

HUMAN SPACEFLIGHT SYMPOSIUM (B3)  
Commercial Human Spaceflight Programs (2)

Author: Ms. Margaret Roberts  
National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), United States

ISS COMMERCIALIZATION

**Abstract**

While Earth's majestic Moon is the brightest astronomical object in the night sky, the International Space Station (ISS) is the second brightest object in the night sky, easily visible from Earth. Like natural wonders of the world, man-made wonders of the world, such as the ISS inspire awe and admiration.

This paper will examine the ISS program and how it has operated as a U.S. National Laboratory. Managed through a partnership of 15 nations, with dozens of nations using its resources, consideration will be given to what differentiates it from an Earth-based national laboratory. Equally interesting is the role of both U.S. and foreign governments participating in the ISS program, and actions they have taken to enable commercial use of the ISS. With ISS program running at least through the year 2024, a commitment adopted by all the ISS International Partners, and launch vehicle access to the ISS being provided by U.S. commercial providers, Japan and Russia (and previously, Europe), the paper will examine what considerations may be useful to enlarge the scope of commercial involvement in the U.S. National Laboratory. Might government incentives or changes in current law be necessary to transition the ISS to something that is more commercially focused? What might be a proper role of government and industry? How might future collaborative efforts result in an increasing number of commercial discoveries and success stories, with a cadre of private participants accessing and using space, through the ISS, orbiting the Earth, encountering a sunrise every 92 minutes, and visible in the night sky.