,000.

10.1.3. Each Official-in-Charge (OIC) of a NASA Center or Headquarters Office shall:

a. Serve as the approving official on all NF 1784s, Conference Approval Form, and NF 1785s, Conference Expense Report, for conferences sponsored by their Center or HQ Office, or recommended for Deputy Administrator approval by their Center or HQ Office.

b. Implement local policies and procedures to ensure that conference attendance, sponsorships and other expenditures represent cost effective means of meeting NASA's scientific, technical, educational, and operational mission requirements.

c. Appoint a Senior Conference point of contact (POC) from their senior staff to oversee their Center's or HQ Office's local conference activities and expenditures.

d. Ensure the designation of: (1) a Conference Reporting POC, to provide guidance and assistance to the local Event POCs and managers at their Center or HQ Office on conference approval and reporting; (2) an Event POC for each conference requiring an NF 1784 that the OIC approves; and (3) CTO Processors (Charge Card and Travel Office Processors), to input estimated costs and other data in the NASA Conference Tracking System (NCTS) for conference costs originating at their Center or HQ Office.

e. Ensure that all NF 1784s originating at their Center or HQ Office are approved and submitted to NASA Shared Services Center (NSSC) at least 6 months in advance of the event, or if 6 months advance approval is not practicable, as soon thereafter as possible.

f. Ensure that all NF 1785s are timely approved and filed with the NSSC.

10.1.4. The Office of the Agency Chief Financial Officer (OCFO) shall:

a. Maintain policies and procedures for conference-related data collection and reporting.

b. Coordinate the final review of agency conference reports, including the quarterly report of NASA sponsored conferences to the Office of Inspector General and the annual website report required under OMB M-12-12.

c. Designate an Agency Conference Reporting Coordinator to oversee the conference reporting process and, in the event of conflicting conference determinations by Conference Reporting POCs, to issue final conference determinations under this directive.

10.1.5. Agency Conference Reporting Coordinator shall:

a. Oversee and coordinate the conference reporting processes.

b. Provide clarification and policy guidance to the Center and HQ Office conference POCs concerning conference approval requests, and conference reporting, and assist in determining whether specific events are “conferences” under this policy.

c. Oversee the preparation and submission to the OIG of the quarterly sponsored conference reports based on submitted NF 1785s.

d. Coordinate the annual posting of NASA’s conference reports on NASA’s public website.

e. For internal consistency, periodically review the NF 1784’s and NF 1785s.

10.1.6. Each Center/Office Conference Reporting POC shall:

a. Assist travelers, travel preparers, event POCs, and other Center/Office conference reporting POCs and managers to determine whether a given event meets this directive’s definition of "conference" (see Chapter 2).

b. Assist the NASA Conference Tracking System (NCTS) Moderator and Agency Conference Reporting Coordinator resolve conference determination questions.

c. Provide guidance to local Event POCs concerning the completion and submission of the NF 1784s, NF 1785s, and associated report forms, and CTOs concerning the input of estimated cost data to NCTS.

d. Oversee the review and correction of their Center/Office's data and other conference report information.

e. Provide other assistance as requested by the NCTS Moderator and Agency Conference Reporting Coordinator regarding the Center's/Office's conference-related matters.

f. Assist with local Center or Office training and awareness efforts pertaining to this directive.

10.1.7. **NASA Conference Sponsor Organizations.** Each NASA organization that plans to host a conference or provide sponsorship funding for a conference shall appoint an Event POC before making substantive plans and notify the cognizant Center/Office Conference Reporting POC of the name of the Event POC for the event.

10.1.8. Event POC shall:

a. Assist the sponsoring organization and their Center/Office OIC in conference planning and reporting for a particular conference.

b. Coordinate with the cognizant Center/Office conference reporting POC(s), beginning with the first stages of planning, to ensure they are aware of the event and to obtain their help with policy and conference determination questions.

c. Prepare NF 1784, and required backup information for assigned conferences receiving NASA sponsorship funding and:

(1) Ensure the timely preparation,

(2) Substantiate and document the event's cost estimates,

(3) Submit the NF 1784 to the approving official for signature, and

(4) Submit the signed form at least 6 months in advance of the event to the NASA Shared Service Center (NSSC), or if 6 months advance approval is not practicable, as soon thereafter as possible.

d. Ensure that NASA attendees and P-Card users are instructed to use the NCTS Conference Code on travel and charge documents.

e. Prepare the NF 1785, Conference Expense Report including:

(1) Preparing an accurate final attendee list (FAL) recording who actually attended the event;

(2) Obtaining BW reports of all travel and charge card costs associated with the NCTS Conference Code, and for all other costs, maintaining a copy of all invoices, receipts, purchase orders, task orders, and other financial documents associated with the conference;

(3) Submitting the NF 1785 to the approving official for signature;

(4) Timely forwarding the NF 1785 and supporting data to the NSSC; and

(5) Maintaining a copy of the report and supporting documentation on behalf of the sponsoring organization in accordance with NPR 1440.6. and making these materials available upon request to appropriate reviewers.

f. Provide other assistance as requested by the NCTS moderator and Agency Conference Reporting coordinator with regard to the conference and its associated forms and reports.

10.1.9. **Traveler and Travel Preparers** shall:

a. Determine whether the event they are planning to attend is a conference using the definition contained in this directive.

b. Obtain the NCTS Conference Code if the event meets the definition of a conference, and (1) enter the Conference Code in the function code field, (2) select "conference" as the trip purpose; and (3) enter conference name in the Comments field in their travel authorization.

c. If there is a registration fee associated with the conference, enter in the travel authorization either (1) when the fee is paid by the traveler, enter the amount under "Other" expenses and under justification enter "Reg. Fee"; or (2) enter in the Comments field, following the conference name, the term "Reg. Fee $."

d. Ensure that the Conference Code is appropriately entered in the function code before finalizing the travel voucher upon completion of the travel; if it is not, amend the travel authorization to use the appropriate Conference Code.

10.1.10. **Travel Approvers** shall:

a. Ensure there is a valid business need for the traveler to attend the requested conference.

b. Ensure the traveler has selected "Conference" as the trip purpose in the Agency electronic travel system for all conference-related travel, and entered the Conference Code and additional information required.

c. Travel Approvers who are also CTO Processors shall register travelers requesting authorization to travel to a conference in NCTS, entering their name and estimated costs, and shall also ensure approval status in NCTS prior to approving travel plans or paying registration fees for all foreign conferences.

d. Ensure all non-travel expenses (e.g. conference fees, site rental, booth expenses, copying services) are recorded in the appropriate system with an annotation that includes the NCTS Conference Code.

10.1.11. **Charge Card Users** shall:

a. Ensure there is a valid business need for the requested charge in connection with the conference.

b. Ensure the prompt entry of the Conference Code and name line from NCTS in the comments field and the Conference Code in the internal order field of the P-Card order log for each P-Card purchase relating to the conference.

10.1.12. **CTO (Charge Card and Travel Office) Processors** shall:

a. Ensure the prompt entry in NCTS of estimated conference costs in the appropriate travel and non-travel tables for Travelers, Charge Card and PR users at their Center/Office.

10.1.13. **Office of International and Interagency Relations (OIIR) shall**:

a. Provide policy guidance regarding foreign travel and related attendance thresholds.

b. Review and coordinate conference-related foreign travel by NASA personnel.

c. Oversee the process to determine appropriate allocations are made in a timely manner for international conferences involving more than 50 NASA employees who seek to attend.

10.1.14. **NSSC** shall:

a. Assign an NCTS Moderator to process requests for new conferences to be added to the NCTS database.

b. Maintain the NCTS system.

10.1.15. **The NCTS Moderator** shall:

a. Maintain and monitor the Agency conference reporting mailbox.

b. Coordinate with the POCs and Agency Conference Reporting coordinator to resolve any requests for conference determination and to update NCTS.

c. Assist the OCFO in maintaining reporting information received from conference sponsors and providing quarterly summaries to management.

d. Notify all Center/Office conference reporting POCs and alternates when conferences are added to NCTS.

e. Monitor weekly Conference commitment and obligation report and notify the OCFO whenever the cost for an individual conference reaches $60,000.

10.1.16. **NASA Enterprise Applications Competency Center (NEACC)** shall maintain and update regularly a list of NCTS Conference codes available for selection in the Agency financial systems, available for use in the electronic travel, charge card and purchase requisition system, for use by travelers and travel preparers when preparing travel authorizations, and charge card holders and procurement staff when preparing charge card and purchase requisition transactions, involving foreign and NASA-sponsored conferences.

Appendix A. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

A.1. The following FAQs provide more detailed guidance for determining whether an event is a conference and whether a conference is NASA-sponsored or foreign and must, therefore, be entered into NCTS.

1. Conference Definition (Section 2.1.): Is the event a "meeting, retreat, seminar, symposium, or event that involves attendee travel?"

FAQ 1-1 (Name includes "conference"). For reporting purposes, should events whose name includes the word "conference" always be assumed to be conferences?

Answer: Generally yes, and absent information to the contrary, events called a conference, seminar or symposium should be presumed to meet the criteria for "conference." But titles can be misdescriptive, and the nature of the event, including its purpose, subject matter, and presence of attendee travel, can be used in determining whether it is a "conference" notwithstanding what its organizers called it.

FAQ. 1-2 (Local Travel). Does a workshop that just requires local travel by employees meet the definition of a conference?

Answer: Generally yes. Some "attendee travel" is required for a meeting to be considered a conference, and OMB has interpreted this to include local travel. Thus, the definition only requires one attendee to be in official travel status or have reimbursable local travel. However, where the only travel by attendees to a meeting is de minimis (e.g., walking distance offsite) or commuting (including to assigned alternative duty stations), the meeting is not considered a "conference."

2. Exclusions - Events that are not a "conference" (section 2.2).

FAQ 2-1. The FTR definition of "conference" seems very broad—are there any exclusions or types of events that are not considered "conferences" for reporting purposes?

Answer: Yes, those events that are specifically excluded in Section 2.2.1 through 2.2.3 are not considered "conferences." But there are special cases where the general exclusion may not apply and the meeting or event is reported as a conference; these special cases include certain larger offsite meetings and onsite events open to external participants (see FAQs 3.1–3.4 and Section 2.2.1.3).

FAQ 2-2 (Operational Meetings). Are "operational meetings" always excluded from being a conference?

Answer: No. Formal operational meetings (i.e., required under an NPR or NPD) are always excluded. Other operational meetings are generally excluded, but there are special cases where this exclusion may not apply and the meeting or event is reportable as a conference under NASA policy (e.g., certain larger offsite meetings and onsite events open to external participants; see Section 2.2.1.3 and FAQs 3.1–3.4).

FAQ 2-3 (Management/Governance meetings). Are governance meetings excluded from being considered conferences?

Answer: Generally, yes. Agency governance meetings required under NPD 1000.3 are excluded; examples include the NASA Advisory Council (NAC) and the Program Management Council (PMC). Most other governance meetings are excluded, since they are held onsite and, to the extent external parties participate, are invitational only. However, a larger governance meeting, such as an organizational strategy meeting held offsite, may be reportable if held at a hotel with 30 or more attendees (see Section 2.2.1.3.b).

FAQ 2-4 (Program-specific events versus operational meetings). Is an event whose purpose is discussion of a specific program considered a conference?

Answer: It depends. Under prior policies NASA recognized a distinction between program-specific meetings and those of a more general nature when determining what was "reportable" as a conference. This distinction was based in part on criteria from Congress and GAO's criteria for a "formal conference." Under the FTR definition that NASA is now required to use, the definition for "conference" is broader than these other definitions, so the "programmatic" nature of an event is no longer sufficient as a criteria by itself. However, the FTR does distinguish between travel to conferences and travel to operational meetings.

In order to minimize ambiguity and confusion and facilitate efficient reporting, NASA has adopted two reasonable bright-line rules for distinguishing "operational meetings" from conference meetings. First, meetings that are formally required by NPD 1000.3, or by NPRs mandating program and project management requirements, are always considered "operational meetings" and not "conferences." Second, other governance or programmatic meetings are generally excluded in view of their operational content. However, to the extent they are held in one of the two settings that are commonly viewed as conference meetings, those meetings will be tracked as "conferences" notwithstanding the fact they may be predominantly "operational" meetings. These two settings are (a) onsite meetings where open to external participants (see FAQs 3.1-3.3) and (b) offsite meetings at a rented facility with 30 or more attendees (see FAQ 3.4).

FAQ 2-5 (Internal organizational meetings). Is my team's offsite meeting considered a conference?

Answer : It depends. Most such events usually qualify as "other operational meetings" due to the nature of both the attendees and the subject matter. Onsite meetings are almost always excluded, since they do not have open participation and often involve no travel. The presence of an invited outside facilitator or speaker does not turn an onsite meeting into a conference. On the other hand, an offsite meeting that satisfies the criteria of Section 2.2.1.3.b (i.e., 30 or more attendees at a rented facility) will be reported as a conference.

FAQ 2-6 (JPL and other NASA contractors). If JPL or other NASA contractor employees attend an event, can it still qualify as a NASA Operational Meeting?

Answer : Yes. The presence of NASA contractors at events where the subject matter focuses on NASA programs or operations does not in itself cause the event to become a conference. All of the other criteria must be considered. If all invited attendees are either NASA civil service

employees or NASA contractors and the subject matter focuses on NASA programs or operations that the contractors are supporting, then an event is not a conference unless it meets the criteria of Section 2.2.1.3.b (i.e., 30 or more attendees at a rented facility).

FAQ 2-7 (Training). Are training events considered conferences?

Answer : It depends. Training is not considered a conference if it involves "classroom training, on-the-job training, technology-based training, satellite training, coaching, mentoring, career development counseling, details, rotational assignments," and other single topic meetings (e.g., lunch and learn gatherings). Thus, an established course or set of courses in a classroom setting is not considered a conference, nor does holding such a course at a rented facility, (e.g., if attendance exceeds planned limits, necessitating rental of a local facility) make it a conference. Similarly, attendance at a university or professional school is not considered a conference.

However, a widely attended event featuring a variety of topical meetings held at a hotel or other conference facility is typically a conference, even if some or all of its content can be seen as educational. It does not matter that a participant's only reason to attend a meeting is to update training in a specific area or maintain a certification.

For example, events that would be considered conferences include the U.S. Office of Government Ethics' annual Government Ethics Conference, the Annual Federal Dispute Resolution Conference, American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics' (AIAA) Annual Conference on Small Satellites, the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) Workshop on Network Security, the High Tech Small Business Conference, and the Flight Test Safety Workshop (providing an open forum on flight test safety issues). Examples of events not considered a conference include a semester-long university course and a two-week professional school class. Remember to apply the other criteria for determining whether an event is a conference, such as whether travel is involved.

FAQ 2-8 (Outreach events). Is there a general exclusion for outreach events?

Answer: Outreach events sponsored by NASA are considered "other operational meetings." As such, they are typically excluded unless the Special Cases of Section 2.2.1.3 apply. Note that certain onsite outreach events are never considered conferences, including news events, such as press conferences and launch viewings, coordinated by the Office of Communications to announce research results, mission milestones, annual budget releases, and the like to Congress or the media.

In general, outreach events in which the Agency has announced discussions with any interested participant about the status of programs generally, future direction of the Agency and programs, and potential opportunities for collaboration, are conferences under the Special Cases. But onsite events and are intended for limited audiences, such as industry day meetings required to inform potential contractors about how to participate in specific upcoming procurement opportunities, are not considered "open participation," so are not reported as conferences.

Outreach at another agency's event is analyzed based on the nature of the event, from the perspective of the other agency, not the nature of NASA's participation (i.e., outreach). For federal agencies subject to OMB M-12-12, NASA will adopt the host agency's determination of whether or not the event is a conference.

FAQ 2-9 (Speakers, presenters, or judges). If a NASA employee serves as a speaker (including via the speakers' bureau), presenter, or judge at a non-NASA event, does that constitute conference attendance?

Answer: It depends. It is the nature of the event, not the purpose for the appearances (e.g., outreach or dissemination) that is determinative. Many presentations are at classroom training settings (e.g., local schools), awards ceremonies, and festivals or state fairs; none of these by themselves would be considered conferences. But a speaker at a STEM event or recruiting exhibitor would still report costs if the event they are attending is a conference.

FAQ 2-10 (Awards ceremonies). Are award ceremonies considered to be conferences?

Answer: Generally, no. Most awards ceremonies are considered to be Other Operational Meetings because they are programmatic or institutional events taking place as part of routine NASA business, which includes recognizing employee performance. However, award ceremonies that have the characteristics of events described in Section 2.2.1.3, Special Cases, are reported as conferences. For example, if NASA hosts an award ceremony at an offsite rented facility with more than 30 attendees, it would be reported as a conference.

FAQ 2-11 (Exhibits at shows). Are exhibits at air and trade shows (such as Joint Services Open House, Oshkosh Airventure, and the Paris Air Show), county fairs, and open houses reported as a conference cost?

Answer: It depends on the nature of the event. Gatherings where the exhibits or activity booths are the purpose for attendance—such as county or job fairs, air shows and the like, are not generally considered conferences, notwithstanding the large number of attendees at the event. However, if such an event is structured to include a conference integral to the event (e.g., with a substantive agenda, discussions on topical matters, multi-entity participation, particularly where a registration fee is charged), all exhibit and attendance costs should be reported as conference costs.

FAQ 2-12 (Recruiting events). Are recruiting events included as reportable conferences?

Answer: Generally not. NASA-specific recruiting events are usually considered an operational meeting, while general recruiting events hosted by others such as job fairs are not typically structured as conferences. However, as with training, to the extent recruiting takes place at a conference, costs for exhibits and attendance are still tracked as conference costs

3. Special Cases—operational meetings at a setting reported as "conferences" (Section 2.2.1.3):

FAQ 3-1 (Onsite meetings). Does holding all of the event sessions on a NASA facility automatically exempt the event from being a conference?

Answer: No. Under OMB's guidance, an event held onsite at a NASA facility might still qualify as a conference. Most onsite meetings are "operational" in nature, so are generally excluded. However, onsite meetings that are open to external participants are not excluded, to the extent they otherwise meet the criteria for "conference" (e.g., involve attendee travel).

FAQ 3-2 (Limited participation). If all participants have to be badged to get onsite, can there still be "open participation"?

Answer: Yes. If the invitation was publicly issued and generally open to anyone responding (e.g., all interested scientists in the topic), it is considered "open participation" notwithstanding special requirements like advanced registration for badging or restricting attendance due to facility size limits. On the other hand, invitation-only operational meetings to cooperate on a specific program, project, or team or to hold recognition events are not "open"; examples include interagency working groups with attendance limited to other agency designees, meetings to collaborate on a mission with selectively invited scientists and engineers, and most on-site award ceremonies.

FAQ 3-3 (Communications events open to the public). If an onsite event is open to anyone, is it always considered "open participation" and thus a conference?

Answer: No. News events are generally open to the general public, yet the nature of most is narrowly focused and structured primarily to have a one-way presentation of information to the audience, thus not what most would consider a "conference." Thus, news events such as press conferences and launch viewings, coordinated by the Office of Communications to announce research results, mission milestones, annual budget releases and the like to the media and others are not considered conferences.

FAQ 3-4 (Offsite meetings). Does holding an operational meeting offsite of a NASA facility make it a conference?

Answer: It depends: (1) Formal operational meetings (sec. 2.2.1.1) are never considered "conferences," even if the size requires it to be held at an offsite rented facility. (2) Other operational meetings primarily hosted or sponsored by NASA are only considered conferences when held at a rented facility selected as large enough to accommodate 30 or more attendees; meetings at contractor or partner facility are excluded when focused on work being performed with NASA. (3) For operational meetings primarily hosted by another federal agency, NASA will adopt that agency's determination on whether the event is a conference.

4. Sponsorship

FAQ 4-1 (Nature of NASA support). If NASA pays for an exhibit booth or provides funding in support of a conference, is the conference considered "held by" NASA—i.e., is NASA a "sponsor"? What if the event is paid for partly by NASA grant or cooperative agreement funds, or uses a NASA logo?

Answer: Attendance costs (travel and registrations), support costs for speakers (paper fees or presentation costs), and exhibit costs are not considered sponsorship costs. Similarly excluded from sponsorship costs are the non-reportable expenses listed in Section 4.3.2, such as conference costs when properly paid by a recipient of NASA financial assistance using grant or cooperative agreement funding.

For NASA to be considered a sponsor, it must use NASA funds in support of the hosting of the conference, such as paying for facility or event support (audio visual or networking) costs.

NASA is typically considered a sponsor of conferences held at a NASA facility, unless the event organizer hosts the conference under a fully reimbursable agreement.

Finally, use of NASA's logo at a conference is not presumed to mean that NASA is a sponsor of the conference; there are other circumstances under which NASA's logo may be legitimately used without creating a sponsorship (See 14 CFR Part 1221). However, NASA is considered a sponsor where an agreement with the event organizer states that NASA is a sponsor, even if the funding under the agreement is predominantly for non-sponsorship purposes (e.g., exhibit space).

FAQ 4-2 (Primary sponsor). When is NASA the "primary" sponsor for quarterly reporting purposes?

Answer: The question of whether NASA is a primary sponsor depends on comparing NASA's sponsorship contribution to that of any other sponsors. For example, NASA is not considered a primary sponsor if its sponsorship contribution is significantly less (e.g., half or less) than the leading sponsors or, even if contributing the second-highest funding of any co-sponsor, its relative contribution is minor (e.g., less than 25 percent of the total contributed). NASA is only a primary sponsor if it was the conference's only sponsor, including events hosted onsite, or one of the conference's principal contributors.

5. What costs should be reported?

FAQ 5-1 (Grants and cooperative agreements). Should the conference-related costs of recipients of NASA grants and cooperative agreements be reported?

Answer: Grants and cooperative agreements are generally excluded from consideration for conference approval and, reporting purposes since the principal purpose of the relationship and the related costs are to carry out a public purpose of support or stimulation (e.g., technical assistance to presenters or the attendance of students at scientific conferences). However, to validate and ensure proper compliance and reporting, if the proposed research or project effort and the related budget under a grant or cooperative agreement proposal supports, directly or indirectly, NASA mission needs and objectives related to hosting (or assisting another entity) to host a conference, this proposed use shall be reviewed and approved by the appropriate NASA Office of Procurement and legal office prior to award. As part of this review, Office of Procurement, with the concurrence of the legal office, will issue a determination as to whether a procurement contract should be used as the appropriate instrument in lieu of all or part of the proposed grant or cooperative agreement. This review shall also ensure that all costs for conferences are properly approved and reported pursuant to this NID.

FAQ 5-2 (Non-NASA costs). Should NASA-sponsored conference costs incurred by other Federal agencies be reported?

Answer: No. Do not report costs of a NASA-sponsored conference that another Government agency ultimately paid. For example, if NASA incurred conference costs but charged them back to another agency via a reimbursable agreement, do not report those costs, since they are not actually NASA costs. Only report those net realized costs shown by NASA's records. For

example, do not report fully reimbursable conference travel arrangements; do report the unreimbursed portion of partially reimbursable arrangements.

FAQ 5-3 (Costs—estimates versus disbursements). For conference travel costs, should one report the recorded or estimated cost or the actual amount disbursed?

Answer: When submitting the NF 1784, report the estimated cost. When submitting the NF 1785, report the amount shown in BW. If disbursements are available, use them. However, since typically reports are required soon after the conference ends, if disbursements are not available, use costs, and if costs are not available, use obligations. In all cases, indicate on the report whether you are reporting using costs or obligations since full amounts of disbursements are not yet available.

FAQ 5-4 (Contractor costs). Should NASA contractors' costs of participating in NASA-sponsored conferences be reported?

Answer: Usually not. However, all costs of conference support contractors supporting NASA-sponsored conferences are reportable.

FAQ 5-5 (Conference support contractor costs). When reporting costs of NASA-sponsored conferences, should all costs connected with the event's conference support contracts or work orders be included, such as award fees and burden or other indirect charges?

Answer: Yes. If a contractor is helping the NASA sponsor organization plan and/or run the conference under a specific work order, task order, or other contract vehicle and is not simply present at the event as an attendee, the contractor's total conference-related costs are reportable.

6. Is the conference a "foreign conference?"

Note: Congress has prohibited NASA from sending more than 50 NASA employees to any one conference outside the U.S.

FAQ 6-1 (Limit applies regardless of funding availability). If funds are still available, does the 50-person limit on foreign conferences apply?

Answer: Yes. The limit is on how many civil service employees NASA sends, not their costs. Even if NASA's only costs are indirect (e.g., NASA pays employee's salary, but conference sponsor pays his/her travel costs), the attendee still counts against the 50-person limit. Moreover, even if the employee is on leave and pays for all costs in connection with attendance at the conference, the attendee still counts against the 50-person limit if representing NASA (e.g., presenting a paper).

FAQ 6-2 (NASA employees). For purposes of the 50-person limit, are JPL employees considered NASA employees?

Answer: No. Only those persons considered employees for purposes of 5 U.S.C., such as NASA civil service employees and detailees to NASA (for whom NASA is paying costs directly or by reimbursement to the detailing agency) are considered employees.

FAQ 6-3 (Foreign). What is considered "outside the United States?"

Answer: "United States" has the same meaning here as in the FTR, which defines the United States to include the 48 contiguous states, the District of Columbia, and the states and areas defined under the term "Non-Foreign Area," which includes the states of Alaska and Hawaii; the Commonwealths of Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Northern Mariana Islands, and the territories and possessions of the United States (excluding the Trust Territories of the Pacific Islands).

Note: The term "foreign conference" includes conferences held entirely at a NASA facility if the facility is outside the U.S.

FAQ 6-4 (Reimbursable travel). If a NASA employee is requested to present at an international conference and the sponsor pays travel/per diem expenses, does the NASA speaker count against the 50-person limit? What if the employee wishes to give a presentation at or otherwise attend a foreign conference at his or her own expense while on vacation?

Answer: Even if the employee is on reimbursable travel, if NASA is paying the employee's salary during the trip, he or she is considered to be on official travel on behalf of the Government and counts against the limit. Employees are reminded to follow standard procedures for Agency acceptance of travel expenses from outside sources in such cases. (See also FAQ 6-1 above.)

If a NASA employee attends a foreign conference while on vacation, traveling at his or her own expense, and charges no costs to NASA (e.g., for shipping materials), and is not representing NASA (such as by giving a presentation at all related to NASA or its missions/activities) attendance does not count against the 50-person limit. The limit is on the use of appropriated funds" to send or otherwise pay for attendance" at a conference. However, to ensure accurate records for NASA employee foreign conference attendance, all employees (even those on vacation) planning to attend a foreign conference shall request attendance via NCTS and obtain advance approval from OIIR. In addition, they must follow any requirements related to representing NASA externally. (See NPR 9700.1, Appendix A.)

FAQ 6-5 (Single conference with multiple tracks versus multiple conferences). If several foreign events are held at the same time in the same location but advertised as separate conferences, are they treated as separate conferences for purposes of the 50-person limit?

Answer: It depends. If conferences are structured in key aspects like a single event, they constitute a single conference for purposes of NASA's foreign conference attendance limitation. For example, the AIAA Guidance, Control, and Navigation and the AIAA Modeling and Simulation Technologies Conferences were advertised as separate conferences by AIAA in 2009 and 2010, but both were held at the same time and location, the same registration fee paid admission to sessions from both events, some sessions were listed in the agendas for both conferences, and a single fee could buy a program CD with materials from both events. They essentially functioned as two tracks in a single conference. On the other hand, if conferences are held separately in time (one after the other) and a separate registration fee is charged, they are considered distinct conferences even if held back to back at the same facility by the same sponsor. Similarly, independent meetings not part of the conference, such as those held in advance (like planning sessions) or at the same time (such as independent working group

meetings held at the same time to take advantage of key participants being present at the same time and place) are treated as separate events; NASA employees attending these meetings, but not, otherwise, attending the conference are not counted towards the 50-person limit for the conference. For purposes of consistency, this rule is to be applied for both foreign and domestic conferences.

7. How do I obtain approval to attend a conference and process the necessary forms?

FAQ 7-1 (Traveler approval steps). I want to go to a meeting that I think is a conference. How do I obtain approval to attend it, process the authorization, and then file a travel voucher for reimbursement?

Answer:

a. Determine whether the event is a conference and whether it is foreign or NASA-sponsored.

1) If it is clearly not a conference, simply proceed with normal travel authorization and vouchering, no other steps are required by this NPR.

2) If the event clearly is a conference, search for the event in NCTS (http://ncts.nasa.gov).

b. Is the conference listed in NCTS?

1) If it is, note its NCTS Conference Code and select that Conference Code from the drop-down menu of function codes in the electronic travel system when preparing your travel authorization. Also, be sure to select "conference" as the trip purpose. A local POC (typically the Center Travel Office (CTO) designee) will enter your name into NCTS along with the estimated cost of your travel, based on your travel request. If the conference requires a registration fee, include the amount in the comments field of the FedTraveler input screen (it should not be included as an “other” cost unless it will be paid for by the traveler’s own travel card). In addition, you must provide the NCTS Conference Code to the office processing your registration fee so that it can be included in the function code field of the Purchase card (including SATERN external training requests) or other procurement transaction used to purchase you registration.

2) If it is not in NCTS, then follow the guidance in Section 4.1.2 and request that your designated Center POC add the event to NCTS.

c. After a new event is input to NCTS, the NCTS moderator will notify you within one working day whether the event is accepted for inclusion in NCTS and if it is, the NCTS moderator will supply its Conference Code and input the event to NCTS. Once you have the NCTS Conference Code, follow the steps in b.1 above.

1) For foreign conferences, submit your travel authorization request to your approver at least five weeks before the planned departure date. After receiving your request, your travel approver will input your name into NCTS to include you on the list of NASA employees who want to attend the conference counting toward the 50-person limit. Your

travel approver shall submit this request at least four weeks before the planned departure date. If NASA attendance at the conference is expected to be small, you will be promptly notified that you are within the 50-person limit. For conferences at which NASA attendance is expected to be larger, you may be placed on a "pending" list while OIIR, in consultation with appropriate Agency representatives, determines the final NASA-wide attendance allocation. If you receive official NCTS approval, proceed with your Center/Office's foreign travel process.

Note: NCTS approval simply means that you are tentatively approved with regard to the 50-person limit; you must still obtain your supervisor's separate approval for your attendance at the conference. As with all official travel, an approval in NCTS is not final and may be reconsidered based on subsequent factors, particularly in the case of conferences where more than 50 persons request approval to attend.

2) For any conference travel, if after submitting your travel authorization you realize you forgot to use the appropriate function code/NCTS Conference Code, then as soon as you realize the omission, file an amended travel authorization using the correct function code.

d. After attending the conference, submit your travel expense report as you normally do, including the NCTS Conference Code.

Note: Additional information on conference attendance and reporting can be found at the conference Web site, http://www.nssc.nasa.gov/conferences.

FAQ 7-2. (Reporting P-Card and PR costs). How are non-travel conference costs tracked?

Answer: Search for the event in NCTS (http://ncts.nasa.gov).

a. If it is in NCTS, note its NCTS Conference Code and select that Conference Code from the drop-down menu of function codes in the electronic travel system when preparing your travel authorization. Also, be sure to select "conference" as the trip purpose.

b. If it is not in NCTS, then either submit a new record to NCTS or have one submitted, as your local Center requires. After a new event is input to NCTS, the NCTS moderator will notify the submitter within one working day whether the event is accepted for inclusion in NCTS and if it is, will supply its Conference Code and input the event to NCTS. Once you have the NCTS Conference Code, select that Conference Code from the drop-down menu of function codes in the electronic travel system when preparing your travel authorization. Also, be sure to select "conference" as the trip purpose.

c. Once your travel has been approved the travel office will register you by name in NCTS. This step is necessary because NASA must now track and report total conference spending including attendance. In addition, NASA must provide specific information on each conferences exceeding $100,000. In some cases it may be necessary to limit attendance in order for NASA to meet spending limits management establishes for a specific conference.

FAQ 7-3. The conference I want to attend is a foreign conference—how do I get approved?

Answer: The Congress has limited NASA funded attendance at foreign conferences to 50 employees. In order to comply with this limitation NASA is using NCTS to track and control attendance authorizations. For foreign conferences, submit your travel authorization request to your approver at least five weeks before the planned departure date. After receiving your request, your travel approver will input your name into NCTS to include you on the list of NASA employees who want to attend the conference counting toward the 50-person limit. Your travel approver shall submit this request at least four weeks before the planned departure date. If NASA attendance at the conference is expected to be small, you will be promptly notified that you are within the 50-person limit. For conferences at which NASA attendance is expected to be larger, you may be placed on a "pending" list while OIIR, in consultation with appropriate Agency representatives, determines the final NASA-wide attendance allocation. If you receive official NCTS approval, proceed with your Center/Office's foreign travel process. Your travel approver will register your name in NCTS as a candidate for the conference.

Appendix B. Conference Decision Tree

B.1. Is the Event a Conference?

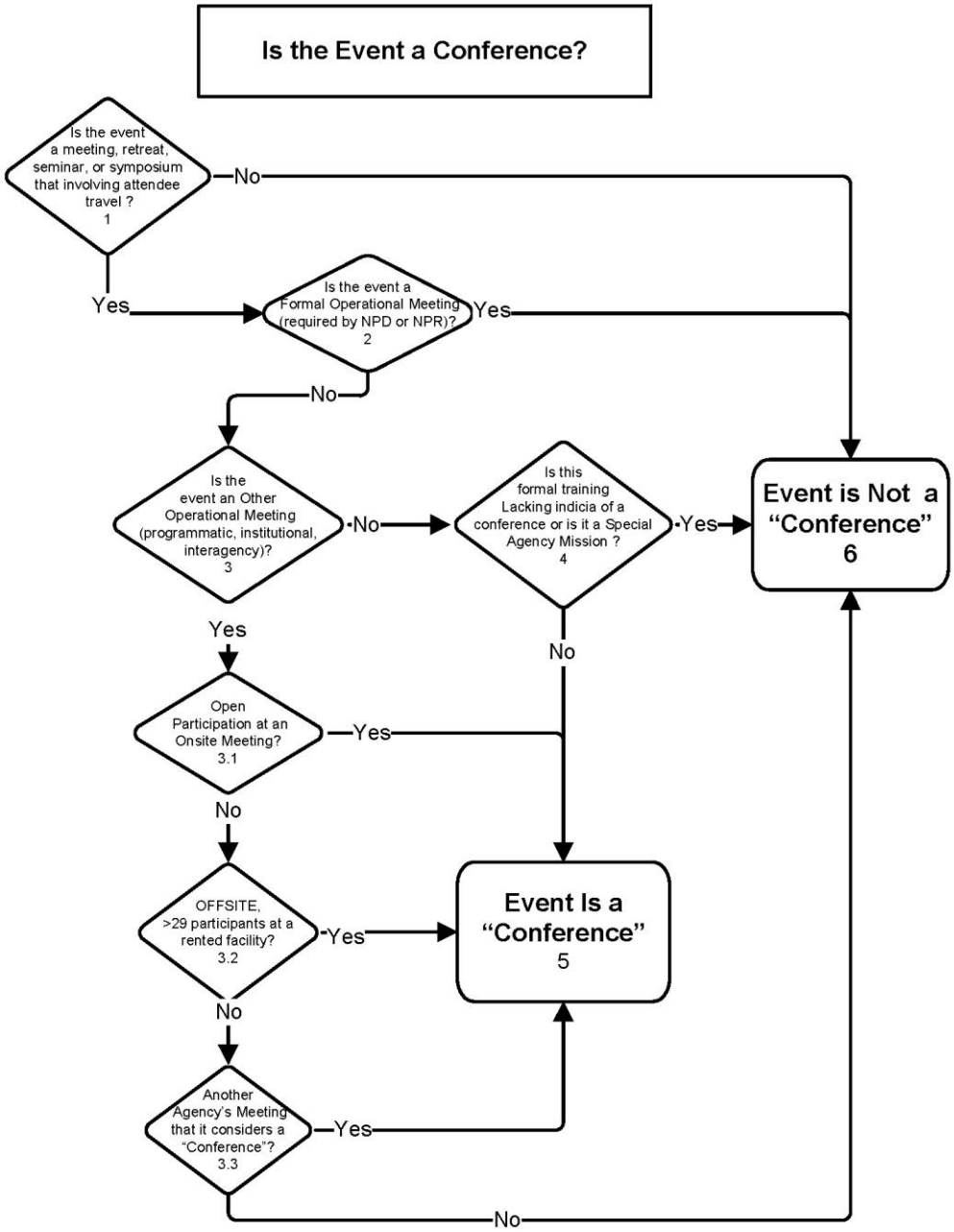

Figure B-1 Conference Determination Decision Tree

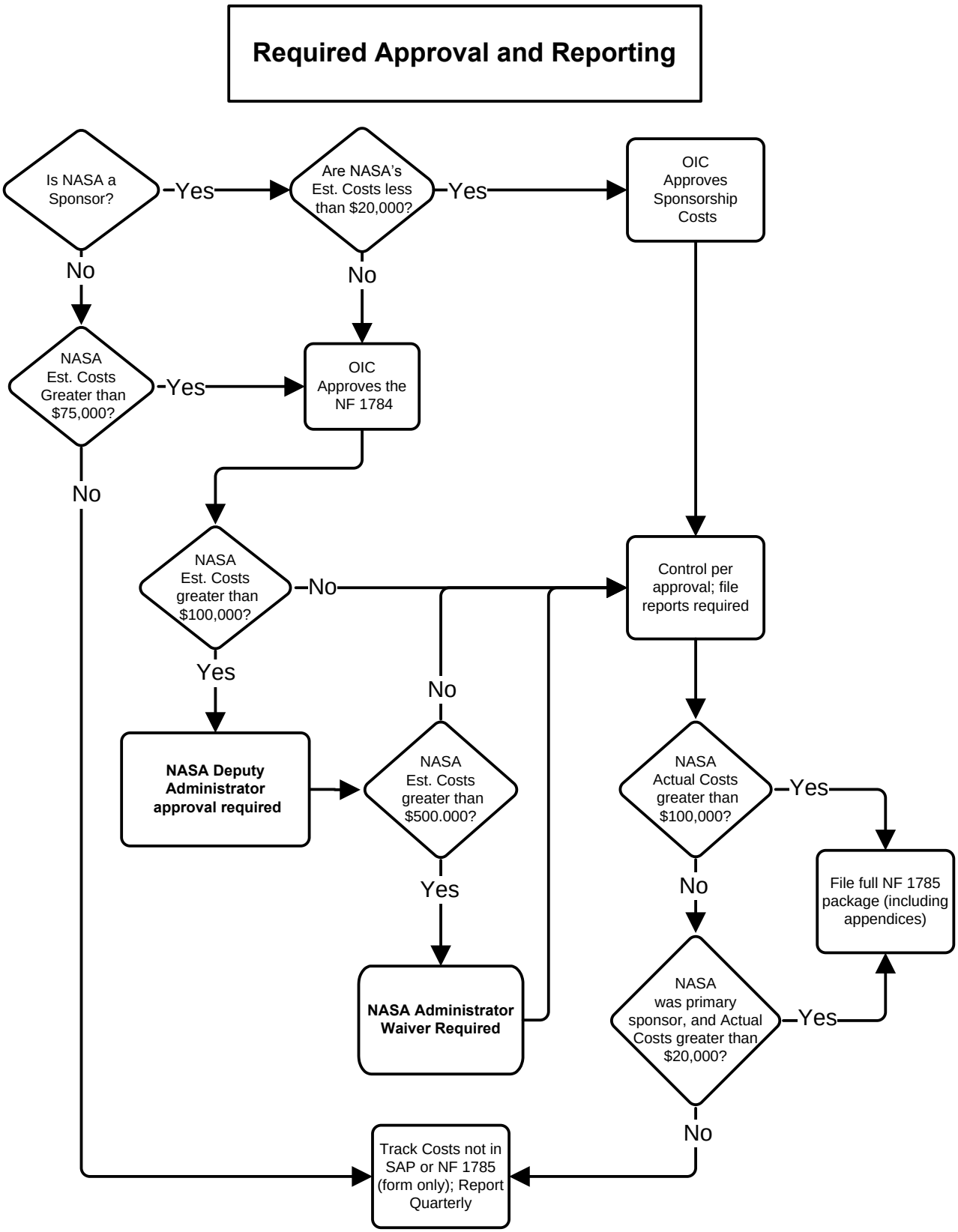

Figure B-2 Required Approval and Reporting

Appendix C. Conference Cost Form

C.1. Conference Cost Form:

1. NASA Center or Headquarters Office	
2. Center/HQ Office POC	
3. Date Prepared	

NCTS Code (1)	Other Cost Type (2)	P-Card (Y/N) (3)	Other Cost Source Identifier (4)	Cost Description/ Justification (5)	Estimated Cost ($) (6)	Actual Cost ($) (7)	Item POC Name (8)	Item POC Email (9)

Conference Cost Form

Instructions

A. General Information

A.1 Purpose

This template will serve several purposes. First it will be used to capture all estimated conference costs other than employee travel and registration fees. The information required is not otherwise available in the travel or financial systems and is needed to ensure that all proposed conference costs are considered when determining the appropriate approval threshold. Second, the information is needed by the event POC when preparing the NF 1784 for NASA sponsored conferences and conferences sponsored by others when NASA will expend $100,000 or more. Lastly, the template will be used to report actual other conference cost information for use in preparing the NF 1785s and other required Agency level reports.

Centers and HQ Office may use other formats to collect other conference cost information as long as all of the data elements shown here are included. However, the format shown here must be used to report quarterly on actual conference costs incurred.

A.2 Events That Require use of the Conference Cost Information Form Template

The Conference Cost Form Template information is required for any planned conference expenditure other than employee travel or registration fees. Prior to the conference reports will contain estimated amounts and the actual amounts will be reported following the conference

A.3 When and How to Submit Conference Cost Information

The Center and NASA HQ Office Conference POCs shall collect the identified data from the offices that are planning to incur the costs. On a biweekly basis the Center POCs will submit the data to a central repository where it will be available to the event POCs responsible for preparing NF 1784s and NF 1785s.

B. Detailed Instructions

Report all conference costs that are not employee travel or conference registration fees. Each uniquely identifiable acquisition is to be entered on a separate line. Item or services that are acquired as part of a larger acquisition and not separately bill must also be identified and reported.

Heading

Line 1. **NASA Center or HQ Office:** Enter the name of the Center or HQ Office submitting the information.

Line 2. **Center/HQ Office POC:** Enter the name of the Center or HQ Office POC who prepared the submission.

Line 3. **Date Prepared:** Enter the date the submission was prepared.

Item Data

Column 1 **NCTS Conference Code:** The NCTS assigned number of the conference to which this other cost entry applies.

Column 2 **Other Cost Type:** Enter one of the following types:

- Exhibit Cost
- Sponsorship Fee
- Facility Rental
- Conference Support Contract
- Other

Column 3 **P-Card - Yes or No?**: Enter Yes if the item was procured using a P-Card transaction, Enter No if the item was procured using any other type of acquisition vehicle.

Column 4 **Other Cost Source Identifier:** The source document number supporting this cost estimate. Possible entries include the SAP Document Number, a contract number, a PO Number, or a Purchase Card **number**

Column 5 **Cost Description /Justification:** Identify the type of item being acquired and a brief description of the reason for acquiring the item

Column 6 **Estimated Cost**: Amount of estimated cost for this specific cost item, in US dollars and cents.

Column 7 **Actual Cost:** Actual cost as recorded in the financial system if cost was uniquely identified. Column 10 **Item POC Name:** Enter the name of the POC who can provide information on the particular acquisition.

Column 8 **Item POC Name:** Enter the name of the person able to respond to any questions on this cost.

Column 9 **Item POC Email:** Enter the email address of the person identified in column 8.