

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

Author: Mr. Sam Scimemi
National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), United States, Sam.scimemi@nasa.gov

THE INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION AND LOW EARTH ORBIT

Abstract

As we approach the end of the second decade of human habitation onboard the International Space Station (ISS), the paradigm of low earth orbit (LEO) operations in human spaceflight is changing. The ability of the private sector LEO has advanced significantly since Expedition 1 moved aboard the ISS in November 2000, both in terms of transportation to and from LEO, and in research, development, production, and habitation capabilities once there. The United States Congress has approved continuing to operate the ISS until at least 2024, and the U.S. Presidential Administration has directed NASA to evaluate the opportunities and challenges presented by transitioning ISS operations to a more commercial regime by 2025. This paper will highlight NASA's goals and requirements in LEO, including preparing for deep space exploration and continuing to enable to growth of a LEO commercial marketplace. NASA's commitment to human activity in LEO remains strong as we seek to find the way to make the most out this unique environment for all interested parties. The ISS Partnership has led the world in human exploration of space for two decades, and is poised to continue this leadership both in LEO and beyond in the 2020s.