NASA Procedural Requirements

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COMPLIANCE IS MANDATORY

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Subject: Requirements for the Conduct of NASA Research and Technology (R&T)

Responsible Office: Science Mission Directorate

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Chapter 2. R&T Planning and Prioritization

2.1 Acquire Advice

2.1.1 NASA R&T Programs are initiated with the advice of the R&T community (internal and external to NASA) in the form of studies or Advisory Committee recommendations. These inputs are used by the MDAA or MSOD, with assistance from the Program Scientist (if assigned) and R&T Program Lead, to develop priorities and documentation in accordance with NPR 7120.8, NASA Research and Technology Program and Project Management Requirements.

2.1.2 NASA uses a broad variety of mechanisms to obtain external input, including, for example, advisory committees comprised of outside experts, contracted external studies, and NASA managed internal studies. Advice may be obtained from NASA-formed advisory committees. Studies may also be requested from for-profit concerns, professional societies, the National Research Council, or other qualified organizations, depending on the specific need.

2.1.3 NASA-formed advisory committees shall be established and managed in accordance with NPD 1150.11, Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) Committees.

2.1.4 In obtaining advice on a given topic or area, NASA seeks to maximize expertise and objectivity; this will often require balancing the independence of advising individuals or organization(s) who receive NASA funding against the need for familiarity with NASA programs and issues. NASA shall avoid conflicts of interest, including financial conflict of interest, and the potential for bias when selecting members of advisory groups.

2.2 Plan and Set Priorities

2.2.1 Strategic Acquisition Planning for R&T investments is accomplished as described in NPR 7120.8, NASA Research and Technology Program and Project Management Requirements.

2.2.2 The setting of priorities requires the balancing of many factors: NASA strategic goals, intrinsic merit, technical feasibility, resources availability, safety, likelihood of mission success, potential environmental impact, and national policy. While achieving R&T objectives is a priority, there will always be a risk of failure when NASA is challenging its researchers to push the state of the art. A good R&T program does not necessarily compromise on advancing the state of the art to ensure that every research goal is achievable.

2.2.3 R&T priorities are based on strategies and implementation plans derived from advice received, MDAA or MSOD investment criteria of relevance, quality, cost and performance, and other considerations and are aligned with the Agency's vision and mission, as defined by NPD 1001.0, NASA Strategic Plan. Programmatic or societal considerations can enter the planning and priority-setting process at several stages. Contributions to broad national needs identified by the Administration or Congress will also play a role in establishing R&T priorities and in arriving at the decision to proceed with a particular investment.

2.2.4 The processes used to set priorities and the rationale and conclusions of priority setting should be clearly and publicly promulgated in the interest of fostering stakeholder input and credibility among non-participants.

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