A Successful Infusion Process for Enabling Lunar Exploration Technologies

Ann P. Over, Mark K. Klem, and Susan M. Motil
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Space Administration

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Abstract

The NASA Vision for Space Exploration begins with a more reliable flight capability to the International Space Station and ends with sending humans to Mars. An important “stepping stone” on the path to Mars encompasses human missions to the Moon. There is little doubt throughout the stakeholder community that new technologies will be required to enable this Vision. However, there are many factors that influence the ability to successfully infuse any technology including the technical risk, requirement and development schedule maturity, and, funds available. This paper focuses on effective infusion processes that have been used recently for the technologies in development for the lunar exploration flight program, Constellation. Recent successes with Constellation customers are highlighted for the Exploration Technology Development Program (ETDP) Projects managed by NASA Glenn Research Center (GRC). Following an overview of the technical context of both the flight program and the technology capability mapping, the process is described for how to effectively build an integrated technology infusion plan. The process starts with a sound risk development plan and is completed with an integrated project plan, including content, schedule and cost. In reality, the available resources for this development are going to change over time, necessitating some level of iteration in the planning. However, the driving process is based on the initial risk assessment, which changes only when the overall architecture changes, enabling some level of stability in the process.

Nomenclature

CaLV Cargo Launch Vehicle
CEV Orion Crew Exploration Vehicle
CFM Cryogenic Fluid Management
CLV Ares Crew Launch Vehicle
CSA Customer Supplier Agreement
CxP Constellation Program
EDS Earth Departure Stage
ESAS Exploration Systems Architecture Study
ETDP Exploration Technology Development Program
EVA Extra Vehicular Activity
GRC NASA Glenn Research Center
ISRU In-Situ Resource Utilization
LAT Lunar Architecture Team
PCAD Propulsion and Cryogenics Advanced Development
PDR Preliminary Design Review
RCS Reaction Control System
SE&I Systems Engineering and Integration
SOA State of the Art
SRR Systems Requirements Review
TBR To Be Resolved
TRL Technology Readiness Level
VSE Vision for Space Exploration
I. Introduction

The NASA Vision for Space Exploration (VSE) includes human space flight missions to the International Space Station, the Moon, and Mars. To accomplish the VSE, several iterations of architecture studies and concept development have been completed. The Exploration Systems Architecture Study (ESAS) completed and published in December of 2005 included a detailed transportation architecture for all three missions, which was subsequently refined. The Lunar Architecture Team (LAT) study, published in December of 2006, focused on defining the surface architecture and detailed drivers for lunar surface operations. At the writing of this paper, a follow-on study, LAT-2 is nearing completion to refine the architecture further. Each of these mission concepts identified technology that was required to “enable” the mission concepts, as well as technology that was highly desired to “enhance” the mission. Technology solutions enable missions by buying down the risk on mission performance, life-cycle costs, and/or safety and reliability. In an ideal situation, NASA would fund all technologies that had promise of payback for later missions. However, fiscal realities are such that only the highest priority subset of the technologies identified can be funded and this decision process is a significant challenge. Perhaps more importantly, there are many factors that influence the ability to successfully infuse any technology including the technical risk, requirement and development schedule maturity, and, funds available. This paper focuses on the successful infusion processes that have been used recently for the technologies in development for the lunar exploration flight program, Constellation. One technology project, Propulsion and Cryogenics Advanced Development (PCAD), has implemented an effective technology infusion process with the Lunar Lander flight project. A similar process was recently applied across the power technology needs starting with the Energy Storage Project. With the help of ETDPO, other successful technology projects, and the Constellation customers, an effective technology infusion process is now in implementation across the program. With the VSE, there is an unprecedented opportunity to make this technology infusion a success because of the strong “technology pull” to enable the missions.

II. Vision for Space Exploration Architectures

The Exploration Systems Architecture Study (ESAS) completed in December 2005 included a lunar transportation architecture as shown in figure 1.

This architecture was updated and modified through follow-on studies including the Lunar Lander internal study concepts and the Lunar Architecture Team. For example, the Lander key design drivers were to minimize mass of the descent and ascent stages to allow the maximum payload possible, and, to simplify the interfaces.

![Figure 1.—Exploration Transportation Architecture](image-url)
In addition to the Lunar Lander, based on the objectives defined for the lunar missions, a surface architecture was defined including surface power, surface communications, habitats, rovers for humans and science, and in-situ resource utilization. A notional architecture is shown in figure 3.
III. Architecture Driven Technology Needs

The architecture studies described above each precipitated a time-phased list of technology needs required to achieve the architecture concept of operations. The ETDP was formulated to address these technology needs. The current program consists of 21 technology projects, most containing multiple technologies within each project, each addressing one or more elements of the future flight systems as depicted in table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline</th>
<th>Launch Vehicle</th>
<th>Lunar Lander</th>
<th>EVA</th>
<th>Lunar Surface Systems</th>
<th>Ground or Flight Ops/SE&amp;I</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mechanical Systems</td>
<td>Orion (CEV)</td>
<td>ARES-I (GLV)</td>
<td>ARES-V (CaLV)</td>
<td>EDS</td>
<td>Power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protection Systems</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Habitant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Propulsion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mobility</td>
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<tr>
<td>Power</td>
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<td></td>
<td>ISRU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thermal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Comm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avionics &amp; Software Systems</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cross-cutting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Control &amp; Life Support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Outpost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crew Support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 1.—TECHNOLOGY MAPPING TO CONSTELLATION FLIGHT ELEMENTS

IV. Technology Prioritization

The technology areas in table 1 represent technology needs identified by the general architecture assessments such as ESAS and LAT. This identification as a promising technology in architecture assessments is a necessary but not sufficient condition to remain funded. The Constellation Program (CxP), who manages the development of the Exploration flight elements, in concurrence with NASA Headquarters and the ETDP, has implemented a Technology Prioritization Process (TPP)\(^1\) to assess and prioritize the technology needs across the program. The CxP process includes rigorous systems engineering assessments to identify and prioritize the technology capabilities required to meet the design, development, and test of mission systems, going beyond the initial architecture assessments. These capabilities are identified by mission phase (Initial/ISS, Lunar, or Mars) and by “enabling” or “enhancing.” In this context, the mission cannot be completed without the enabling technology. However, the enhancing technologies allow missions with better performance and/or lower risk and life cycle costs. The net result is an integrated technology priority list identifying the “pull technologies.” In the case where flight system requirements are not well defined, the technology program works with the architecture concept leads to define core

\(^1\)Constellation Program Technology Insertion Strategy Document, CxP 70079
technologies that cross most architecture solutions, working to supplement the TPP process. For example, although the exact mobility needs are not known for the surface we know that low power, lunar environment tolerant (e.g., dust, vacuum, temperature) mobility subsystems are required to be developed.

V. Technology Infusion Process

At the macro scale, a technology may have been identified as critical and selected for funding based on the program priority list. Although a technology development has sufficient funding and some level of success with development, it may not be used in the target flight system, or “infused.” There are many factors that influence the ability to successfully infuse any technology including the technical risk, requirement and development schedule maturity, and funds available. An effective infusion process has been demonstrated by the ETDP PCAD Project, managed at GRC. The PCAD project content includes “green propulsion” (non-toxic) main and reaction control system (RCS) propulsion, currently including hydrogen and methane fuels. PCAD also includes Cryogenic Fluid Management (CFM) content including storage, distribution, and low gravity management of cryogenic fluids for vehicles and surface systems. PCAD’s process started with a sound risk development plan and was completed with an integrated project plan, including content, schedule and cost. The following are details of the infusion process that recently worked well between the PCAD and the Lunar Lander Projects.

A. Baseline Requirements and Definitions

To start the infusion process, the needs, goals, and objectives of the flight program need to be stated in a set of requirements. For PCAD, although the Lander did not have baselined requirements they were able to confirm the majority of the requirements to guide the technology development. An example of those requirements is for the Lander liquid oxygen (LOx), liquid methane ascent main engine as shown in table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance</th>
<th>Life</th>
<th>Propellant inlet conditions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total thrust: 3,500 to 7,500 lbf (TBR)</td>
<td>6 starts (TBR)</td>
<td>Pressure: 325 psia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isp: 355 sec minimum End of Life</td>
<td>9 months in space (TBR)</td>
<td>Temperature: 185 °R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start time: 0.5 sec (max)</td>
<td>Impulse (includes 1.5x margin)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacuum start</td>
<td>Continuous:4,500K lbf*sec (650 sec @ 7.5K) (TBR)</td>
<td>LOx temperature: 163 to 224 °R with a goal down to 145 °R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Continuous:4,500K lbf*sec (1425 sec @ 7.5K) (TBR)</td>
<td>LCH4 temperature: 170 to 224 °R with a goal up to 264 °R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sun and deep space viewing</td>
<td>Startup vapor slug: 100 in.³</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to requirements, there must be an understanding and definition of what Technology Readiness Level (TRL)² means for a given technology. For example, in general Exploration has a goal to develop technologies to a TRL level of 6 before they are delivered to the flight program for engineering development. For propulsion and CFM, PCAD spent significant time to define what TRL meant for their disciplines. In general, most technologies have a range of infusion points that follow the maturity of the flight design. For example, at SRR the technology development may not be complete; however, enough risk mitigation has been accomplished to adequately address the design maturity and risk.

B. Technology Risk Assessment

The PCAD Team conducted a risk workshop to identify the risks to be able to meet the Lunar Lander and CEV propulsion system requirements. A rigorous risk identification process was used to enable succinct statements of the risk, a relative ranking, mitigation strategies, and ultimately customer ownership. These risks serve to identify the technology gaps compared to State of the Art (SOA). The workshop provided raw data that needed to be consolidated for each area. This process resulted in a prioritized set of risks for the Lander propulsion system as shown in table 3. The color-coding for the risk corresponds to the scoring of likelihood (1-5) multiplied by consequence (1-5). Reds are 15-25; yellows 8-12 and greens are <8. The PCAD Risk abbreviations are “G” for green propulsion (e.g., methane fuel), “C” for CFM and, “D” for deep-throttling main engines. For example, the first

²TRL levels as defined in the NASA White Paper “Technology Readiness Levels” by John C. Mankins, April 1995.
risk in the table, G15 was 15th risk at the workshop for green propulsion and it covered ignition reliability for liquid oxygen-liquid methane combination. Customer interaction at the actual workshop was limited, hence follow-up meetings were held with the customer to review and refine the risks and associated mitigation strategies, and to effectively transfer ownership of the risks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lunar Lander Risk</th>
<th>Risk Statement</th>
<th>Corresponding PCAD Green Propulsion Risk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RCS &amp; Ascent Engine Ignition</td>
<td>Given that LOX/Methane are non-hypergolic propellants, an ignition system is required; because no space qualified hardware currently exists for LOX/Methane there are risks that the required ignition systems will not be at a TRL of 6 prior to full-scale development.</td>
<td>G15 - Ignition Reliability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOX/Methane Propulsion Technology Maturity</td>
<td>Given that flight-qualified, human-rated LOX/Methane propulsions systems do not currently exist, there is a limited amount of data at both the component and system level to guide mission planning and provide confidence the systems will meet performance targets.</td>
<td>G02 - Integrated System Test Requirement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown Ascent/RCS Propulsion System Requirements</td>
<td>Given that advanced development of LOX/Methane propulsion technology is proceeding prior to establishment of LSAM ascent and RCS requirements; there is a risk that the advances made through PCAD will not satisfy these future requirements. Alternatively, if advanced development is to satisfy a very wide range of potential requirements there is a risk that PCAD resources &amp; schedule are inadequate.</td>
<td>G27 - Variable Requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOX/Methane Test Facility Suitability &amp; Availability</td>
<td>Given that there are limited contractor and government test facilities currently supporting a range of Cs propulsion system development activities; there is a risk that necessary advanced development tests cannot be accomplished when needed.</td>
<td>G4 - Lack of Facility capabilities and/or availability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOX/ H2 Ascent Engine Fast Start</td>
<td>Given that a pump fed LOX/ H2 engine is being considered for LSAM Ascent and the engine has a requirement to be able to perform during certain abort scenarios, there is a possibility that it might not meet the engine quick/fast start requirements for the abort.</td>
<td>D95 - LOX/ H2 Ascent Engine Fast Start</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Descent Engine Performance</td>
<td>Given the propulsion needs for high performance, reliable lunar descent, there is a risk that this capability cannot be met using an engine design within the current technology base (RL-10 derivative).</td>
<td>D91 - Inconsistent Assumptions Between Performance, Cost &amp; D010 - Deep Thrust Engine Overall Performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Descent Deep Throttling</td>
<td>Given that the lunar descent propulsion will need engines to provide a wide range of thrust, there is a risk that throttling requirements cannot be met.</td>
<td>D019 - Deep Thrust Transient Response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Descent Engine Development Base</td>
<td>Given that there is limited expertise within both NASA and industry, successful on-schedule descent engine development is at risk.</td>
<td>D112 - Limited Number of Qualified Suppliers for Deep Thrust Engine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cryogenic Propellant Quality</td>
<td>Given the nature of a distributed cryogenic propulsion system, there is a risk that engine feed quality will be unacceptable.</td>
<td>C093 - RCS Feed line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active Cooling for Thermal Control</td>
<td>Given that long duration liquid hydrogen storage is required, active thermal control may be required to mitigate boil-off.</td>
<td>C099 - Long Term In-Space Cryogenic Propellant Storage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cryogenic Fluid Management Technology Maturity</td>
<td>Given that flight-qualified, human-rated long duration, on-orbit cryogenic fluid management systems do not currently exist, there are advanced development tasks at both the component and system level that have not yet been completed.</td>
<td>C098 - Cryogenic Propellant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunar Dust Contamination</td>
<td>Given that the LSAM will be exposed to lunar dust, there is a risk that contamination could result in malfunctions</td>
<td>L017 - LOX/H2 Engine Throttle Transient Response Due to Lunar Dust</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.—PCAD Rolled-Up Risks for Lunar Lander (Not in Order)

C. Integrated Technology and Flight Schedules

Based on the integrated risk matrix that was reviewed by the Lander, schedules for the technology development were developed to meet the flight project schedule. The risk mitigation items became tasks on a schedule supporting the Lander SRR and PDR, and some times post-PDR phases. Each task included an associated resource estimate. Several iterations were conducted to optimize the tasks (e.g., synergy was found by assuming the same reaction control system for the Ascent and Descent Stages). Throughout the process, all participants maintained a strict rigor to challenge task needs by inserting only mandatory tasks that met Lander schedule and critical risk mitigation.
needs. Based on the risk priorities and phasing of funding, the content within the planned budget and outside of the
guideline was identified. Further iterations and scrubs of the task schedule were conducted to minimize the
overguideline needs. By the end of this meticulous process, the Lander Project became the best advocate for the
increased funding needs.

**D. Final Steps of Technology Infusion**

The final step in the process was the documentation of the PCAD technology deliverables to the Lander Project. This
was accomplished with a Customer Supplier Agreement (CSA),\(^3\) including the technology development
schedule of deliverables to meet the flight schedule needs, as shown in table 4. Over time, the Lander Project has
continued to refine their requirements; however, the original PCAD risks were and still are applicable. The CSA
with PCAD and the Lander Project, and the associated development schedule will remain a “living document” with
periodic updates (at least once/year) to assure the alignment for technology infusion. Updates will also be required
as the funding changes. The process outlined here, including a rigorous risk development process, enables a more
stable development program that can adapt to changes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deliverables</th>
<th>Expected completion date</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PCAD—Ascent/Descent RCS Design Deliverables</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGST RCS Contract</td>
<td>4th Qtr FY07</td>
<td>Complete workhorse testing of RCS concept. Test Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aerojet RCS Contract</td>
<td>1st Qtr FY08</td>
<td>Deliver 4 Aerojet 100-lbf RCS engines (Contract Option 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Igniter Duration Testing (Duration and Wide Operating Range)</td>
<td>1st Qtr FY08</td>
<td>Vacuum ignition pulse (100,000+) duration testing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Area Ratio Testing</td>
<td>3rd Qtr FY08</td>
<td>Vacuum testing of a single engine to obtain performance data and benchmark data to examine kinetics models in existing analytical tools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spark Plug Durability</td>
<td>4th Qtr FY08</td>
<td>Heat transfer analysis and thermal stability analysis and test data of current insulating materials in LOx/LCH(_4) environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100-lbf LOx/LCH(_4) RCS Thruster Sea Level Testing</td>
<td>4th Qtr FY08</td>
<td>Sea level testing over a range of propellant inlet conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100-lbf LOx/LCH(_4) RCS Thruster APSTB</td>
<td>1st Qtr FY09</td>
<td>Vacuum testing of a 3 thruster reaction control box in a CEV configuration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exciter Breadboard demonstration</td>
<td>3rd Qtr FY09</td>
<td>Breadboard testing of capacitive and/or inductive discharge ignition proof-of-concept (PoC) exciter designs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100-lbf LOx/LCH(_4) RCS Thruster Vacuum Testing</td>
<td>4th Qtr FY09</td>
<td>Thermal vacuum testing over a range of propellant inlet conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOx/LCH(_4) RCS Thruster APSTB</td>
<td>4th Qtr FY11</td>
<td>Testing of RCS engines and main engine simulator in lunar lander APSTB configuration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCAD—Ascent Main Engine Deliverables</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KTE Workhorse Testing</td>
<td>3rd Qtr FY07</td>
<td>Complete sea level workhorse testing of 7.5K-lbf LOx/LCH(_4) main engine concept. Test data report.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KTE Contract</td>
<td>4th Qtr FY07</td>
<td>Complete contract base period with PDR for 3.5K-lbf LOx/LCH(_4) prototype Ascent Main Engine. Workhorse test date and PDR level engine design.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATK Contract</td>
<td>4th Qtr FY07</td>
<td>Complete contract base period with PDR for 3.5K-lbf LOx/LCH(_4) prototype. Ascent Main Engine. Workhorse test date and PDR level engine design.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PWR Heated Tube SAA</td>
<td>4th Qtr FY07</td>
<td>Complete testing with super heated gaseous methane and subcooled liquid methane - Test Results.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workhorse vacuum testing</td>
<td>1st Qtr FY09</td>
<td>Complete vacuum workhorse testing of LOx/LCH(_4) main engine concept. Test data report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATK Workhorse Testing</td>
<td>3rd Qtr FY11</td>
<td>Complete sea level workhorse testing of 7.5K-lbf LOx/LCH(_4) main engine concept. Test data report.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prototype engine demonstration</td>
<td>1st Qtr FY12</td>
<td>Complete design, development, fabrication and vacuum testing of a lunar lander prototype ascent engine.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^3\) CSA is part of the Cx Technology Insertion Strategy document, CxP 70079
E. Other Technology Projects

Other GRC ETDP Projects have enjoyed some success following the lead of PCAD. At the time of this writing, a Power Risk Workshop is planned for late August 2007 to identify the power technology risks for the Energy Storage and the Fission Surface Power Projects. This risk workshop and risk mitigation identification process will enable more rigorous integrated schedules and CSA’s with the Lander, EVA, and various Lunar Surface Systems. The Dust Management Project is in formulation and is planning to utilize this process.

VII. Summary

Historically it has been difficult to successfully infuse new technologies into flight systems. The Exploration Program, with the help of the Architecture Study teams, the ETDP and the Constellation Program, has developed a method to prioritize and manage the technology portfolio for the Agency. At a technology project level, this paper showed the details of an effective technology infusion process that was used by the ETDP PCAD Project, and is now in use by other technology projects. The driving process is based on rigorous risk assessments, which change only when the overall architecture changes, enabling some level of stability in the process to be able to accommodate the typical perturbations of most NASA programs, including budget fluctuations.
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Lunar; Exploration; Technology development; Propulsion; Energy storage

The NASA Vision for Space Exploration begins with a more reliable flight capability to the International Space Station and ends with sending humans to Mars. An important “stepping stone” on the path to Mars encompasses human missions to the Moon. There is little doubt throughout the stakeholder community that new technologies will be required to enable this Vision. However, there are many factors that influence the ability to successfully infuse any technology including the technical risk, requirement and development schedule maturity, and funds available. This paper focuses on effective infusion processes that have been used recently for the technologies in development for the lunar exploration flight program, Constellation. Recent successes with Constellation customers are highlighted for the Exploration Technology Development Program (ETDP) Projects managed by NASA Glenn Research Center (GRC). Following an overview of the technical context of both the flight program and the technology capability mapping, the process is described for how to effectively build an integrated technology infusion plan. The process starts with a sound risk development plan and is completed with an integrated project plan, including content, schedule and cost. In reality, the available resources for this development are going to change over time, necessitating some level of iteration in the planning. However, the driving process is based on the initial risk assessment, which changes only when the overall architecture changes, enabling some level of stability in the process.