



Federally Funded Research and Development Center (FFRDC) Option



ISS FFRDC Option Outline

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ISS FFRDC Option

End-State Description

In it's end-state, the ISS FFRDC is envisioned as follows:

- The ISS FFRDC, contracted to a non-profit organization or consortium and managed by the Office of Biological and Physical Research (Code U), would be responsible for the leadership of a majority of the functions associated with management of ISS Utilization.
- Specifically, the ISS FFRDC would lead the following functional areas:
 - Science, Technology, and Commercial User Leadership
 - Maintaining and Sustaining Flight Research
 - Integrating User Mission - Analytical
 - Integrating User Missions - Operational
- Additionally, the FFRDC would provide a direct Customer Integration and Operations support capability to the discipline specific Payload Developers at their associated NASA Center.
- New Payload Development specific functional responsibilities (e.g. DDT&E, requirements development, cost, schedule, and risk assessment) would be primarily staffed and lead by the currently responsible NASA Center.
- Physical Integration of User Missions would remain as a NASA Appropriate capability.
- Because of its Tactical level leadership responsibilities and capabilities the ISS FFRDC would support NASA in performance of Strategic Planning.
- Single point of entry for all users.
- As part of transition, initial processing of IP payloads remains with NASA, until



ISS FFRDC Option Rationale

- An FFRDC meets some special long-term research or development need which cannot be met as effectively by existing in-house or contractor resources.
- An FFRDC, in order to discharge its responsibilities to the sponsoring agency, has access, beyond that which is common to the normal contractual relationship, to Government and supplier data, including sensitive and proprietary data, and to employees and facilities.
- Consequently, an FFRDC is uniquely qualified to represent the needs of NASA, while also enjoying the independence of not being part of the Government.
 - Permits the FFRDC to sit on strategic boards with NASA, (e.g., the SSUB)
 - Permits the FFRDC to partner with the centers
 - Permits the FFRDC to have the objectivity to represent the needs of a diverse user community.
 - Permits the FFRDC to attract high quality personnel with the necessary expertise to support S/T/C.
 - Limitations on contracting aid conflict of interest problems and give the FFRDC more perceived objectivity.
 - Status of being FFRDC coupled with long term relationship should give new entity more prestige to attract personnel and additional influence within the user community.



ISS FFRDC Option

End-State Functional Allocation

S/T/C Leadership, Mission Management, Engineering

	FFRDC Lead	FFRDC Support	Remarks
0) Define, Develop and Implement Policy and Strategic Plans	Member of SSUB	Support	NASA leads
1) Management of Research Utilization			
a) Establish Research Plans		Support	NASA leads
b) Manage Research Programs	Lead		
c) Manage Integrated Research Utilization	Lead		
2) Preparing and Allocating Budgets			
a) Budget Formulation, Justification		Support	NASA leads
3) Selecting and Prioritizing Research			
a) Managing selection process	Lead		
b) Selection			NASA leads
c) Prioritizing selections	Lead		
5) Developing Cost, Schedule, and Risk Assessments			
a) Perform Cost, Schedule, Risk Management Assessment	Lead		NASA Support
b) Authority to Proceed	Lead		NASA leads for new hardware build
13) Managing Missions and Allocating Services			
a) Advocacy, Manifesting and Resource Allocations	Lead		
b) ISS Research Mission Management	Lead		NASA leads vehicle integration tasks
14) Integrating User Mission - Analytical			
a) Payload Engineering Integration	Lead		NASA leads vehicle integration tasks
b) Payload Software Integration and Flight Production	Lead		NASA leads vehicle integration tasks
16) Integrating User Missions - Operational			
a) Payload Training	Lead		
b) Operations Integration	Lead		NASA leads vehicle interface tasks
18) Educating and Reaching Out to the Public (including industry)			
a) Management and Control	Lead		Direction and approval of strategy and products provided by NASA
b) Disseminate, Communicate & Report results to ISS customers	Lead		
19) Recommending ISS Pre-Planned Product Improvements	Lead		For payload systems input to P3I
20) Managing Archival of Research Samples, Data, and Results	Lead		



ISS FFRDC Option

End-State Functional Allocation

Sustaining Payloads

	FFRDC Lead	FFRDC Support	Remarks
7) Maintaining and Sustaining Flight Research Systems			
7*) Customer Integration and Ops Support Representative	Lead		New Role
a) DDT&E	Lead		
b) Operations	Lead		
9) Maintaining and Sustaining Ground Systems			
a) Identify changes/upgrades to Research Flight Systems	Lead		
b) Maintain & Sustain Research Ground Systems	Lead		

Developing Payloads

	FFRDC Lead	FFRDC Support	Remarks
4) Establishing Payload/Experiment Requirements and Feasibility			
a) Research Requirements	Lead		NASA supported
b) Engineering Concept Development & Hardware Assessments	Lead		NASA supported
6) Developing and Qualifying Flight Research Systems			
6*) Customer Integration and Ops Support Representative	Lead		New Role
a) DDT&E			NASA led
b) Subrack Integration			NASA led
c) Operations	Lead		
8) Developing Ground Systems	Lead		



ISS FFRDC Option

End-State Functional Allocation

Other Functions	Lead	Remarks
0) Define, Develop and Implement Policy and Strategic Plans	NASA	Inherently Governmental; Support provided by FFRDC
1*) Code U Contract Oversight of FFRDC	NASA	Inherently Governmental
2) Preparing and Allocating Budgets		
a) Budget Formulation, Justification	NASA	Inherently Governmental; Support provided by FFRDC
b) Budget Execution	NASA	Inherently Governmental
3) Selecting and prioritizing Research		
b) Selection	NASA	Appropriately NASA led
5) Developing Cost, Schedule, and Risk Assessments		
b) Authority to Proceed	NASA	Appropriately NASA for new build hardware
6) Developing and Qualifying Research Systems		
a) DDT&E	NASA	
b) Subrack Integration	NASA	
10) Constructing Ground Facilities		Proposal dependent
11) Maintaining Ground Facilities		Proposal dependent
12) Certifying Safety of Research Flight and Ground Systems	NASA	Appropriately NASA Led
15) Integrating User Missions - Physical	NASA	Appropriately NASA Led
17) Conducting Research & Analysis and Disseminating Results	PI	



ISS FFRDC Option

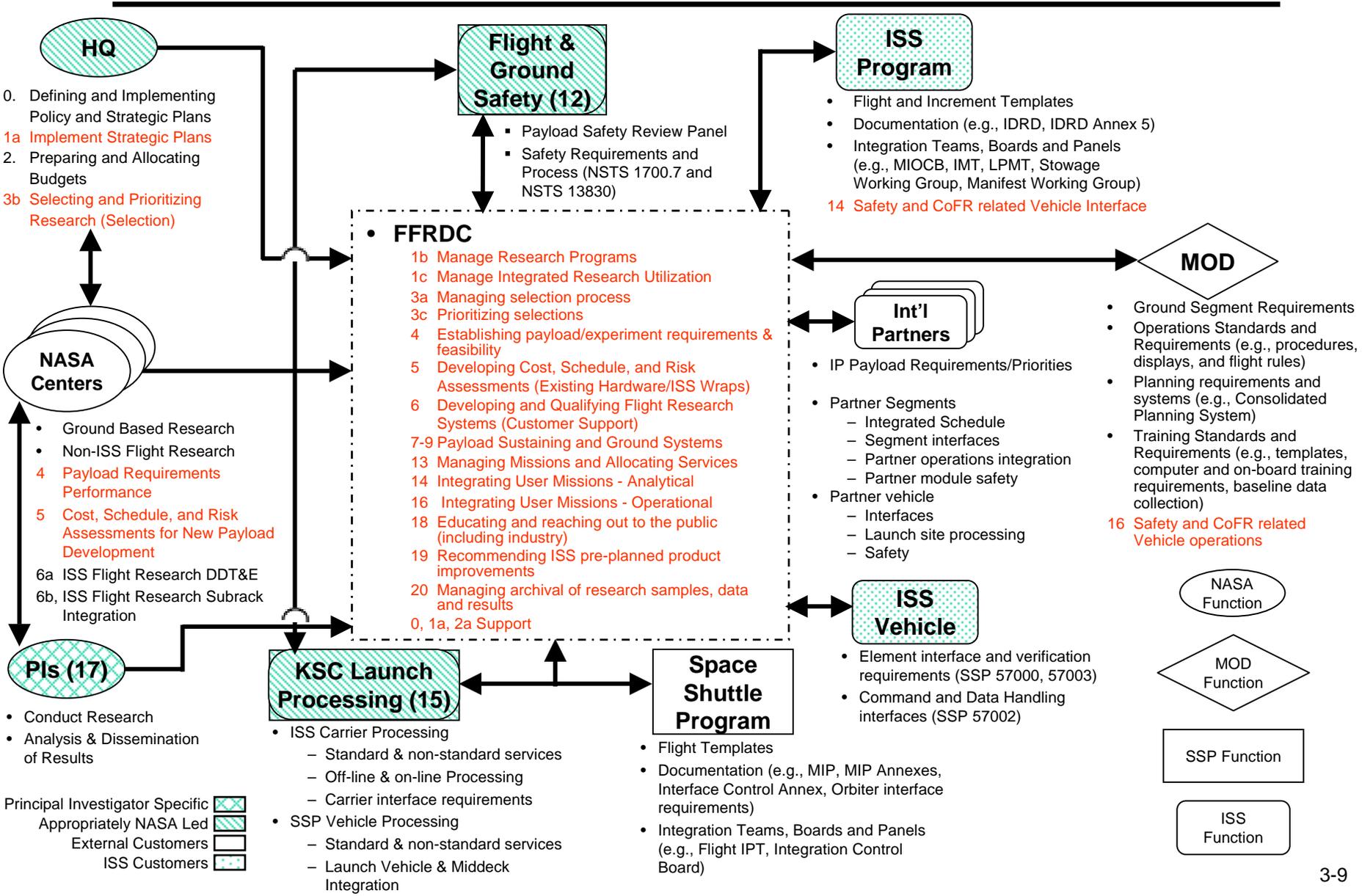
Key Aspects

- Operated by university or consortium of universities on a not-for-profit basis.
- Can only perform work within specific purpose of mission statement.*
- Specifically exempted from competition to help FFRDC attract and retain highly qualified personnel. Creation of FFRDC can be competed however.
- Reviewed every five years. If needs have changed, then NASA can either modify the mission statement or smoothly transition from the FFRDC relationship.
- FFRDC cannot compete against private sector,* but can contract with private sector for goods or services necessary to meet its mission or purpose. Assumed that FFRDC would subcontract for those efforts currently being performed by contractors in the areas of operations and hardware maintenance.
- Special relationship permits FFRDC to partner with NASA and to participate in strategic planning.
- Has authority to obtain funding from other government agencies and private sector consistent with stated mission or purpose.
- Proposed functional allocation has FFRDC managing the utilization of ISS, but will not be involved in “hands-on” research.*
- The FFRDC would use the Inter-Agency Personnel Act for key positions, (e.g., customer representative and vehicle interface), to ensure that trust is established between NASA and the FFRDC.

*Limitations designed to prevent an organizational conflict of interest

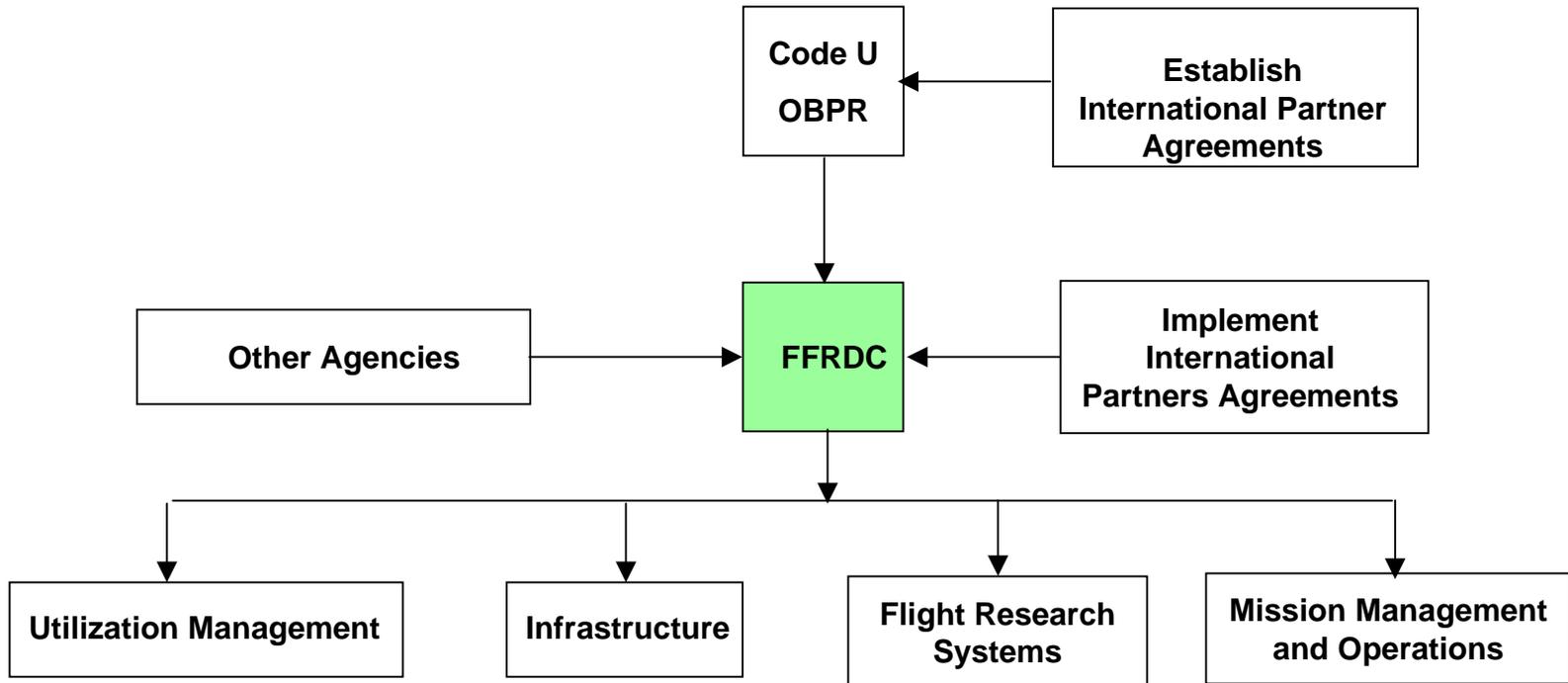


ISS FFRDC Option Interfaces





ISS FFRDC Option Management Structure





ISS FFRDC Option

Functional Organization (at End State)

Infrastructure

- * (L) General & Administrative
- * (L) Sub-Contractor Administration

Mission Management and Operations

- 1b (L) Manage Research Programs
- 1c (L) Manage Integrated Research Utilization
- 13a (L) Advocacy, Manifesting and Resource Allocations
- 13 b (L) ISS Research Mission Mgmt
- 14 (L) Analytical Integrated User Mission Process (PE&I)
(Exception: vehicle interface specific function remain w/NASA)
- 8 (L) Ground Systems Development
- 9 (L) Maintain & Sustain Ground Systems
- 16b (L) Operations Integration (Exception: vehicle interface specific functions remain with NASA)
- 20 (L) Managing Archive

Utilization Management

- * (L) Establish S/T/C Opportunities Office – Single Entry Point for Users
- 0/1a (S) Support SSUB, Implement Policy and Strategic Plans
- 1b/c (L) Manage Research Programs and Integrated Research Utilization
- 2a (S) Formulate Budgets
- 3 a/c (L) Manage Selection Process and Prioritization (with support of FFRDC Chief Scientist)
- 18 (L) Education and Public Outreach
- 19 (L) Recommend ISS P³

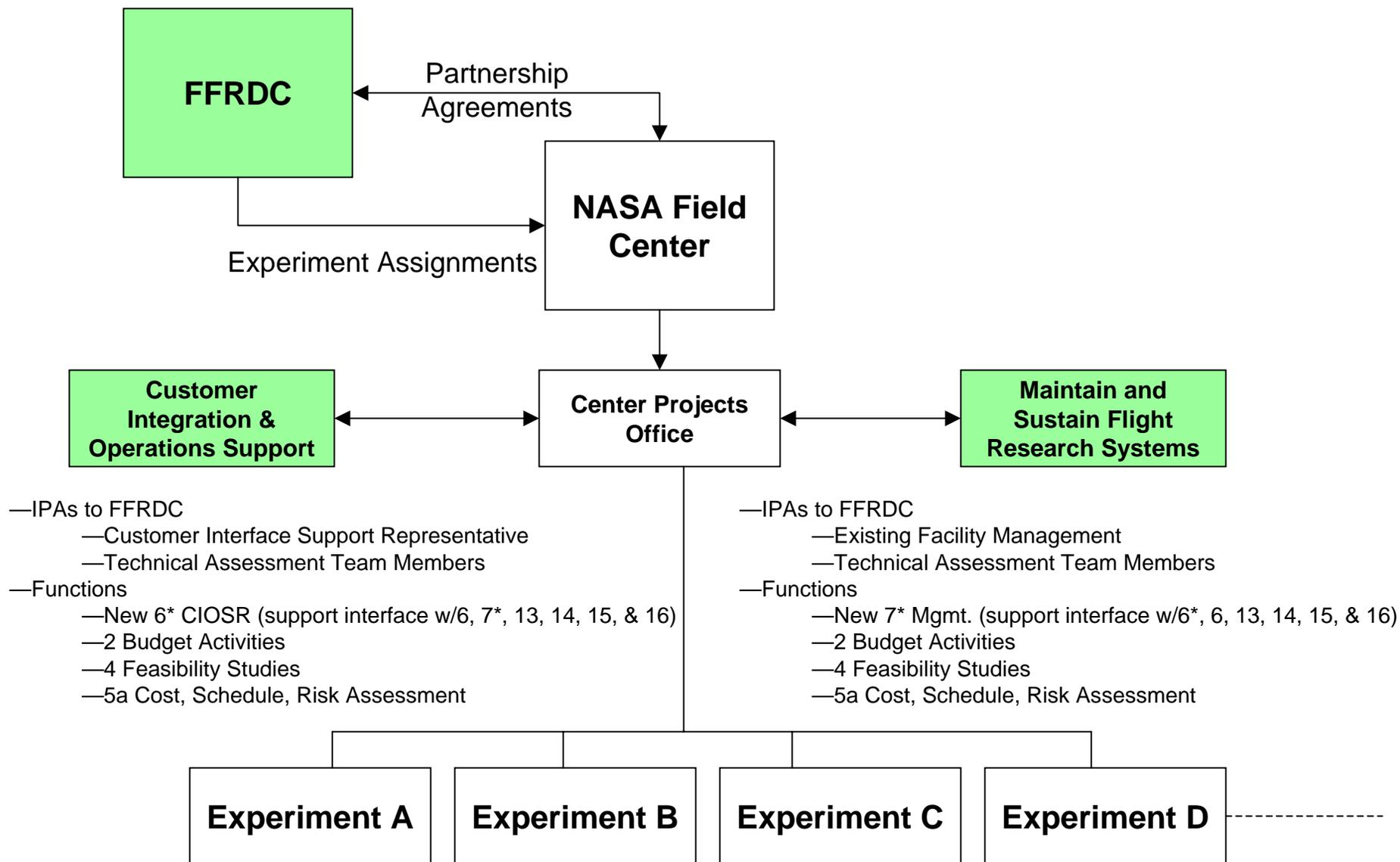
Flight Research Systems

- 4 (L) Experiment Requirements & Feasibility (primarily supported by NASA Center Expertise/Personnel)
- 5 (L) Cost, Schedule, & Risk Assessments and Authority to Proceed (Lead ATP only for reuse of Sustaining Hardware elements; C/S/R for newly developed payload provided by NASA)
- 6*/7* (L) Program Manger/Customer Integration and Operations Support Representative (Lead User Customer Interface)
- 6c (L) Support User Operations Development
- 7 (L) Maintain & Sustain Flight Systems
- 16a (L) Payload Training

* New FFRDC specific function



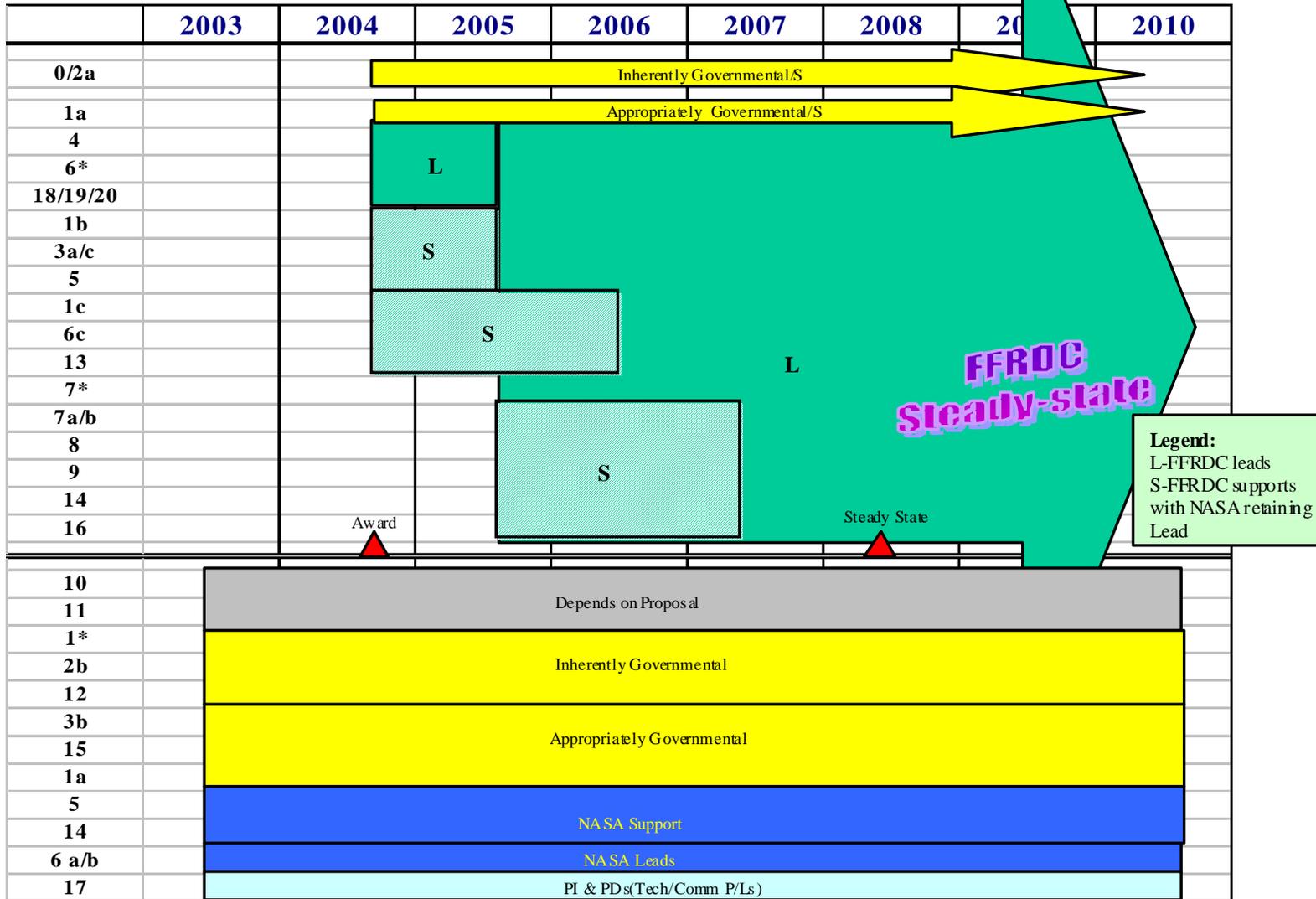
ISS FFRDC Option Relationship with PD Field Centers





ISS FFRDC Option Transition Strategy

FFRDC Transition Strategy





ISS FFRDC Option

Transition Strategy, cont'd

Transition considerations

- Provided the ISS FFRDC with the necessary critical mass of initial of functions to become a viable entity
- Structured the transition to allow for ramp up of functional composition
- Emphasis was given to those functions requiring interface with customer
- Quickly involved FFRDC in those areas that are perceived to be broken, (e.g., selection process, outreach, etc.)
- Involved ISS FFRDC in management early on
- Transitioned engineering functions more slowly and only where user interface required
- Ensured that ISS FFRDC has ability (expertise and bargaining leverage) to manage contractors before transitioning certain contracts
- Tailored transition of functions to the FFRDC while accounting for existing contracts with NASA at a top level
- Effect on civil servant workforce was subjective based on an initial Center provided input. Additional analysis would be required to adequately address Agency Competency and Human Capital



ISS FFRDC Option Goals Assessment

The FFRDC has the potential to:

- Ensure the vision, mission, and strategy for ISS utilization includes the users' perspective by having the FFRDC be a member of the SSUB.
- Better align research prioritization and manifesting/flight planning to the needs of NASA while increasing possibility of success by giving the FFRDC leadership of integrated research utilization and manifesting.
- Standardize the selection process, where appropriate, and streamline/shorten end-to-end processing time by giving the FFRDC management of the selection process and prioritization.
- Eliminate the cumbersome and daunting organizational structure and will make the process more user friendly by creating the position of Customer Integration and Operations Support Representative to work every users.
- Eliminate existing organizational barriers by having the FFRDC standardize utilization management practices, establish clear lines of authority, and have a single point of entry for all users.
- Enhance advocacy and outreach to promote the greater use of ISS though the FFRDC's academic affiliation coupled with its overarching mission to represent the entire S/T/C user community.



ISS FFRDC Option

Workforce Assessment

- The ISS FFRDC, if initially established in FY04 as outlined in the model, would have a total workforce (FFRDC personnel and associated subcontractors) of approximately 475 by mid- FY05
 - Sufficient to establish a foundation for development of a viable FFRDC to manage ISS utilization
 - Approximately 200 out of 589 current NASA civil servants would be affected
- By the end of FY07 the FFRDC would grow towards a total workforce of approximately 1,700.
 - This forecasted ROM would be sufficient to attract a range of potential bidders
 - In its projected end-state configuration, the ISS FFRDC as modeled within this study would affect approximately 300 current civil servants



ISS FFRDC Option Competencies Assessment

- Based on the Functional Allocations associated with this particular ISS FFRDC Option the potential exists for an impact to a number of competencies at each Center.
- A detailed assessment of the impact to each Center has been planned as a follow-on activity.
- A preliminary assessment of the impact at each of the associated Code U Centers, based on subject matter expert opinion of Center provided data, is:

Center	Functional Area					
	S/T/C Leadership	Develop Payloads	Sustain Payloads	Mission Management	Integration - Analytical	Integration - Operational
ARC	Red	White	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
GRC	Red	White	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	White
JSC	Red	White	Red	Red	Yellow	Yellow
MSFC	Red	White	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Red

Red	Potentially High Impact to a Center Competency
Yellow	Potentially Medium Impact to a Center Competency
White	Potentially No/Low Impact to a Center Competency



ISS FFRDC Option Budget Assessment

- The ISS FFRDC, if initially established in FY04 as outlined in the model, would have a total ROM budget in FY05 of approximately \$70M.
 - Sufficient to establish a foundation for development of a viable FFRDC
 - Approximately \$55M of NASA's Research Capability Budget and \$15M additional funds for transition and infrastructure costs would be associated with the FFRDC budget
- By the end of FY07 the ISS FFRDC would grow towards a budget of approximately \$280M.
 - This forecasted business growth is sufficient to attract a range of potential bidders
 - Approximately \$235M of NASA's Research Capability Budget and \$45M additional funds for transition and infrastructure costs would be associated with the FFRDC budget



ISS FFRDC Option

Distinguishing Strengths

- Has the ability to bring together a diverse group necessary to represent the entire ISS user community.
- No new authority required to establish.
- Has the ability to partner with agencies and participate in strategic planning.
- Will have leadership of all of the functions necessary to represent the user community.
- Is specifically exempted from competition – an exemption designed to attract and to retain “the best and the brightest.”
- Limitations based upon policy and functional allocation will prevent any organizational conflicts of interest associated with managing the selection process and dealing with commercial users.
- Will maintain the highest levels of objectivity while fostering the outlook of the government, industry, and academia.
- Provides transparency to users through an office for customer support which also serves as the single point of entry into the process.



ISS FFRDC Option

Distinguishing Weaknesses

- FFRDCs have been in disfavor because of the potential for abuse due to being a sole source and to the special relationship with the sponsoring agency.
- Notification to OSTP required when establishing new FFRDC.
- No one outside entity currently exists that can adequately represent the S/T/C. Creation of an FFRDC for ISS would be through competition, which is contrary to manner most FFRDCs are established.
- Part of the “clout” an FFRDC has comes from the prestige of the organization operating the entity, yet do not know what entity would operate the FFRDC for ISS.
- Given the available facilities and the functional allocation, it is probable that the FFRDC will be geographical dispersed.
- Uncertainty about the ability of a newly created FFRDC to manage large aerospace engineering contracts.
- Perception that the limitation on conducting research would hinder the FFRDCs ability to attract “the best and the brightest.”



ISS FFRDC Option Establishment

- Need for NASA to give authority to proceed with ISS FFRDC.
- Need to obtain necessary budget to support an ISS FFRDC.
- Need to obtain approval from OSTP.
- Determine acquisition approach– sole source or competitive.
 - Need to establish expertise; no one existing single entity can best meet science, technology, and commercial needs.
 - Sole source may give ability to select “the best,” but appears consortium is needed and entities must be willing to “partner.”
 - Sole source permits early start date.
 - Competition appears to be better approach
 - RFI would allow private sector to pull teams together
 - Get creative ideas from private sector
 - Private sector looking for a competition.
 - Influence teams thru evaluation criteria



ISS FFRDC Option Schedule for Implementation

Federally Funded R&D Center (FFRDC) Milestone Schedule

	2002			2003												2004												
	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Administrator Decision and Go-Ahead			▲																									
Notice to Labor Unions			▲																									
Notice to OSTP			▲																									
Draft SOW			■	■	■	■																						
Draft RFP			■	■	■	■	■	■																				
Draft Implementation Plan to Congress			■	■	■	■	■	■																				
Notice to Congress re: FFRDC & DOD \$									▲																			
Release RFP										▲																		
Receive proposals; Source Selection													■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■								
Contract Start Date																							▲					



ISS FFRDC Option Summary

- Brings together the expertise and outlook of government, industry, and academia necessary to represent the entire ISS user community of S/T/C.
- Will manage the utilization of ISS and not be involved in “hand on” research.
- Has all of the functions necessary to manage ISS utilization while the Centers retain all competencies associated with payload development and vehicle interface.
- Can operate as a strategic/tactical partner with NASA and other federal agencies, including being on the SSUB.
- Creates an office specifically to support customers. This office also will act as the single point of entry for users.
- With its academic affiliation, would be an excellent advocate for all users by promoting the use of ISS and disseminating ISS successes.
- With its built-in protections for organizational conflicts of interest, can better take leadership of the selection process and represent commercial users.



Backup



ISS FFRDC Transition Strategy

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Functions						
0 Defining and Implementing Policy and Strategic Plans	I/S (10%)					
1* Code U Contract Oversight of FFRDC	I	I	I	I	I	I
1 Management of Research Utilization						
a Implement Strategic Plans	S (50%)					
b Manage Research Programs	S (50%)	L (100%)				
c Manage Integrated Research Utilization	S (50%)	S (75%)	L (100%)	L (100%)	L (100%)	L (100%)
2 Preparing and Allocating Budgets						
a Budget Formulation, Justifications	I/S (50%)	I/S (75%)				
b Budget Execution	I	I	I	I	I	I
3 Selecting and Prioritizing Research						
a Managing selection process	S (50%)	L (100%)				
b Selection	A	A	A	A	A	A
c Prioritizing selections	S (50%)	L (100%)				
4 Establishing Payload/Experiment Req & Feasibility						
a Research Requirements	L (10%)					
b Engineering Concepts, Development, & Hardware Assessments	L (10%)					
5 Developing Cost, Schedule, and Risk Assessments						
a Perform Cost, Schedule, Risk Management Assessment	S (25%)	L (25%)				
b Authority to Proceed (Lead for reuse of Sustaining Hardware only)	S (25%)	L (50%)				
6 Developing and Qualifying Flight Research Systems						
* Customer Integration and Ops Supt Reps	L (100%)					
a DDT&E						
b Subrack Integration						
c Operations	S (50%)	S (50%)	L (50%)	L (50%)	L (50%)	L (50%)
7 Maintaining and Sustaining Flight Research Systems						
* Project Management/Customer Integration and Ops Supt Reps	L (100%)					
a DDT&E		S (50%)	S (75%)	L (100%)	L (100%)	L (100%)
b Operations		S (50%)	S (75%)	L (100%)	L (100%)	L (100%)
8 Developing Ground Systems						
a Identify changes/upgrades to Research Flight Systems		S (50%)	S (50%)	L (100%)	L (100%)	L (100%)
b Maintain & Sustain Research Ground Systems		S (50%)	S (50%)	L (100%)	L (100%)	L (100%)



ISS FFRDC Transition Strategy

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
10 Constructing Ground Facilities						
11 Maintaining Ground Facilities						
12 Certifying Safety of Research Flight & Ground Systems	I	I	I	I	I	I
13 Managing Missions and Allocating Services						
a Advocacy, Manifesting & Resource Allocations	S (50%)	S (75%)	L (100%)	L (100%)	L (100%)	L (100%)
b ISS Research Mission Management	S (50%)	S (75%)	L (100%)	L (100%)	L (100%)	L (100%)
14 Integrating User Missions - Analytical						
a Payload Engineering Integration		S (50%)	S (50%)	L (90%)	L (90%)	L (90%)
b Payload Software Integration & Flight Production		S (50%)	S (50%)	L (90%)	L (90%)	L (90%)
15 Integrating User Missions - Physical	A	A	A	A	A	A
16 Integrating User Missions - Operational						
a Payload Training		S (50%)	S (75%)	L (100%)	L (100%)	L (100%)
b Operations Integration		S (50%)	S (75%)	L (100%)	L (100%)	L (100%)
17 Conducting Research & Analysis & Disseminating Results	PI	PI	PI	PI	PI	PI
18 Educating & Reaching Out to the Public (including industry)						
a Management & Control	L (100%)					
b Disseminate, Communicate & Support results to ISS customers	L (100%)					
19 Recommending ISS Pre-Planned Product Improvements	L (100%)					
20 Managing Archival of Research Samples, Data, and Results	L (100%)					

Inherently or Appropriately Governmental I/A

ISS FFRDC Supports (% supported) S (50%)

ISS FFRDC Leads (% lead) L (100%)

Principal Investigator PI



Function	FY07	Civil Service Competency Priority Submitted by Centers					Civil Service Competency Impacts at ISS FFRDC End-State						
		ARC	GRC	JSC	MSFC	HQ	ARC	GRC	JSC	MSFC	HQ		
0 Defining and Implementing Policy and Strategic Plans													
1 Management of Research Utilization													
a. Implement Strategic Plans													
b. Manage Research Programs													
c. Manage Integrated Research Utilization													
2 Preparing and Allocating Budgets													
a. Budget Formulation, Justification													
b. Budget Execution													
3 Selecting and Prioritizing Research													
a. Managing selection process													
b. Selection													
c. Prioritizing selections													
4 Establishing Payload/Experiment Req & Feasibility													
a. Research Requirements													
b. Engineering Concepts, Development, & Hardware Assessments													
5 Developing Cost, Schedule, and Risk Assessments													
a. Perform Cost, Schedule, Risk Management Assessment													
b. Authority to Proceed													
6 Developing and Qualifying Flight Research Systems													
a. DOT&E													
b. Subrack Integration													
c. Operations													
7 Maintaining and Sustaining Flight Research Systems													
a. DOT&E													
b. Operations													
8 Developing Ground Systems													
9 Maintaining & Sustaining Ground Systems													
a. Identify changes/updates to Research Flight Systems													
b. Maintain & Sustain Research Ground Systems													
10 Constructing Ground Facilities													
11 Maintaining Ground Facilities													
12 Certifying Safety of Research Flight & Ground Systems													
13 Managing Missions and Allocating Services													
a. Advocacy, Manifesting & Resource Allocation													
b. ISS Research Mission Management													
14 Integrating User Missions - Analytical													
a. Payload Engineering Integration													
b. Payload to Probe Integration & Flight Production													
15 Integrating User Missions - Physical													
16 Integrating User Missions - Operational													
a. Payload Training													
b. Operations Integration													
17 Conducting Research & Analysis & Disseminating Results													
18 Educating & Reaching Out to the Public (including industry)													
a. Management & Control													
b. Disseminate, Communicate & Support results to ISS customers													
19 Recommending ISS Pre-Planned Product Improvements													
20 Managing Archival of Research Samples, Data, and Results													
FFRDC leads 100% of the function. Centers not be able to retain associated competency gained by performing this function.													
FFRDC leads, however, thru Partnership agreements and IFAs, Centers will support the FFRDC with their contracted expertise in these functions, whereby retaining competencies gained by performing these functions.													

* NOTE: HQ (Code U) FTE and Competency Priorities will be identified following discussions with Division Directors

KEY

■ High Priority	■ Potential High Impact to a Center's Competency
■ Medium Priority	■ Potential Medium Impact to a Center's Competency
■ Low Priority	



ISS FFRDC Option Strengths and Weaknesses

<u>Strengths</u>	<u>Weaknesses</u>
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. NASA has the capability to quickly transition to an FFRDC for ISS Utilization Management as no new authority is needed for establishment.2. The FFRDC would bring together the expertise and outlook of government, industry, and academia to solve utilization issues that cannot be solved by any one group alone. This would result in the FFRDC being an excellent advocate for the entire S/T/C user community.3. The FFRDC as envisioned contains built in protections for organizational conflicts of interest.4. With the “special relationship” granted under the Federal Acquisition Regulations, the FFRDC would partner with the Centers to enhance and standardize payload development, maintain and sustain existing payload facilities, and provide tactical utilization leadership positioning it to provide strategic planning support at the highest levels.5. The FFRDC would encompass all of the functions necessary to most effectively represent the entire, broad user community while providing a single point of entry for users into the ISS utilization process.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The creation of an FFRDC has the potential to result in additional interfaces with NASA.2. FFRDCs have been disfavored because of the potential for abuse due to the sole source nature and the special relationship with sponsoring agency.3. The FFRDC cannot perform inherently governmental functions such as negotiating barter agreement with our International Partners. However, the FFRDC would be in a strong position to implement existing agreements.4. The cost associated with transitioning expertise from inside NASA to an FFRDC is uncertain and may be more expensive because FFRDC is not subject to federal pay schedule.5. The Limitation on the FFRDC to conduct research is perceived as hindering their ability to attract the best and brightest. This restriction, which offsets potential conflict of interests relative to selection, needs to be vetted by academia and industry via an RFI.6. As a geographically dispersed entity, the FFRDC would need to establish a management focal point to ensure clear lines of communication.