National Aeronautics and
Space Administration

NASA's Moon to Mars
Architecture

Architecture Definition Document ESDMD-001 Revision B

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NASA/TP- 20240015571

Exploration Systems Development Mission Directorate

Moon to Mars Architecture Definition Document (ESDMD-001) – Revision B

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

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December 2024

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) explores the unknown in air and space, innovates for the benefit of humanity, and inspires the world through discovery. Extending the reach of humanity through the human exploration of the Moon, Mars, and beyond is key to that mission. NASA's Moon to Mars Strategy and Objectives document establishes long-term goals and objectives for crewed deep space exploration; however, satisfying NASA's Moon to Mars Objectives requires an innovative approach to the definition, management, and execution of NASA's Moon to Mars Architecture. An architecture offers a high-level unifying structure and defines a system. It provides rules, guidelines, and constraints that define a cohesive and coherent framework that identifies constituent parts, relationships, and connections and establishes how those parts fit and work together. This Architecture Definition Document (ADD) establishes the process for the decomposition of objectives empowers the agency's success in achieving human exploration of the cosmos. NASA updates this document annually to reflect the maturation of the architecture and the progress NASA and partners make toward achieving exploration objectives.

The ADD is not a manifest or requirements document. Instead, it serves as a tool for the programs, projects, and engineers who will implement and execute NASA's bold ambitions for crewed exploration of deep space.

As established in the Moon to Mars Strategy and Objectives, "Why" we explore encompasses three pillars: Science, Inspiration, and National Posture. Ensuring success in all three areas requires an architectural approach that incorporates innovation, collaboration, and partnerships that can be sustained across a multi-decadal effort. This second revision (Rev-B) of the ADD, developed to support NASA's 2024 Architecture Concept Review (ACR), incorporates several key updates to support the continued evolution of the architecture.

Since the last revision of the ADD, NASA has significantly improved the clarity of the objective decomposition, which distills exploration objectives into the characteristics and needs and use cases and functions needed to achieve them. The updated decomposition incorporates findings from internal studies and diverse stakeholder feedback. A model-based systems engineering approach ensures coherence and consistency, removing inconsistency and repetition.

Revision B also incorporates advancements to NASA's Mars architecture, including insight into initial capabilities, systems, and operations necessary to support the Humans to Mars segment. Updates to objective decomposition for Mars add significant detail to the ADD and hint at areas of forward work and future study. An appendix adds greater depth in the future decisions needed for Mars that will drive lunar needs. They are not the only decisions to be made, but they will have huge effects on subsequent decisions.

NASA continues to introduce new exploration systems into the architecture. Two new elements — initial surface habitat and lunar surface cargo lander — successfully passed mission concept review in 2024 as a result of extensive analysis, concept refinement, and studies. These elements and their respective reference missions appear in this revision.

NASA also continues to apply architecture processes to cross-agency efforts and coordination with external stakeholders by including definitions of architecture technology gaps — essential areas for engagement across and beyond the agency. The technology gaps appendix identifies areas that need attention and innovation to enable future exploration. In publishing this information, NASA communicates the technologies and capabilities that may benefit from partnership with industry, academia, other U.S. government agencies, and international space agencies.

Ultimately, NASA established the Moon to Mars Architecture approach to communicate and facilitate humanity's journey into the universe according to the principles and recurring tenets of NASA's Moon to Mars Strategy and Objectives. The NASA architecture team thanks their many stakeholders, participants, and partners for their efforts to review and provide feedback. Their support has been critical to the success of this approach.

REVISION AND HISTORY

The NASA Office of Primary Responsibility for this document is the Exploration Systems Development Mission Directorate Architecture Development Office. Please visit <https://www.nasa.gov/MoonToMarsArchitecture> for the latest version and updates to the Moon to Mars Architecture and exploration campaign.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

An architecture is the high-level unifying structure that defines a system. It provides a set of rules, guidelines, and constraints that define a cohesive and coherent structure consisting of constituent parts, relationships, and connections that establish how those parts fit and work together. This definition, as found in the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Systems Engineering Handbook,¹ is essential to capture the broad range of systems, programs, and projects supporting the human exploration of the Moon, Mars, and beyond. Although this definition is typically used for a single program construct rather than a multidecadal Moon to Mars human exploration architecture, the need for a unifying structure to address the magnitude of the endeavor remains. These goals represent the most complex systems engineering effort conducted by NASA to date. Ultimately, the programs, projects, and contributing systems will span decades, agencies, countries, cultures, and a variety of commercial, academic, and other types of contributors. Establishing a common architectural language, framework, and integration process to communicate and document the Moon to Mars system-of-systems is necessary, and this document is the first step in that process.

1.1 PURPOSE

An integrated architecture creates many opportunities to execute the ambitious Moon to Mars efforts. Many of these opportunities involve establishing a systems engineering framework that can support the breadth of necessary program and system contributions. By applying these needs to nearer-term lunar development, NASA will be instituting the process, procedures, and techniques needed to enable longer-term Mars goals and more. Some of the challenges being addressed in the Moon to Mars Strategy are associated with the architecture definition, including broad/changing goals, funding, and external pressures/influences. This document and the methodology outlined for architecture definition have been crafted to contend with these challenges using an iterative and adaptable framework.

The primary purpose of the Architecture Definition Document (ADD) is to capture the methodology, organization, and decomposition necessary to translate the broad objectives outlined in the Moon to Mars Strategy into functions and use cases that can be allocated to implementable programs and projects. Inherent in this process is the need to communicate the long-term vision, maintain traceability to responsible parties, and iterate on the architectural implementation as innovations and solutions develop. This document is updated and improved in conjunction with the Architecture Concept Review (ACR), which is held annually to get buy-in and input from across the agency on the human exploration architecture. The annual nature of the process provides the opportunity to continually incorporate new developments in technologies and new partnerships, whether they are with industry, the U.S. government, international entities, or academia.

1.2 SCOPE

The scope of this document is to capture the programs, projects, systems, and contributions that enable the human exploration of the Moon, Mars, and beyond. The agency-level Moon to Mars Strategy encompasses the combined objectives that may be satisfied through human, robotic, or other efforts conducted across all agency directorates. NASA's Exploration Systems Development Mission Directorate (ESDMD) has established this ADD, the methodology, and the

¹ NASA System Engineering Handbook, [SP-20170001761.](https://ntrs.nasa.gov/citations/20170001761)

decomposition of the objectives for the efforts applicable to the human exploration architecture and robotic systems interfacing with or supporting it. Agency blueprint goals and objectives will, in many cases, also decompose or be supported by independent robotic or other non-NASA systems that, in combination with the human architecture, contribute to objective satisfaction. Objective decompositions in the ADD identify objectives derived to support human exploration architecture and systems. They may also have other functions, features, or uses beyond those presented here. The Moon to Mars Architecture process will coordinate objective decomposition in conjunction with all NASA mission directorates.

Figure 1-1. Human Exploration Moon to Mars Architecture Scope

1.2.1 ADD Content Structure

This ADD has been structured to reflect the architecture process and will be iterated on over time through subsequent analysis and integration efforts with partners. Section [1.0](#page-10-0) describes the methodology and framework of the decomposition. This description includes definitions of the segments and sub-architectures used to describe the architecture and the process NASA will use to organize the decomposition through iterative cycles.

Section [2.0](#page-30-0) [Architecture Decomposition](#page-30-0) includes the rationale for the lunar architecture as viewed through a systems engineering lens. This describes the key drivers and questions that must be answered to arrive at the implemented architecture. Unique considerations for the Moon are also included. This section introduces the relationships between the architectural questions and how the order in which they are answered drives the Mars architecture. In subsequent iterations of this document, this content will eventually be replaced by the Mars architecture description as decisions are made and implemented. This section concludes with the decomposition of the objectives to the characteristics and needs the architecture must possess to support the Moon to Mars Strategy and Objectives.

Section 3.0 Moon to Mars Architecture describes the relationship of the characteristics and needs to assigned use cases and functions as applied to supporting architecture elements. These elements are organized by the architecture framework introduced in Section 1.0. In the scope of the ADD, one of the key drivers is to delineate between committed and funded elements and avoid premature inclusion of concept solutions. This approach is necessary to ensure the Moon to Mars Architecture reflects the open and evolutionary opportunities to support innovation, technology enhancements, and potential partnerships. As concepts are refined, the preformulation process develops elements into potential program/projects for implementation. These concepts are reviewed at NASA project management decision gates per the NASA Procedural Requirement 7120.5 NASA Space Flight Program and Project Management Requirements process. Following a successful NASA Mission Concept Review (MCR), an element will be approved as a candidate for inclusion into the architecture through the ACR process. NASA's project management decision gates, in combination with program/projects milestone reviews, will formally allocate architecture use cases and functions, key driving performance needs, and initial program/project concepts to the element. Additionally, following the successful completion of an MCR, the element concept also transitions to an implementing program/project phase. Through the ACR process, the ADD will be updated to capture the formal allocation of use cases and functions to the defined element in the appropriate segment. With respect to international partnerships, proposed cooperation will be included in the Moon to Mars Architecture and be reflected in the ADD upon the completion of internal NASA and partner reviews and conclusion of an appropriate international agreement. Section 3.0 also identifies open or unanswered questions in the architecture and the unallocated functions that are yet to be addressed by future systems or supporting elements. This section also includes descriptions of open trades or considerations for future architecture development are included, with an emphasis on the Mars Architecture.

Section [4.0](#page-204-0) [Assessment to the Recurring Tenets](#page-204-0) provides qualitative assessments of the architecture and reflects on the degree to which the architecture is adhering to the cross-cutting tenets of the strategy and objectives. These assessments are qualitative in nature to consider the state of the architecture and identify opportunities for revision. These will be living assessments updated on a recurring basis as the architecture adapts and develops. With respect to potential international partnerships, study agreements are developed to frame efforts. The ability to efficiently address gaps and needs in the architecture can be explored through strategic analysis, assessments of alternatives, and technology infusion studies. Results from these studies inform pre-formulation activities. Subsequent ADD revisions will be updated to reflect these efforts and potential areas of collaboration in the Section 4.0 Recurring Tenet 1 (RT-1): International Collaboration assessment.

The document content is followed by extensive decomposition and traceability tables in Appendix A. This appendix provides the complete traces from lunar objectives to the implementing element lunar use case and functions. Appendix B provides narratives of the priority Key Mars Architecture Decisions and a full list of candidate key decisions. The architecture-driven technology gaps list found in Appendix C identifies areas that need attention and innovation to enable future exploration. Lastly, Appendix D provides a list of acronyms and abbreviations and a glossary of terms for reference.

1.2.2 Content Outside of ADD Scope

During iteration of the ADD and communication of the architecture, it is important to note what the ADD includes and intentionally excludes. This is necessary to capture the content that is within the scope of the architecture effort and delineate it from the existing process or other implementing organization areas of responsibility. To this end, the ADD is not…

… a replacement for existing processes or agreements.

Existing documented NASA mechanisms and processes for partnerships, procurements, etc., are unchanged and existing formal governmental processes remain in effect. The architecture approach is to engage and communicate in support of these processes and architecture products will be updated to reflect decisions from the formal processes.

… procurement direction.

As with existing processes and agreements, the NASA procurement process is a formally documented and highly managed activity. Architecture products, including the ADD, white papers, and other materials, are to communicate needs and not to presuppose solutions. Any indications of the procurement timing, requirements definition, and contract methods are defined within the procurement process. The ADD informs the procurement process by articulating the relationships for new elements in the context of the wider architecture.

… a manifest.

Actual flight manifests, sequences, or specific mission content or design are the responsibility of the Moon to Mars Program(s), partner planning, and contract mechanisms. Manifests are subject to the development, budget, schedule, and other pressures that are beyond the scope of the ADD. The architecture products reflect the content necessary to achieve the Moon to Mars goals and objectives and their effectiveness at doing so. The actual manifesting of flights or schedule to achieve the objectives are subject to the procurement, development, and implementation processes managed by the implementing programs.

… a budget request.

Decisions related to the creation of programs and elements occur in the context of the budget planning process and are not presupposed in the architecture documentation of needs. Ultimately, those needs may be fulfilled through various means coordinated through the existing processes and procedures, including the budget analysis associated with them. Architecture products will inform those processes and reflect progress toward the objectives as decisions and content are approved, funded, or contributed.

1.3 ARCHITECTURE METHODOLOGY

The Moon to Mars Strategy has developed two complementary principles to address the complex framework: architect from the right and execute from the left. Architecting from the right means beginning with the long-term goal (farthest to the right on a timeline) and working backwards from that goal to establish the complete set of elements that will be required for success. Derived from the decomposed plan, systems and elements execute from the left in a regular development process, integrating as systems move left to right within the architecture.

NASA developed an applied systems engineering method to facilitate applying these principles to the architecture definition. The first part of this method is an ordered process of objective decomposition to complete the process of architecting from the right. The purpose of objective decomposition is to define the actionable capabilities the human exploration architecture needs to satisfy the agency's exploration objectives. In this process, the characteristics and needs are identified to ensure objective satisfaction. These characteristics and needs are then traced to the functions and use cases that must be accomplished by elements and systems. The second supporting method is establishing an architectural framework to organize, integrate, and track the allocation of functions and use cases to the executing programs and projects. This structure will enable the integration of the system-of-systems development, identify gaps in the architecture, and adjust the architecture as left-to-right execution occurs, technologies mature, or objectives

are satisfied. The architectural framework is managed using sub-architectures and segments, which are discussed in Sections [1.3.2.1](#page-18-0) and [1.3.2.2,](#page-27-1) respectively.

1.3.1 Objective Decomposition Process

As documented in the Moon to Mars Strategy, the broad top-level objectives of the Moon to Mars campaign have been identified with the help of stakeholders. These objectives establish desired results for NASA's exploration activities, with each objective defining a desired outcome of the Moon to Mars Architecture. Objectives were purposely drafted to be agnostic with respect to implementation, and thus do not specify architectural or operational solutions. Rather, they provide the goals to facilitate the development of an architecture and the means to measure progress.

To facilitate the objective decomposition process, several terms are defined as follows:

Table 1-1. Key Architecture Process Terms and Definitions

² Definition from NASA System Engineering Handbook. [SP-20170001761.](https://ntrs.nasa.gov/citations/20170001761)

The process that NASA will apply to define the exploration architecture, described in [Figure 1-2,](#page-15-0) is rooted in the defined set of top-level objectives within the Moon to Mars Strategy. The process includes a series of discrete steps, each of which results in the progressive definition of needs with reduced abstraction in the architecture and increasing fidelity.

Figure 1-3. Notional Example Mapping of an Objective to Characteristics and Needs

The first step in this process is to define the characteristics and needs required to satisfy an objective or a group of objectives. While the objectives themselves focus on desired outcomes, the characteristics and needs translate those outcomes into the features or products of the exploration architecture necessary to produce those outcomes. Characteristics and needs are defined in a form that is still neutral regarding architectural implementation, not specifying a particular solution to produce the desired results, but rather focusing on what the architecture produces or accomplishes. This step of the process is critical for converting generalized objectives into actionable exploration activities. Goal owners and stakeholders who are familiar with and helped to define the Moon to Mars Strategy's top-level objectives contribute to the definition of the characteristics and needs, adding the detail needed to define the features and products. [Figure 1-3](#page-15-1) shows a partial and notional example of how one representative objective could be decomposed into a set of characteristics and needs.

Figure 1-4. Notional Example Mapping of Characteristics and Needs to Functions and Use Cases

Once the characteristics and needs are defined, the next step in the process is to translate those statements into a more specific definition of implementable functions and use cases. This step adds further definition to the architectural needs and begins to define actionable features that could be included in the exploration architecture. Functions are the services or actions that the exploration architecture would have to produce to provide the desired characteristics and needs. Use cases describe how those functions are operationally employed to produce the desired characteristics and needs. Architecture teams formally decompose the characteristics and needs into functions and use cases, working with stakeholders to ensure that the defined functions and use cases would result in the desired outcomes.

In the last step in the decomposition process, the defined use cases and functions are organized to group similar features into representative reference missions, concepts of operations, and reference elements. Architecture teams, through trade studies and assessments, develop reference elements that can most effectively provide a subset, or group, of the desired functions within defined constraints. Similarly, teams develop reference missions and concepts of operations that employ those elements to fulfill the defined use cases. This step in the process is the first phase in the development of architectural solutions; it demonstrates the viability of the reference elements, reference missions, and concepts of operations in delivering the defined functions and use cases, providing the desired characteristics and needs, and satisfying the blueprint objectives.

[Figure 1-4](#page-16-0) shows an example of how the notional characteristics and needs could be further decomposed into notional functions and use cases. The decomposition of blueprint objectives is provided in Appendix A and will continue to be refined during future process cycles.

The definitions of reference missions, concepts of operations, and system requirements can be traced from the use cases and functions. The allocated use cases and functions will be used throughout the program or project formulation process to address feasibility, definition, and scope. Programmatic assessments will identify the existence of feasible solutions to meet the assigned functions and use cases as requirements are instantiated. If adjustments are needed in formulation, functions/use cases may be descoped for allocation to a different system later in the

architecture process. During design and development, assessments will be conducted to ensure the system is achieving the expected architectural functions or adjustments are made as needed. Groupings and definitions may change as designs progress and/or are better understood; however, the mapping of objectives to reference missions, concepts of operations, and systems should be continually revisited to ensure objective satisfaction as intended.

1.3.2 Architecture Framework

Given the scale of the Moon to Mars Architecture, it is necessary to establish a framework for partitioning the effort into portions that are executable by NASA and its partners. Instituting a systems engineering process that empowers incremental advancements and the ability to infuse innovations in technologies and solutions provides the opportunity for economic benefit and the incorporation of partnerships while ensuring that objectives are systematically accomplished. In a typical systems engineering process, the architecture would be fully established up front, the requirements and concept of operations would be defined, and the programs would begin execution. This traditional method, if applied to the scale of Moon to Mars Architecture, would therefore have to "pick" the mission profile, technologies, and development schedule for an enormous number of projects up front and would be biased toward mature solutions and capabilities that exist today. This traditional "single pass through" architecture definition has been attempted for Moon and Mars systems many times in the past with limited success, as discussed in the Moon to Mars Strategy document.

To contend with this architecture breadth, NASA established an iterative framework process using two types of integration categories. The first type is to group tightly coupled systems, needs, and capabilities that function together to accomplish objectives as sub-architectures, similar to a system-to-sub-system relationship. More detail on the sub-architectures can be found in [Table](#page-19-0) [1-2.](#page-19-0)

The second type is to establish segments defined as a portion of the architecture, identified by one or more notional missions or integrated use cases, illustrating the interaction, relationships, and connections of the sub-architectures through progressively increasing operational complexity and objective satisfaction. The specific segments are discussed in Section [2.6.1](#page-60-1) and [Table 3-1.](#page-91-0) Segments reflect the integration reference missions established to ensure elements can function together. Actual missions and segments operations may overlap; it is not necessary to complete one mission or segment before functions and projects in the next begin operations. Together, these provide horizontal (sub-architecture) and vertical (segment) integration to provide traceability in the Moon to Mars Architecture definition as illustrated in [Figure 1.](#page-18-1)

Illustration of the Moon to Mars Architecture Framework (+ denotes increased functional performance)

Figure 1-5. Illustration of the Moon to Mars Architecture Framework

In the Architecture Framework, the sub-architectures and segments will be used to ensure coherence in the elements, which may include various programs, projects, or systems, as represented by the lettered and numbered boxes. These programs and projects will be expanded or added to over time, plus additional elements with which they will need to interface within a subarchitecture. Segments will describe the relationship and cooperation across these elements. As systems mature, functions may be added or reassigned to reflect capabilities or implementations through the design or evolution of systems.

1.3.2.1 Sub-Architecture Definitions

The use of sub-architectures addresses the complexity of programs, projects, systems, and operations that span multiple sources or elements but must interact in a tightly coupled manner. By sub-dividing the architecture, functions and use cases can be assessed for consistency, gaps, or improvements. These sub-architectures will then evolve through the ADD iterations as functions and use cases are assigned to associated elements and systems to facilitate increasing capabilities toward the accomplishment of objectives. As shown in [Figure 1Figure 1-5.](#page-18-1) Illustration [of the Moon to Mars Architecture Framework,](#page-18-1) sub-architectures will add elements and systems through the progression of segments to achieve the associated characteristics and needs. These sub-architectures can facilitate and identify the areas where common standards and interoperability of associated elements are beneficial to ensure consistency in functions and allocations. Once identified, architecture-level interconnections can also be included in respective sub-architectures (e.g., Data Systems and Management) to ensure interoperability and application of common standards.

The initial set of identified sub-architectures reflects the current state of program and project development and current integration challenges. While the sub-architectures are defined independently, they will have interfaces and dependencies with other sub-architectures and will all work together to perform utilization activities supported by the architecture. The current subarchitectures will be refined and new sub-architectures will be identified during future ACR cycles. [Table 1-2](#page-19-0) identifies and provides rationale for the initial sub-architectures.

1.3.2.1.1 Communication and Positioning, Navigation, and Timing Systems

The Communication and Positioning, Navigation, and Timing (C&PNT) sub-architecture is a group of services that enable the transmission and reception of end-to-end data flows such as commands, telemetry, video, files, and voice across all elements and provides all missions with the ability to accurately and precisely determine location and orientation, the capability to determine current and desired position, and the ability to acquire and maintain accurate and precise time from a coordinated lunar time standard that is traceable to Earth's Coordinated Universal Time (UTC). The regions in which service is available, the delivery mechanisms for those services to those areas, and the evolution of each aspect throughout the lifetime of the architecture are all key factors that will affect C&PNT implementation. Another key consideration for a strong foundation is maximizing the interoperability of C&PNT assets throughout an evolving architecture with many different providers and users (e.g., government, commercial, scientific, international). As the architecture evolves, the C&PNT sub-architecture and concept of operations will scale based on the developing user needs and will evolve by collecting ground truth data as the campaign progresses. Services may expand (for example, with high-throughput optical links), and service regions may expand to include larger volumes of data on the South Pole and Far Side. Position, navigation, and timing services may expand to more Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS)–like capabilities by providing services on a global or regional basis. Accurate position, velocity, and time knowledge are essential for applications like safe navigation, tracking, surveying, geolocation-based services, and precision temporal and spatial science. The evolution of lunar communications and navigation capabilities will close knowledge gaps to enable NASA and its partners to develop communications and navigation capabilities and concepts of operations for Mars missions.

1.3.2.1.2 Data Systems and Management

The Data Systems and Management (DS&M) sub-architecture includes capabilities that work together to move, manage, secure, and protect data within acceptable latency constraints for use throughout the architecture. This sub-architecture is tightly coupled with the C&PNT, Human Systems, and Autonomous Systems and Robotics sub-architectures to ensure data is shared and made useful across the architecture. Future capabilities may include data fusion, internet of things (IoT), cloud computing, and servers. The implementation of this sub-architecture spans Earth systems, space, and planetary surfaces. Not all capabilities are expected to reside in-situ; each domain will include a mixture of assets.

Data systems and management play a pivotal role in modern information-driven landscapes. This area encompasses the intricate framework of tools, models, processes, representations, and technologies designed to capture, store, process, and retrieve data efficiently and securely. From small-scale payloads to large, complex mission sequences, effective data management across the Moon to Mars Architecture ensures that valuable insights can be derived from raw data, driving informed decision making and providing broad access as allowed.

The DS&M sub-architecture provides architecture definition for logical and conceptual data models using element-level physical data specifications. This data architecture includes analysis of relationships among elements to ensure robustness throughout the evolution of NASA missions. These systems can consist of databases, their management systems, data warehouses, and data lakes that collectively organize and maintain data integrity. With the advent of big data, cloud computing, and advanced analytics, modern data systems not only handle structured information, but also embrace unstructured and semi-structured data formats. A robust data management strategy considers data availability, quality, interoperability, security, privacy, compliance policy, and access to ensure that we can harness the full potential of the expansive amount of lunar data, fostering innovation across the architecture. The architecture considers cybersecurity as a key aspect of the design given the many government, commercial, and international elements that are part of a common architecture. Given the diversity of these interfaces, cybersecurity architecture design is critical in minimizing impacts from threats of these various elements and works to reduce overall risk to the system.

1.3.2.1.3 Habitation Systems

The Habitation sub-architecture is a group of capabilities that provide controlled environments to ensure crew health and performance over the course of missions. This functionality extends across multiple applications throughout the architecture and is tailored to suit the location and environment (e.g., deep space, lunar surface, Martian surface). Common habitation functions include environmental control and life support (ECLS), thermal control, extravehicular activity (EVA) support (e.g., ingress/egress, suit services, worksite accommodations), crew habitability (e.g., hygiene, food and nutrition, waste management, sleep, crew exercise), crew health (e.g., health and medical care, human performance, psychological support), and crew survival (e.g., pressurized suits, safe haven), among others. These functions may scale in size and complexity based upon crew size, mission duration, operational environment, and the ability to share functionality through interfaces with other elements (e.g., consumables and power transfer). As such, the volume and structure supporting habitation can vary drastically and potentially include modular, connected, pressurized volumes of various materials (e.g., inflatable soft goods, metallic structure, in-situ constructed elements). While crew size and mission duration are primary factors in scaling the appropriate habitable volumes, other factors such as gravity environment, crew tasks, and required motions (e.g., supportability of on-board equipment; accommodation of science and technology utilization; and logistical stowage and resupply that require controlled, pressurized environments) also factor into overall volume. Some key trades to help scope such

habitation elements include EVA ingress/egress methods, logistics resupply needs, and use of regenerable ECLS systems (ECLSS). To maximize the availability of crew time to perform science and technology utilization activities and to maintain nominal operation in each operational environment while uncrewed, habitation elements must use system autonomy (e.g., vehicle/element control and operation, including planning/scheduling/execution and fault management; identification/recovery; robotic assistance) while also enabling crew control (i.e., manual operations, software override) for critical functions and troubleshooting during unforeseen contingencies.

1.3.2.1.4 Human Systems

The Human Systems sub-architecture covers the collective capabilities of the flight crew, ground/mission teams, mission systems, and enabling architecture required to develop and execute safe and successful crewed and uncrewed missions that are not covered by subarchitectures like Habitation Systems, Mobility Systems, Logistics Systems, and others. However, the Human Systems sub-architecture is tightly coupled with all the other sub-architectures. Human Systems is unique from the other hardware sub-architectures; it significantly expands exploration beyond uncrewed mission capabilities. These systems ensure the safety and success of the mission and the well-being of the crew. They require a multidisciplinary approach, involving expertise in engineering, medicine, space science, human factors, safety and mission assurance, and operations. These systems are crucial for monitoring and maintaining crew health, enabling crew to accomplish the jobs required across the architecture, supporting the crew's physical and mental performance, and keeping the crew safe and comfortable during the mission.

The humans who embark on the exploration missions are the most critical component of the campaign to get humans to the Moon and, ultimately, to Mars. Vehicles, systems, training, and operations must be designed around the "human system." The success of ambitious lunar and Mars crewed missions will largely be determined by the degree to which the human system is strategically considered and integrated into the architecture. The architecture and implementation should allow the crew to move and operate seamlessly across elements to execute the mission. The Artemis Flight Control Team, consisting of the Mission Control Center – Houston (MCC-H) and other NASA/partner control centers, will monitor and control the crewed and uncrewed Artemis elements. This distributed operations model leverages decades of experience from International Space Station collaboration with international and commercial partners while advancing partner roles for Artemis. Standards for human-rated systems, design and construction, safety and mission assurance, crew health and performance, flight operations, crew and ground personnel training and certification, and system interoperability are necessary to conduct safe and successful missions. Mars missions will require NASA and its partners to fill key knowledge gaps and establish standards related to human performance after extended deconditioning beyond the International Space Station 6-to-12-month mission timeframe, with crew-Earth communication delays beyond a few seconds, and/or with total Earth autonomy for up to two weeks. Human capabilities and limitations within the context of mission-induced environments will drive the enabling architecture for element robustness, integrated capabilities, interoperable/consistent interfaces, human system integration, and crew health and performance.

1.3.2.1.5 Infrastructure Support

The Infrastructure Support sub-architecture describes the infrastructure associated with the operations of the Moon to Mars endeavor across the Earth (ground), in space, and in extraterrestrial surface domains. Several of the sub-architectures will have facilities, systems, equipment, and services in these domains that require supporting infrastructure. For example, ground processing of spaceflight elements and logistics items supports the transportation subarchitecture. Other examples include landing and recovery infrastructure on the ground for returning transportation vehicles and curation facilities for samples returned from the Moon and Mars. An in-space example is landers that require adapters to transfer stages. Surface examples include equipment needed for handling, accessing, and transferring dry goods and fluid commodities and common and portable lighting support equipment, both of which are likely to be shared across sub-architectures. Surface examples may also include prepared regolith surfaces or structures to minimize lofted dust, facilitate transfer of materials, and maximize crew mobility.

1.3.2.1.6 In-Situ Resource Utilization (ISRU) Systems

In-situ resource utilization (ISRU) is the concept of locating, mapping, and estimating extraterrestrial resource reserves and extracting and processing these local resources to generate products instead of delivering the products from Earth. As humans stay longer and go farther into space and the focus turns to more sustainable commercial operations and Earth independence, missions will incorporate ISRU practices. ISRU starts with identifying, characterizing, and mapping the resources at potential sites of exploration. ISRU identifies products that can significantly reduce mission cost and risk or enable new mission options, such as utilizing local resources (both natural resources, such as regolith, water, atmosphere, etc., as well as crew trash, waste, discarded hardware, etc.) to produce water, propellant, and other supplies, and capabilities to excavate and construct structures on an extraterrestrial body. ISRU pathways include commercial-scale water, oxygen, and metals; consumables for humans and food production; feedstock for construction, manufacturing, and energy; and commodities for reusable in-space and surface transportation and depots.

For successful implementation, ISRU systems and capabilities must obtain products and services from other lunar systems and infrastructure, and ISRU systems and operations require customers/users to utilize the products/commodities they produce. Lunar support services and infrastructure for ISRU systems include material transfer and asset movement between ISRU resource extraction, processing, waste tailing, product storage sites, handling and manipulation of resources and bulk regolith, local navigational aids, communications to/from and within ISRU operational sites, power transmission and management, crew and robotic logistics management, maintenance, and repair capabilities, and construction of roads and infrastructure to/from and on the ISRU operation sites. To achieve the full benefits of using in-situ derived products and to meet the intent of Moon to Mars Objective OP-11, customer/users need to design their systems and concepts of operation around the availability and location of these products and how they can be provided. To minimize the risk to the Artemis campaign and ISRU product customers, NASA and its partners must plan a transition of Earth-delivered to ISRU-derived products, along with adequate resource mapping and demonstration of the ISRU processes and product quality.

1.3.2.1.7 Logistics Systems

The Logistics Systems sub-architecture includes the systems and capabilities needed for packaging, handling, staging, and transferring logistics goods, including equipment, materials, supplies, and consumables needed to support use cases and meet architecture functional needs. This sub-architecture also includes approaches and capabilities for addressing trash and waste management. During the initial part of the campaign, the capability for logistics goods and consumables will be limited to those that arrive with the crew. As time advances, additional functions are introduced into the architecture. The logistics needs will broaden as the subarchitectures mature. Over time, the architecture will require solutions for increasing Mars mission duration. The need to deliver elements, payloads, cargo, experiments, and larger quantities of logistics and to better address inventory management, trash, and waste disposal functions necessary to support the missions and meet planetary protection requirements will increase. As the sub-architecture matures, the capabilities can continue to grow to take advantage of increased automation and/or in-situ resource sourcing of logistics to support increased mission durations.

1.3.2.1.8 Mobility Systems

The Mobility Systems sub-architecture is a group of capabilities and functions that enable the mobility of crew and/or cargo on and around the destination, including EVA systems. This subarchitecture extends the range of exploration and external operations in support of science. It spans robotic and crewed systems with both pressurized and unpressurized capabilities. Mobility systems will likely need to interface with other sub-architecture capabilities like power, C&PNT, habitation, and logistics to accomplish the desired outcomes.

1.3.2.1.9 Power Systems

The Power Systems sub-architecture is a group of capabilities that support the function of providing electrical energy to architectural elements. These capabilities include components and hardware for power generation (e.g., solar arrays, fission surface power [FSP]), power distribution (e.g., electrical cables, induction), and energy storage (e.g., batteries, regenerative fuel cells). A primary aspect of the power sub-architecture is interoperability, including standardized power interfaces (either hard or inductive connections) and compatible power quality standards. The power sub-architecture will include the coordination of missions where elements are expected to provide their own power with the development of energy infrastructure to support future needs.

1.3.2.1.10 Autonomous Systems and Robotics Systems

The Autonomous Systems and Robotics (AS&R) sub-architecture aims to integrate the unique and complementary capabilities of humans and robotic systems to maximize the crew's efficiency, provide needed capabilities during uncrewed mission phases, and expand the range of possible exploration, science, and utilization activities across the architecture. Robots are not only well suited to tedious, highly repetitive, or hazardous tasks, but can also augment the abilities of human explorers through tailored suites of instruments or capabilities. This assistance enables the crew to focus on higher-priority activities while at the destination and improves safety without sacrificing operational effectiveness or mission reach. Robotics capable of efficient and effective mobility and manipulation improve remote access to areas of scientific interest; asset handling, repositioning, and utilization; logistics management; and infrastructure assembly, outfitting, and maintenance during crewed operations (and enable them in the absence of crew) and robotic reconnaissance (e.g., scouting, surveying, mapping, collecting samples). During both crewed and uncrewed periods, robotic operations will be performed remotely via teleoperations of robotic systems or with increasing levels of autonomy, requiring minimal human interaction. The AS&R sub-architecture includes capabilities and systems that can 1) assist the crew (working in tandem or collaboratively with them), 2) perform operations at a distance from crew under their control or supervision, 3) operate remotely in the absence of crew, and 4) perform tasks in parallel to crew independent of crew timelines and requiring no oversight or intervention by the crew. The subarchitecture also includes support systems and equipment on Earth, such as simulations, planning and scheduling tools, and ground analog test beds. The sub-architecture spans the Earth (ground), cislunar space, and lunar surface environments, and eventually includes Mars.

1.3.2.1.11Transportation Systems

The Transportation sub-architecture is the collection of capabilities that provide the transportation functions for all phases of the Moon and Mars missions for both crew and cargo, including in space; entry, descent, and landing (EDL); and ascent for all Earth, Moon, and Mars phases. The transportation systems will need to interface with or be incorporated into a variety of systems and payloads, including habitation and other human support systems, as well as refueling or recharging systems, all in diverse environments, including in-space and surface conditions. Initial lunar segments will include transportation capabilities for the transit of crew and cargo to cislunar space, the landing of crew and cargo on the surface, ascent of crew and limited cargo to cislunar

space, and return to Earth. As the architecture expands toward Mars, the transportation subarchitecture will evolve to include Mars transit, EDL, and ascent systems for cargo and crew.

Figure 1-6. Visualization of Utilization Areas

The Moon to Mars Strategy document³ defines *utilization* as the "use of the platform, campaign and/or mission to conduct science, research, test and evaluation, public outreach, education, and industrialization." In this document, the term *utilization* is used generically to encompass all areas of utilization; specific terms, such as "science or technology demonstration," are used where the meaning is more specific. The Utilization Systems sub-architecture is a group of capabilities whose primary function is to accomplish these science, technology, and other activities, including sample and utilization cargo return to Earth. In this sense, the Moon to Mars Architecture provides a platform of functions to a broad set of organizations in support of their needs. Inherent in the Moon to Mars Architecture is that all the sub-architectures ultimately support utilization; utilization systems will levy functions and use cases on all other sub-architectures. The major utilization areas of emphasis for the Moon to Mars Architecture are depicted in [Figure 1-6](#page-26-0).

Utilization is achieved through not just the capabilities in the Utilization Systems sub-architecture, but the entire architecture. For instance, a technology may be demonstrated under the umbrella of utilization on one mission and, through technology maturation, provide essential services as part of the exploration platform on subsequent missions. Similarly, some items may serve multiple functions (e.g., multi-purpose cameras used for both science and operations, equipment shared between human research and medical operations). However, systems whose primary purpose is to achieve utilization, and not just enable the mission, will be included in the utilization subarchitecture.

1.3.2.1.13Future Sub-Architecture Development

As the focus of the Architecture Framework is to establish the process for recurrent architecture definition and refinement, the sub-architectures will continue to evolve. The current subarchitectures were initially established based on knowledge gained from driving system

³ NASA's Moon to Mars Strategy and Objectives Development, [NP-2023-03-3115-HQ.](https://www.nasa.gov/sites/default/files/atoms/files/m2m_strategy_and_objectives_development.pdf)

requirements and included updates based on the revised use cases and functions. Future revisions will likely include additional sub-architectures.

1.3.2.2 Campaign Segment Definition

Segments capture the interaction, relationships, and connections of the sub-architectures at a specific phase. These would most commonly be typified by reference missions or operations use cases of the systems to illustrate how systems will work together to satisfy objectives. These examples provide the context for the allocation of functions to elements and systems in the subarchitectures, rather than prescriptive solutions. These segments will grow increasingly complex as systems are developed and added to the sub-architectures. The segments are crafted in a manner such that the knowledge gathered earlier in the campaign informs implementation later in the campaign. The segments integrate the exploration, utilization, and sustained development of the Moon, with preparation for the exploration of Mars. The segments integrate needs and capabilities over time but are not a defined launch manifest, as systems from a later segment may begin to appear as available. Further, in representing the context of the sub-architecture interactions, segments do not limit the types of missions that may be designed and flown. As systems are built, novel operations and uses are expected.

The segments, described in detail in Section 3, reflect the current Moon to Mars effort and provide open opportunities to refine and include use cases in the architecture as systems and technologies mature. The segments and their content will evolve through the annual ACR cycles to reflect the inputs, capabilities, and needs identified across the partners to achieve the Moon to Mars Strategy.

1.3.3 Architecture Definition Process

Having established the necessary components to decompose objectives ("architecting from the right") and the framework to correlate the systems ("executing from the left"), the process by which these components and systems will be integrated remains. NASA and its partners established the process to enable an iterative allocation to programs and projects and infusion of solutions, technologies, and capabilities that emerge over time to address the strategy objectives. This process is managed by NASA's ESDMD through the coordination of Strategic Analysis Cycles (SAC). These cycles will occur annually to prioritize the work and studies needed to address open questions, identify potential architectural drivers to buy down mission risk, coordinate with partners, and identify and resolve gaps in the architecture. The cycles will conclude with study findings and/or updates and iteration to the ADD and supporting products, which are reviewed at the annual ACR.

These iterative cycles will need to both enable the definition of new elements or systems as they are added to the architecture by defining the allocated functions and needs and update and modify the architecture as existing elements and programs mature. The SAC process will also need to include assessments or studies of how emerging technologies or new solutions, whether from within NASA or from partners, could address architecture needs or modify the future segments. This complex analysis process will reflect a diversity of viewpoints, perspectives, and ideas from stakeholders and partners.

Figure 1-7. Illustration of the Architecture Definition Process

Iterative Architecture Process Step

 $5 \mid$ SAC trades and analysis identify element solutions or definition of new program/projects, including sub-architecture allocation and/or alignment

6 Definition of next segment and included elements begins

7 Repeat

[Figure 1](#page-28-0) shows the architecture definition process, which reflects the intersection of the architect from the right and execute from the left principles outlined in the Moon to Mars Strategy. Examples and representative systems using known sub-architectures, segments (discussed further in Section 3), and elements are used to illustrate this iterative process. This process reflects the reality the systems, functions, and needs of the most immediate segments are known and that significantly fewer allocations are made as the segments process to the right. Systems reflected in the current programs and projects are already executing their development and, in some cases, have conducted their first flights, such as the Space Launch System and Orion. Modifications to these existing systems should be limited or carefully traded in future segments. The SAC process will need to consider the programmatic trades in any allocation, whether existing or new systems are used, for cost, schedule, technical, and risk factors. The process steps are highlighted in [Figure 1](#page-28-0) are outlined in Table 1-3. [Iterative Architecture Process Steps.](#page-28-1)

The SAC trade studies will continue to evaluate concepts and analysis to identify possible solutions to address unallocated functions and potential alternatives. Coordination with both internal NASA partners and external partner communities will be a key enabler to identify solutions that can most effectively satisfy objectives. Inputs of technological advancements, alternate concepts, and other innovations can be assessed for satisfaction to meet the integrated architecture needs during the SACs. These assessments will mature and refine allocations in partnership with the executing element or partner leadership to ensure traceability from the use cases and functions into the requirements and concepts of operations that formally establish the design process for execution. The SAC process will also consider technology advancements, alternative solutions, and different concepts to identify efficiencies or priorities for development in future segments. As program execution matures and actual missions are flown, the architecture will account for realized system performance and science discovery. These efforts will inform how future systems and elements are instantiated and developed as systems mature.

2.0 ARCHITECTURE DECOMPOSITION

A similar systems engineering process to the one applied at the strategic level in Section [1.0](#page-10-0) can be used as a framework for the architecture by addressing the six key questions: Who, What, Where, When, How, and Why? [\(Figure 2-1.](#page-30-1)) Different stakeholders may find the answers to some of these questions more compelling than others: for example, engineers tend to focus on "How?," whereas technology developers may be more interested in "When?"; partners want to know "Who?," and scientists may be keen to discuss "Where?" and "What?" To reach consensus and move forward, an exploration architecture must address all six questions, but reiteration and negotiation may be required. The answer to any one question is less important than ensuring that the answers to all six fit together as an integrated whole.

Figure 2-1. Elements of a Compelling Architecture Story

2.1 EXPLORATION STRATEGY: "WHY EXPLORE?"

Figure 2-2. Three Pillars of Exploration from NASA's Moon to Mars Strategy and Objectives Development Document⁴

Systems engineering is predicated on the motivation, which is the fundamental goal. Why do this? For the blueprint vision and Moon to Mars endeavor, along with its goals, objectives, and subsequent architectural wireframe, the question is: Why send humans into space? Creating a blueprint for sustained human presence and exploration throughout the solar system provides a value proposition for humanity that is rooted across three balanced pillars: science, inspiration, and national posture. Each pillar contains both unique and intersecting stakeholder values that together form the value proposition for the blueprint vision, starting with the Moon to Mars endeavor (shown in [Figure 2-2\)](#page-31-1). While different individuals identify with different values, it is NASA's responsibility as a steward of taxpayer dollars to consider the entire landscape of motivating factors that underscore our society's answer to Why Go? Uniquely, by balancing all the factors, NASA positions the Moon to Mars strategy for longevity and success: it is not subject to whims or leadership overhauls. Instead, it is rooted deeply in a broadly relevant, largely unchanging value system. So, Why Go? These combined and intersecting three pillars, as illustrated in [Figure 2-2,](#page-31-1) are why humans go into space.

⁴ NASA's Moon to Mars Strategy and Objectives Development, [NP-2023-03-3115-HQ.](https://www.nasa.gov/sites/default/files/atoms/files/m2m_strategy_and_objectives_development.pdf)

2.1.1 Science

The pursuit of scientific knowledge—exploring and understanding the universe—is integral to the human space exploration endeavor. Just as the James Webb Space Telescope informs us about the history of time, answers gained on the Moon and Mars will build knowledge about the formation and evolution of the solar system and, more specifically, the Earth. From geology to solar, biological, and fundamental physics phenomena, exploration teaches us about the earliest solar system environment: whether and how the bombardments of nascent worlds influenced the emergence of life, how the Earth and Moon formed and evolved, and how volatiles (e.g., water) and other potential resources were distributed and transported throughout the solar system. Space exploration teaches us about human and plant physiology in extreme environments, how to mitigate engineering and health risks, and how to perform complex operations in harsh planetary environments. Space provides a unique vantage point to amplify learning on Earth. Biological and physical systems can be observed in partial gravity, bringing out second- and thirdorder effects that are otherwise overwhelmed in the gravity environment. The history of our Sun is preserved in lunar soil, examination of which enables solar activity predictions and space weather forecasts, which in turn support lunar and Martian exploration. Specific frequency ranges available for use only in space (because of interference by other Earth-based signals or the atmosphere) allow us to probe the universe's deepest space and time. While remote sensing is a great aid, robotic and human engagement with and visitation of other bodies in the solar system ultimately reap more data more effectively.

2.1.2 National Posture

By its very nature, achieving a vision of space exploration establishes national strength in science and technology innovation and competitiveness, which supports economic growth and global position. Hard technology problems solved in space have far-reaching implications for other Earth-based challenges and industries, and in many cases, spin off their own disciplines. For example, the term "software engineering" was crafted for the development of the guidance and navigation systems on Apollo spacecraft. Food safety standards and telemedicine likewise originated with NASA's effort to enable longer-duration human space flight. NASA technology, spin-offs, and investments fuel growth in American industry and support quality, high-paying jobs across the country. Specifically, NASA's contracts and partnership with domestic commercial space resulted in \$15 billion in private investments in space start-up companies in a single year, most of which were with United States companies. Commercial space activity impacts other industries, such as agriculture, maritime, energy, and homeland security, producing ripple effects throughout the economy. Additionally, because there are no geographic bounds in space, exploration lends itself to international partnerships to achieve feats that might not otherwise be possible. Bolstering international partnerships, economic competitiveness, and global influence likewise reinforces national security interests.

2.1.3 Inspiration

The "Moonshots" of the Apollo Program became a metaphor for how we as a nation could take on an audacious challenge and succeed through hard work and determination. The "Moonshot" metaphor has since been applied to seemingly insurmountable challenges, from curing cancer to developing fusion power. Apollo inspired a new generation of engineers and scientists to pursue education and careers supporting visionary work. The International Space Station and other space partnerships model how people from many nations can live and work together toward a common purpose. The next steps in space exploration can likewise inspire a new generation the Artemis Generation — in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics studies that support the great enterprises of voyaging into space and overcoming the most difficult challenges on Earth.

2.2 LUNAR ARCHITECTURE STRATEGIC ASSESSMENTS

The effort to return humans to the Moon has been addressed at a strategic level first by answering the "Why," as documented in NASA's Moon to Mars Strategy and Objectives Development document. This strategic plan ensures that the lunar architecture must consider a range of stakeholder needs, including the long-term goal of enabling Mars and other deep space exploration. Definition of the architecture and the methodology to achieve it is fundamental to the leadership needs reflected in the "Why." By implementing an architecture that can respond to innovation and developments and includes partners, the endeavor will enable benefits reflected in terms of both the economy and the human condition. Working from both the blueprint objectives and the array of available Mars studies, NASA has derived several key characteristics of the lunar architecture. Throughout all of these decisions, the Responsible Use (RT-6) Tenet is applied to ensure consistent application of policy, legal, and ethical frameworks. Areas of uncertainty about how policy or standards should be applied to the objectives or architecture are elevated to agency leadership for resolution.

Figure 2-3. Lunar Architecture Decision Flow Starting with "Why?"

As illustrated in [Figure 2-3,](#page-33-1) answering the "Why" for lunar exploration is only the first step in the decision process. Answering (or exploring the option space for) other big architecture questions ("Where," "What," "Who," "How," and "When") helps define the key characteristics of the lunar exploration campaign.

There are other questions that will be answered while developing programmatic solutions for architecture implementation, including "how much?," "how safe?," etc., that take the form of constraints as conditions to be met. These constraints inform an iterative design loop driven by the set of stakeholder expectations where an architecture, the associated concepts of operations,

and the derived requirements and design solutions are developed and programmatic constraints such as cost and schedule are applied. The associated implementing organization works this iterative loop (sometimes referred to as "closure"), which is informed by the architecture in this document.

2.2.1 Key Lunar Decision Drivers

2.2.1.1 "What" Foundational Capabilities are Needed?

As decomposition of the objectives — captured in the Strategy and Objectives document indicates, several technological, scientific, or human condition insights are needed to inform Mars architectural decisions. These multi-dimensional objectives across the science, technology, and infrastructure development goals will need to be supported by foundational platforms from which the crew will operate. These systems will enable the crew to retrieve and return samples, deploy instrumentation or technology demonstration, research in-situ resource utilization, understand the human condition in long-term deep space exploration, and much more. The ability to support these activities and the decomposition of the capabilities needed to accomplish science and infrastructure objectives will be key characteristics for cislunar and surface destination systems. Common across all architectural studies to date is the need to provide demonstration and test environments across dynamic space weather conditions, deep space microgravity, partial gravity, and the transitions between them. These environmental drivers must be paired with increasing operational durations to establish sufficient design, engineering, and demonstration drivers in the architectural approach.

From these assessments, two key destination systems and the ability to transition between them are derived as platforms for this development. First is the ability to stage long-duration microgravity systems in deep space or near–deep space–equivalent environmental conditions that analogues to the transit conditions to and from Mars. This platform will necessarily need to accommodate a human crew and function with reductions in the crew-managed reliability, maintenance, and ground intervention associated with near-Earth systems (RT-5 Maintainability and Reuse). Other characteristics beneficial for any microgravity platform include the ability to aggregate elements autonomously and to support incremental build-up to prepare for the eventual accumulation of systems necessary for Mars transit.

Second, the destination platform must provide human systems deployment and aggregation in partial gravity with what can be considered "hostile" atmospheric conditions (in the case of Mars) or no atmospheric environment (in the case of the Moon). This surface platform as an aggregation of elements will also provide the opportunity to demonstrate the necessary components for achieving Mars-forward systems for human-conducted surface exploration. These systems will need to support increasingly long crewed exploration periods and be expandable to accommodate the breadth of the objectives laid out towards the Mars goal.

The architectural approach will also leverage available low Earth orbit (LEO) assets and infrastructure to accomplish lunar and Mars objectives. In this regard, exercising objective capabilities at the lowest energy state (whereas performance demand can be considered proportional to the resources and/or programmatic needs) will be applied throughout (RT-8 Leverage Low Earth Orbit).

2.2.1.2 "Where" Should the Systems Be?

From the definition of the "What," it is necessary to support the architectural approach in the microgravity and surface platforms; "Where," in relation to the Moon, became the next systems engineering driver. To ensure the platforms' support of long-term objectives and the balancedsystems approach of the "Why," NASA and other organizations have conducted numerous studies of lunar system locations. The primary consideration of "Where" is to ensure surface access to and optimization for the lunar South Pole; however, this approach ensures access to non-polar locations as well.

The lunar South Pole has several key driving characteristics to enable systems development for the Moon to Mars Architecture. First, from a flight performance perspective, the lunar South Pole provides a bounding condition for vehicle translation or delta-velocity costs. These performance drivers are one of the most significant conditions for transportation system design. Vehicles and reference missions designed to achieve landing at the South Pole can provide future flexibility to reach global locations through planning and certification. This approach differs from the Apollo vehicles and systems, which, when directed to reach the Moon at essentially the earliest possible time (answering the "When" question first), necessarily selected the "easiest" lunar landing sites on Earth-facing, near-equatorial regions and lacked the performance and systems capabilities for global and/or polar landings.

Second, lunar poles support multiple scientific and engineering values, and the South Pole provides more opportunity for these conditions in designing systems to ensure extensibility to other lunar locations and future Mars needs. One key enabling characteristic of the South Pole is the lighting conditions. At the lunar equator, solar illumination occurs in 14 days of continuous daylight and 14 days of continuous darkness (these are the lunar cycles we are so familiar with as viewed from Earth). However, at the South Pole, the Sun is seen very low on the horizon, as during the extreme summer nights at Earth's poles. Unlike Earth, the extreme terrain on the lunar South Pole provides significant variation, resulting in "peaks" of light that can provide lit conditions for much of the year and "valleys" of darkness that never see the Sun. These peaks or ridges along craters provide advantageous locations to stage systems for longer-duration operations. However, while advantageous for illumination, the peaks and ridges are more challenging for navigation and placement of elements. These factors must be considered in the architectural approach and element designs. This lighting environment will be an enabling feature of the polar region to represent Mars-forward precursor missions and aggregation of surface elements for longer-duration test and demonstration.

Finally, the lighting conditions in the South Pole region also contribute to unique scientific opportunities. Although the lunar surface was found to be void of volatiles, as they are stripped away by the solar wind, sites of permanent darkness in the polar regions could preserve volatiles collected throughout the Moon's past. This region is among the oldest parts of the Moon—older than any explored during Apollo. The volatiles, likely trapped as ice, could reveal valuable knowledge about the history of the inner solar system, including when life gained a foothold on Earth. Just as ancient ices hold scientific value, lunar samples from this area will increase our knowledge of the history of the Moon itself. These ices could also serve as valuable resources for use during future exploration. Finally, the peaks of light at the South Pole are an enabling characteristic to support extended durations of human-tended surface operations to provide the infrastructure capabilities for sustainable and lasting development and research.

The lunar South Pole environment results in several architectural drivers. The power and thermal systems to operate in environmental extremes, provide surface mobility, and allow the aggregation of infrastructure are possible at the lunar South Pole. Given the necessary development of platforms and systems at these locations over time, the application of interoperability and commonality will be a key enabling characteristic (RT-7). The ability to deploy, upgrade, and develop systems across the platforms will be critical to the evolution and continued operations of the integrated architecture. These reasons ensure that the South Pole is a significant feature in the Moon to Mars Architecture definition, while also maintaining and supporting the ability to visit diverse non-polar sites.
2.2.1.3 "How" Will We Get There and Return?

The driving surface of the South Pole destination for long-term infrastructure, the need for global periodic access, and the development of a long-duration cislunar platform inform the architectural driver of "How" to place the lunar microgravity staging operations. Based on a variety of studies and alternatives, the Lunar Architecture will use the near-rectilinear halo orbit (NRHO). This orbit meets several key needs, including the long-duration staging through minimal propellent demand for orbit maintenance, accessibility to the lunar South Pole and other global access on a frequent and recurring basis, and consistent access for crew and cargo to and from Earth while still providing near–deep space environmental conditions with near-continuous illumination and limited lunar albedo (i.e., reflectivity of light and heat) to the orbiting platform.

Having established the NRHO architectural orbit, the ability to transport crew, cargo, and support systems to and from the destinations can be decomposed. These systems are driven by the sizing performance splits across the architectural destinations to traverse the regions from Earth to cislunar space and to the surface. Crewed transportation systems will be driven by the need to launch, transport, and safely mitigate potential contingencies and risks in two key transportation regimes: first, crew accessibility to and from Earth to NRHO platforms, and second, to and from NRHO to the surface destinations to support either South Pole or non-polar mission selection. The crew transportation access, in conjunction with destination systems, will necessarily need to ensure the safety and responsive planning for crew return (RT-3) for potential contingency scenarios.

Transportation objectives are some of the earliest objectives in the architecture and most established systems, given that they are necessary first steps for the human return to the Moon, enabling subsequent objectives. These systems are developed with several key characteristics applied, including the ability to achieve missions with sufficient frequency and opportunity. With the scope of objectives and the tightly coupled architectural aggregation approach, the ability to ensure timely and consistent launch and mission opportunities is a key characteristic. In addition to crew transportation, systems will also need to support the launch and delivery of cargo across a range of masses and volumes to support the element aggregation, logistics, and maintainability across the architectural lifetime and destinations (RT-5 Maintainability and Reuse). Systems capable of reuse offer significant benefits, reducing the number of launches required and continuing to enable long-term objectives across the architecture. Given the significant considerations in transportation objectives, the ability to support docking, deployment, and disposal — with minimal crew intervention when necessary — will be key. Increased crew time to support routine operations, maintenance, and services would compromise crew time (RT-4) to achieve utilization and other objectives.

Although the largest and most recognizable transportation systems are those that carry the crew through space, the ability to support mobile operations on the lunar surface is a key characteristic of many of the blueprint objectives. Mobility systems on the lunar surface are necessary to enable the myriad objectives that must be accomplished at points across the surface that would be impractical to reach or inaccessible to crew traveling on foot from the landing location. The ability to transport crew members safely and efficiently between surface locations is essential for maximizing crew time (RT-4) applied to the utilization objectives. This capability is also necessary for future Mars exploration and is essential to the exploration plans to enable the crew to travel to increasingly far points from the landing sites, explore regions where landing is not feasible, and carry and transport samples or utilization payloads.

A robust, secure communication and position, navigation, and timing system will also be critical to these complex operations. The volume of data required to safely monitor, command, and control active vehicles, both crewed and uncrewed, will be a key characteristic of the integrated architecture. The number of systems in both cislunar and surface operations will also generate the need to handle multiple simultaneous streams of data and telemetry. Management of these systems and functions across the distributed architecture through interoperable and expandable systems will be a key characteristic to accomplish lunar objectives.

2.2.1.4 "When" Will We Achieve Lunar Objectives?

As the lunar campaign has already begun, the key characteristics to address the "When" question are more appropriately addressed as the time frequency, or "how often". Driving the systems to support an annual cadence of crewed lunar missions is a need that flows throughout the system development, from ground processing and launch facilities, to development and assembly timelines, to the assets necessary to support those missions. Turnaround and processing times will also be key characteristics for any system reuse driven by the transportation objectives. Further, the demand for logistics supply, repurposing, and disposal will be key considerations in the architecture's opportunity frequency. Logistics demand is a significant derived capability necessary to support increasing mission durations to accomplish the blueprint objectives at both cislunar and surface platforms. Periods between crew flights will drive characteristics for the assets to provide ongoing value and benefit during tele-robotic or autonomous operations.

This diverse suite of frequent crewed and uncrewed operations using permanent infrastructure, will provide significant opportunity for commercial and space development. The agency objectives can be addressed through a variety of approaches, innovations, and partners. One of the key recurring tenets applicable to addressing "When" is RT-9 Commerce and Space Development. NASA plans to foster the innovation among industry partners, expanding the economic sphere to the Moon, following the example of the commercial development of LEO. Creative solutions to meet multi-user needs, responsiveness to opportunities, and the shared support of lunar exploration across industry and partners will be necessary to keep the architecture durable and sustainable.

The planned campaign will spend several decades establishing permanent footholds in cislunar space and on the lunar surface, developing and deploying major human-rated transportation systems to the Moon and Mars, and developing and deploying lunar and Martian surface infrastructure to enable humans to live and explore once they arrive. The term "sustainable" can have different meanings, depending on the context. For the exploration campaign, several definitions apply. *Financial sustainability* is the ability to execute a program of work within spending levels that are realistic, managed effectively, and likely to be available. *Technical sustainability* requires that operations be conducted repeatedly at acceptable levels of risk. Proper management of the inherent risks of deep space exploration is the key to making those risks "acceptable." Finally, *policy sustainability* means that the program's financial and technical factors are supportive of long-term national interests, broadly and consistently, over time.

2.2.1.5 "Who" Does This Approach Include?

Having established all the component parts of the architecture, sizing for systems is designated to include up to four crew during an integrated mission. These crew members will thus be enabled to conduct the scientific, technological, and developmental objectives for which the human mind is most suited. Again, maximizing the time of the crew members to support these objectives is a recurring tenet (RT-4) in the architectural selection and decomposition. The ability to support four crew members provides the opportunity to assign various tasks ranging from piloting to utilization and operations. The crew operations will provide a gradual build-up approach to demonstrate the technologies and operations necessary to live and work on planetary surfaces and in extended deep space microgravity environments, including a safe return to Earth. Risk is inherent in any type of spaceflight, but it is an especially important consideration in the context of human

spaceflight. As one of the recurring tenets, RT-3 Crew Return is a key characteristic across all architectural domains. The application of risk management, fault tolerance, and integrated human-rating certification is necessary at the architectural level. Contingency capability, abort performance, and risk management are treated as an applied characteristic across the architecture.

The most critical components of the campaign to get humans to the Moon, and ultimately Mars, are the humans themselves. Vehicles, systems, training, and operations must be designed, developed, and certified to be safe and reliable for, compatible with, and in support of the "human system" as an integrated system to accomplish the mission with an acceptable level of human risk. Human-rating is the process of designing, evaluating, and ensuring that the total system can safely conduct the required human missions, as well as incorporating design features and capabilities that both accommodate human interaction with the system to enhance overall safety and mission success and enable safe recovery of the crew from hazardous situations. Humanrating applies standards for design and construction, safety and mission assurance, health and medical concerns, flight operations, and system interoperability. Human-rating is an integral part of all program activities throughout the life cycle of the system, including (but not limited to) design and development; test and verification; program management and control; flight readiness certification; mission operations; sustaining engineering; and maintenance, upgrades, disposal, and ground processing. NASA will lead/integrate the distributed team of government, commercial, and international partners that develop and implement hardware, software, and operations supporting exploration. Both nominal and contingency scenarios must be part of the overall development of the mission, hardware, software, and operations to arrive at a reasonable level of risk. The crew will require many years of Earth training across numerous vehicles and systems in a compressed timeframe to prepare for the mission.

In addition to the crew themselves, the development of the myriad systems, operations, and capabilities to meet objectives will require the support of international and industry collaborations (RT-1 and RT-2). The Moon to Mars Architecture approach enables a variety of support mechanisms and contributions to enable innovation, economic development, and the inspiration foundation to address Why We Explore (Section [2.1\)](#page-31-0). Characteristics include architectural robustness to infuse innovative solutions and technological advancements over time. The iterative methodology, flexibility in design solutions, and ability to perform responsive mission planning for future developments will be key considerations.

NASA has a long, successful history of working with a diverse community of international partners to advance common space exploration and science objectives. The agency is committed to building on and broadening these global partnerships as part of the Moon to Mars Objectives. NASA has numerous international partnerships already in place and is engaging in ongoing bilateral and multilateral dialogues with international space agencies to identify new, mutually beneficial opportunities for collaboration.

Building upon more than two decades of experience with the International Space Station in LEO, NASA and its partners will need operational flexibility to demonstrate the capability to integrate the multi-party contributions, aggregations of systems over time, and increasing complexity to address long-term Mars-forward development. The coordination of integrated ground, launch, and flight systems for both crewed and uncrewed regimes and multiple planetary bodies will require a significant leap forward in the complexity of mission operations.

2.2.2 Unique Considerations for the Moon

Although NASA has previously conducted human exploration on the lunar surface with the Apollo Program, there are still unique aspects to consider for the current lunar architecture. With the

desire to seamlessly expand to long-term, sustainable exploration while preparing for human Mars exploration, the Moon to Mars Architecture must remain flexible to plan for the future campaign with current programs and elements in development, adjust to the actual flight systems as the elements mature and are deployed, and accommodate new contributions. This allows for an incremental increase in capabilities for lunar exploration, gradually building up functionality to achieve the agency's objectives.

The most recent human spaceflight exploration and the majority of hours of human spaceflight experience have been conducted in LEO. There are several major differences in concepts of operations between LEO and cislunar missions. For one example, abort capabilities back to Earth vary in duration. With exploration interest in lunar South Pole locations and a cislunar platform in NRHO, aborts back to Earth are more complex and take days rather than hours (as is the case from the International Space Station). These durations significantly complicate or eliminate crew rescue options that may be available in LEO. In another example, crew will transition between micro- and partial-gravity environments, eventually doing so after extended durations in microgravity without the support that crew members experience upon their return to Earth after long missions on the International Space Station. Testing out the concept of operations for surface exploration with deconditioned crew will also help NASA prepare for Mars exploration. Further, the unique aspects of the South Pole, in term of lighting, terrain, and other environmental considerations, present unique challenges to the missions and strategic planning. These include the relatively constrained area of the South Pole, which is advantageous not only to NASA, but also to other commercial, scientific, international, or other lunar exploration plans.

2.3 MARS ARCHITECTURE STRATEGIC ASSESSMENTS

In the five decades since Dr. Wernher von Braun proposed NASA's first human Mars architecture, NASA has pivoted from one exploration point design concept to another, many optimized around heritage programs or emerging technologies of particular interest. Indeed, half a century of architecture studies have filled our libraries with myriad architecture concepts that have maintained interest in Mars and contributed some progress toward the current Moon to Mars effort. However, none of these concepts found traction with stakeholders, many of whom had competing perspectives or needs. The agency's Moon to Mars Objectives provide a comprehensive framework to ensure that human Mars architectures will meet — or can evolve to meet — more stakeholder needs. After mapping objectives to the required functional capabilities, the architecture team will coordinate with technology and element concept developers and identify the key architecture decisions that must be made. Because decisions in one part of the architecture will ripple through other parts of the architecture, it is critical that decision-makers understand the effect of each decision on the integrated architecture, including differences that depend on the order in which decisions are made. The strategic assessment and campaign segment description described in this document form the foundation for this Mars decision roadmapping process. Later revisions will document Mars Architecture decisions as they are made.

To build a compelling architecture that will gain traction with stakeholders, a similar systems engineering process applied at the strategic level can be used as a framework for the architecture by addressing the six key questions: "Who," "What," "Where," "When," "Why," and "How"? To reach consensus and move forward, an exploration architecture must address all six questions, but reiteration and negotiation may be required. The answer to any one question is less important than ensuring that the answers to all six fit together as an integrated whole.

2.3.1 Key Mars Decision Drivers

As noted in at the beginning of this section, the human Mars exploration architecture can be described as a six-sided trade space, shaped by the answers to six key questions: "Who," "What," "Where," "When," "How," and "Why"? (s shown in [Figure 2-1\)](#page-30-0). In laying out the agency's architecture decision roadmap, it is critical for decision-makers to understand how these key drivers relate to each other and how the architecture can vary depending on the order in which these decisions are made.

Figure 2-4. Mars Architecture Decision Flow Starting with "When?"

The Apollo Program was famously characterized by the mandate of "landing a man on the Moon and returning him safely to Earth before the end of the decade". This prioritized "When?" (within the decade) over other considerations. NASA successfully achieved this goal, but because the resulting architecture was optimized to meet a tight implementation schedule, it was not particularly extensible, with implications for sustained human exploration of the Moon.

The Apollo Program serves as a cautionary tale for Mars exploration: if decision-makers focus on "When?" as an anchoring decision [\(Figure 2-4\)](#page-40-0), and the answer is a date that does not give us enough time to develop new technologies, then the answer to "How?" would default to heritage or heritage-derived systems. If the specified date is too soon to develop and certify new transportation, descent, ascent, and surface systems, then the schedule compromise may be an orbital-only or fly-by first mission, followed by surface missions in later years. This affects not just "How?" but cascades to "What?" and "Why?" If, instead of a particular date, "When?" is indexed to another event — for example, the timeline of a particular technology development or an agency funding profile — then certain technologies or assets from other programs may be prescribed, again influencing both "How?" and "What?" If the answer to "When?" specifies both a "boots on Mars" date and a "boots back on Earth" date (in other words, a total crewed mission duration), that restriction will define whether we require new high-tech, high-energy transportation systems capable of shorter mission durations. As shown in [Figure 2-4,](#page-40-0) starting with "When?" can cause the answers to "Why?," "Where?," and "Who?" to rely on the answers to "How?" and "What?".

Figure 2-5. Mars Architecture Decision Flow Starting with "Why?"

With few architecture decisions mandated thus far, human Mars exploration offers a unique opportunity to take an objectives-based approach to exploration architecture development. NASA's Moon to Mars Strategy provides such a framework. In contrast to a capabilities-based approach, an objectives-based approach focuses on the big picture, establishing the "What?" and "Why?" of deep space exploration before prescribing the "When?" or "How?"

As shown in [Figure 2-5,](#page-41-0) NASA's blueprint identifies the answers to the question of "Why?" Any single answer is unlikely to satisfy all stakeholders, but each answer is important to one or more stakeholders. Starting with "Why?" will help anchor the development process, but architecture choices may still vary widely depending on how the many different answers to "Why?" are prioritized. Must the first human Mars mission check off *every* item in the "Why?" Venn diagram, or is it sufficient to establish a first-mission architecture that meets the highest-priority items, and is extensible to meet lower priorities during subsequent missions?

For example, prioritizing science on the first human Mars mission will influence "Where" we land if the specific science objective of interest requires access to a particular region or feature and may require other mission elements tailored to that particular science discipline. If that priority science location is difficult to reach or lacks the resources for sustained human presence, NASA could desire a lighter exploration footprint for the first mission, and crew selection may be heavily influenced by science expertise. Conversely, if inspiration, in the form of sustained human presence, is the priority goal, then NASA may desire a landing site offering abundant resources or ease of access, with the first mission elements laying the groundwork for a heavier, permanent infrastructure at a single location that is able to support a larger number of crew, possibly selected for their engineering expertise. As shown in [Figure 2-5,](#page-41-0) different priorities within "Why?" will cascade through the other questions.

These sample decision structures illustrate an important point: the Mars architecture will heavily depend on the decisions that are prioritized. In practice, the Mars architecture decision flow is likely to be iterative rather than linear. To minimize disruption, rework, and cost or schedule

changes, understanding the minimum goals and priorities for the first mission, as well as the longer-term goals for subsequent missions, can aid in establishing a flexible and sustainable architecture. The answer to any one of these questions is less important than whether the answers to all six complement one another as a set and can be balanced to establish an architecture that is achievable, affordable, and adaptable.

2.3.2 Unique Considerations for Mars

2.3.2.1 Mars Architecture Frame of Reference

In Mars Architecture discussions, it is helpful to keep in mind that mission distances traveled will be at a scale far beyond the entirety of human spaceflight experience to date [\(Figure 2-6\)](#page-42-0). A single round-trip journey between Earth and Mars will put about 1.8 to 2 billion kilometers on a Mars transportation system's odometer, regardless of departure opportunity or trajectory traveled—that is roughly equivalent to 950 round trips to the Moon. The distance between the Moon and Earth only varies by about 43,000 kilometers over time, so it always takes about the same amount of energy to travel to the Moon and back, no matter when we go. By contrast, the distance between Earth and Mars can vary by as much as 340 million kilometers as the two planets orbit the Sun. The closest Mars ever approaches Earth is 54.6 million kilometers; at their farthest, over 400 million kilometers of deep space separates the two planets. This means that much of the operational experience and many of the paradigms — such as mission control, sparing/resupply strategy, crew rescue, and mission abort contingency planning — will require a different approach than previously used on heritage programs (such as the International Space Station).

Figure 2-6. Roundtrip Mars Mission Distance in Perspective (AU, Astronomical Unit)

The energy required to achieve the roundtrip journey from Earth to Mars and back depends heavily on the timing. Because both planets orbit the Sun, both the distance and the relative velocity of the planets are constantly changing, cycling on a roughly 15- to 20-year cycle. It always takes about the same amount of energy to reach the Moon from Earth, but the amount of energy required to reach Mars varies considerably over this cycle. As part of the "When?" decision, a

determination must be made on whether to optimize the transportation system for the easiest opportunities (more affordable, but limits us to one mission every 15 to 20 years), optimize for the most difficult opportunities (less affordable, but allows missions every 2 years), or aim for something in the middle.

Traditionally, to minimize the total energy required to achieve the roundtrip mission, mission planning has selected optimal planetary departure and arrival timing to maximize the benefit of the natural relative positions and velocity between the planets. This results in what is typically known as conjunction-class long-stay missions, where both the Earth-to-Mars and Mars-to-Earth trajectories are minimum-energy in nature, typically 180–300 days in duration (each way), depending on the mission opportunity. This approach requires a Mars stay time of 300–500 days to wait for the proper planetary alignment for the return trip and results in a roundtrip total mission duration of around three years.

Shorter duration roundtrip missions to Mars require less energy-efficient trajectories. The energy versus time tradeoff for a roundtrip mission to Mars is a continuum, but the relationship is exponential in nature: as the mission duration is shortened, the energy required to achieve the roundtrip mission increases exponentially. This translates to an exponential increase in the vehicle mass required, in terms of both propellant and propulsion system. The total energy required is also highly dependent on the Mars stay time. Unlike the minimum-energy conjunctionclass mission, where the Mars stay time is dictated by the waiting period for the optimal return trajectory, shorter roundtrip missions do not have built-in constraints for Mars stay time. This design parameter becomes a key driving factor in interplanetary mission planning. Shorter mission duration also results in shorter stay time at Mars.

An example of these shorter roundtrip missions to Mars is an opposition-class short-stay mission. This class of roundtrip mission to Mars is optimized with one minimum-energy transit (either Earthto-Mars or Mars-to-Earth), like the conjunction-class missions, and one high-energy transit that is timed to take advantage of a gravity assist swing-by of Venus during opportunities where Venus is in the correct location. This trajectory has typical transit time of 180–300 days each way, with a very short Mars stay time between 10 and 50 days, to achieve a roundtrip total mission duration as short as two years.

Figure 2-7. Illustration of Conjunction- and Opposition-Class Mars Trajectories

These two classes of mission have traditionally been the focus of Mars mission design and planning, but it is important to note that roundtrip missions to Mars are not limited to these two options, as evinced by the example trajectory shown in [Figure 2-6.](#page-42-0) Mars mission design should not be a contest of "conjunction" versus "opposition," but rather an integrated, thoughtful analysis of all parameters of interest. Roundtrip transit time, Mars stay time, and departure dates are all important factors in determining the total energy required to achieve roundtrip missions. Analyzing the implications of each factor on all relevant systems will help us better understand the overall design trade space to support more informed decisions.

2.3.2.2 Aggregate Mars Mission Risk

Throughout the entire 60-year history of human spaceflight, astronauts have never been more than a few days (and rarely more than a few hours) from Earth. For missions to the International Space Station, or even to the Moon, aborting the mission and returning home is a relatively straightforward option. But on the transit to Mars, mission abort is complicated because of the sheer distance between Earth and Mars. Depending on when abort is initiated in the mission timeline, the heliocentric nature of the transit may require *months* to return to Earth, regardless of the transportation system selected. For transportation architectures that rely on Mars vicinity return fueling strategies, mission abort during the outbound transit leg may not be possible. In many cases, transit abort will not be a practical response to an emergency because the time to effect crew return will exceed the amount of time within which the crew must resolve the emergency. Early human Mars missions will also have limited Mars ascent/descent abort options. Mars's atmosphere and gravity make it difficult to carry sufficient on-board propellant to initiate human-scale payload descent and abort back to orbit during Mars descent, and Mars will initially lack the specialized infrastructure and staffing needed to aid crew after an ascent abort back to the Mars surface — even a successful abort to the surface may very well leave crew stranded away from assets necessary for a safe return to Mars orbit. These challenges will require an entirely new contingency operations paradigm for initial human Mars missions relative to NASA's Earth-centric flight experience. Given that crew survival has been key in meeting human-rating certification loss-of-crew requirements (as derived from Administrator-established safety risk thresholds), additional emphasis will need to be placed on hazard mitigation via other measures (e.g., incorporation of additional reliability and maintainability of hardware/software and a heavier reliance upon autonomy) to do the same for a Mars architecture. Such measures will need to account for various other factors, including longer Earth-based communication delays and blackout periods, negative mental health and physiological impacts of transit and surface operations, and impacts upon human reliability.

The farther that humans travel from Earth, the more risk we must accept to achieve the goals of exploration. Mission durations, travel distances, and mass constraints increase the probabilities of something not performing as expected and decrease NASA's ability to respond in a timely manner to emergencies. Crew health, safety, and survival techniques will necessarily change as we move into Mars exploration. The definition of and acceptance of reasonable levels of risk will be a driving factor in determining architecture capabilities and use cases. The definition of acceptable risk is influenced heavily by both internal and external environments and, thus, must be explicitly defined and understood within the architecture so that it can influence decisions throughout the design and implementation process.

2.3.2.3 The Human System in the Mars Architecture

Mars architecture discussions must consider the human system as part of the integrated mission architecture. Historically, emphasis on conjunction-class Mars missions on the order of three or more years duration was driven by a desire to lower Earth-launched transit propellant mass. While this may result in a "better" architecture from a transportation system point of view — with total stack mass serving as the measuring stick for "better" — the three-or-more-year conjunction-class

mission duration is not necessarily better from a crew health and performance perspective. From a purely medical point of view, it would seem intuitively obvious that the two-year opposition-class mission should be "better" for the crew than the longer-duration conjunction-class mission because of the shorter time spent in the deep space environment, but that conclusion is premature without more insight into the integrated vehicle risks that will be layered on top of the medical risks, as well as considerations for crew performance. Beyond the transportation and habitation systems, crew support elements, such as a long-duration food system, remote medical care, laundry/clothing, on-demand training aids, communications, physical and psychological support, and utilization systems, must be included as part of the end-to-end human Mars architecture.

To ensure the human system is well integrated into the overall architecture, NASA is exercising a process to develop more robust spaceflight systems and build a culture of interplanetary human exploration, guided by the agency's new blueprint objectives for exploration. This process incorporates iterative steps building on lessons learned from NASA assets and operations — such as Earth analogs, International Space Station and commercial LEO missions, and the development of plans for Artemis — to mature plans for future human Mars missions and to use these plans to inform activities for the International Space Station and future platforms in LEO, as well as Gateway and lunar surface mission analogs during upcoming Artemis missions. The knowledge gained from these will reduce uncertainty and risk for Mars.

2.3.2.4 Mars Architecture Development Approach

The light-footprint initial mission architecture that has been developed over the past several analysis cycles will serve as a starting point to define one corner of the trade space. This modest architecture concept, described in more detail below, will be expanded through a methodical process to develop the initial human Mars segment. The decomposition of the agency objectives drives the specific functions and use cases that inform Mars architecture strategy. NASA will coordinate with stakeholders to explore integrated architecture impacts, such as how infrastructure or science objectives influence mass, volume, power, and overall transportation and habitation design. This will be an iterative process, resulting in a catalog of key Mars architecture decisions. Where additional research is required to inform a decision, NASA will coordinate activities across the agency, which may include testing, analysis, or analog investigations on Earth, orbiting platforms, or the lunar surface. Objectives will be prioritized to align with anticipated resource availability timelines, opportunities, and partner agreements. As a roadmap of key architecture decisions emerges and the trade space is narrowed, this document will be updated to reflect the evolving Mars architecture.

Since the Mars architecture will be built up over time, interoperability is a vital aspect to ensure compatibility between elements and systems. With limited ground support, on-board autonomy (crew and systems) and interoperability in the Mars campaign will be crucial for crew safety and mission success. Lunar interoperability lessons will guide the development of interoperability for Mars architecture systems. Compatible systems envisioned include deep space vehicles, surface vehicles, utilization/science, and logistics operations. The Mars architecture team will work with lunar programs to evaluate best practices learned from the lunar campaign and define the future needs for specific system compatibility.

2.4 MOON TO MARS ARCHITECTURE DECISION ROADMAPPING

Developing a new exploration architecture will depend on hundreds of individual decisions made by dozens of decision authorities across NASA. Every decision is important, but there is a class of decisions (i.e., "key" decisions) that can so significantly influence the end-to-end architecture that they warrant a much higher level of scrutiny. For example, the decision about whether to launch round-trip propellant from Earth versus pre-deploying or manufacturing return propellant at the destination will significantly impact the surface infrastructure and ascent elements, which in turn will influence the number, cadence, and payload capacity of landers, which will in turn will influence transportation system cadence and capacity — all of which will influence the number, capacity, and cadence of rockets that must be launched from Earth. Though return propellant acquisition strategy might appear at first blush to be a straightforward engineering decision solely under the purview of the transportation element implementation authority, there are other, less obvious considerations: manufacturing propellant from in-situ Mars resources may involve forward or backward planetary protection constraints, for which planetary protection and health and medical decision authorities must be involved. Establishing the infrastructure necessary for in-situ manufacturing has technology benefit implications that will be traded against development cost and schedule. Although a human spaceflight program office might prefer that subsequent missions return to the same landing site to take advantage of existing infrastructure (thus lowering total architecture costs), constraining exploration to a single landing site might preclude the agency's ability to achieve important science objectives elsewhere on the planet. Either approach may target addressing different mission objectives for different stakeholders, but careful consideration is needed for weighting different objective priorities and infrastructure demands.

The architecture decision roadmapping process was designed to identify "key" decisions for the Moon to Mars Architecture and to carefully track and assess the impact of these highly influential decisions. The process also includes assessing how the key decisions might impact the agency's exploration objectives and RTs. By definition, the architecture key decision roadmapping will only include "key" decisions whose outcomes significantly influence the architecture and/or that require collaboration between multiple lower-level decision authorities, meaning that the decision authority for these key decisions resides with agency leadership.

2.4.1 Architecture Key Decision Roadmapping Approach

The architecture decision roadmapping process was designed to ensure the impacts of these farreaching decisions are carefully traced, assessed, and coordinated with those affected. The process defines a common terminology, establishes roles and responsibilities, and provides guidance on how to identify decisions to be included in the roadmapping, trace linkages between these decisions, and develop new tools to manage all the relevant information as decisions are made and the architecture trade space narrows over time.

Although the premise of architecture decision roadmapping applies to lunar and Mars architecture development, there will be differences, given that some lunar architecture decisions have already been made. The human Mars architecture, on the other hand, is being developed with no existing decisions made prior to the creation of the decision roadmapping process ("clean slate"). NASA is therefore using the *Initial Humans to Mars segment* as a decision roadmap pathfinder, while the process is still being tailored to determine and manage the remaining lunar architecture decisions in the context of legacy lunar decisions that have already been made. This approach also establishes a process baseline that could be applied to future exploration destinations beyond Mars.

As with all new processes, refinements and improvements will be made over time, so the process and the architecture decision roadmapping will continue to be updated. It is called "roadmapping" because it not only provides a path to follow for decision-making, but also is iterative work with annual updates anticipated. Note that architecture key decisions and overall decision roadmapping is an internal agency process, though in many cases external input will be factored into decision making.

2.4.1.1 Value Proposition

As noted here and in ACR 2022 White Paper ["Systems Analysis of Architecture Drivers,](https://www.nasa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/acr22-wp-systems-analysis-of-architecture-drivers.pdf?emrc=a0171a)" making one key decision before fully understanding the cascading effects of that decision across the endto-end architecture can limit the flexibility or utility of an architecture, rendering the enterprise unsustainable. At its core, architecture decision roadmapping is a path to orient the recommended of decision-making. The essential question is: of all the important decisions to be made, which should be decided first?

The practical utility of architecture decision roadmapping is to understand which decisions lay in the critical path of other decisions. Architecture decision roadmapping developed early in an exploration campaign provides value in three ways:

1. **Minimizes later rework or disruption**

Decomposing exploration objectives into characteristics and needs and their associated use cases and functions will identify architecture key decisions. To enhance the traceability and utility of this process, identifying linkages between those decisions — in particular, the effect that one decision has on others (if/then relationships and decision prerequisites) — will aid in identifying high-impact decisions that influence every aspect of the architecture. Architecture decision roadmapping that prioritizes these high-impact decisions early in the overall decision flow will minimize implementation delays, rework, or relitigating decisions.

2. **Defines inter-organizational critical paths**

Most decision authority will reside within programs or projects, but because exploration architectures typically represent a collection of programs and projects, architecture decision authority will necessarily cross multiple organizational boundaries. A decision under one decision authority may be in the critical path of what might seem at first glance to be an unrelated decision under a different decision authority. By mapping out how decisions relate to each other — and under whose purview these decisions fall — programs, projects, or technical authorities will be aware of whose critical path they are in or who may be in their critical path.

3. **Informs investment strategies**

Where two or more investments could meet objectives, but budget or schedule realities cannot support multiple developments, a down-select decision must be made with input from all affected internal organizations. Making the decision too late will likely result in unwanted program/project consequences, including increased costs or schedule delays associated with development and testing schedules. However, as noted above, making the decision too early — such as before flow-down impacts are fully understood — may result in an architecture that is unable to meet exploration objectives. As an example, integrating important technology down-select decisions into the architecture decision roadmapping will help technologists time their decision gates to optimize development resources.

2.4.1.2 Terminology

New terms used in the decision roadmapping process include the following:

Decision outcome – A formal judgement of the options as a result of deliberation, culminating in an approved forward path on which option(s) to implement.

Decision definition – Before a decision outcome is determined, there is a fully scoped decision definition. The decision definition is the set of inputs required to reach a decision outcome, which includes a question, options, context, dependencies, and a recommendation on which a decision authority will deliberate.

Key decision – Defined as a decision (i.e., decision definitions and, when available, decision outcomes) that so profoundly influences the end-to-end architecture that it warrants elevated scrutiny. At one end of the spectrum, deciding how many crew members an architecture must accommodate is obviously a "key" decision because it influences virtually every aspect of the architecture and will involve collaboration between multiple decision authorities. At the other end of the spectrum, deciding handrail color or style — even though it will affect many elements — is best categorized as an engineering decision that does *not* rise to the same level of management scrutiny. But where to draw the line? For the purpose of sorting through thousands of decisions to determine which have a profound enough impact to be labeled as "key," NASA employs two criteria: high connectivity to other decisions, programs, and projects and high sensitivity of architecture-level and agency values (such as cost, schedule, or risk) to the decision options. This sorting process is subjective but errs on the side of caution: if in doubt, a decision is considered key; it may be reclassified later if further analysis indicates — or a decision authority decides that the decision could be made at a lower level or does not have a significant technical, cost, schedule, or risk impact.

Decision authority – Defined as the highest-ranking official or body (such as a control board or executive council) that will sign a formal decision outcome, thus indicating responsibility for *and commitment to implementing* — that decision outcome. The instrument used to document each decision outcome — such as formal reports, executive summaries, or approval memos will vary depending on the internal processes used by each decision authority. In the hierarchy of decision authorities, some decision outcomes will be determined by programs or projects, while other decision outcomes may be determined by agency technical authorities. Where the needs of multiple projects, programs, or technical authorities must be balanced, a key decision may necessitate elevation to the applicable mission directorate's associate administrator. Where the needs of multiple mission directorates must be balanced, a key decision may necessitate elevation to the NASA administrator. In some cases, the decision authority may reside outside of NASA, such as with another government agency. For any given architecture decision definition, there may be multiple stakeholders, *but there can only be one decision authority*.

Stakeholders – In the context of architecture decision roadmapping, stakeholders are defined as those internal NASA organizations with an interest in a particular key decision because they can either affect or be affected by the decision outcome. For example, the stakeholder may affect the decision outcome by providing critical data, technical analyses, risk assessments, cost estimates, or other supporting data and analyses to the decision package. On the other hand, the stakeholder may be affected by the decision if that decision results in a change to their implementation requirements, schedules, or resource requirements. Different architecture key decisions may have different stakeholders. In some cases, stakeholders are decision authorities for prerequisite decisions that feed into another architecture key decision.

2.4.1.3 Identifying and Defining Key Decisions Needed for the Architecture

The first step of architecture decision roadmapping is to identify and define each key decision outcome that is needed for the architecture. Decision definitions include the question that needs to be answered (i.e., the type of decision *outcome* needed), potential decision options, the decision authority (if known), relevant stakeholders, architecture context, and dependencies (both prerequisites and flow-down impacts of the decision on other decisions). Collecting all of this information in the first step before analyses or decision package development begin is crucial. NASA has used two methods to identify candidate key decisions: first, a bottom-up analysis drew input from decades of heritage studies. Then, a top-down assessment was used to decompose NASA's exploration objectives into use cases and functions, and the entire objective decomposition was used as a guide to identify candidate key decisions. This top-down approach is key to NASA's "architecting from the right" strategy for human exploration and is still ongoing as the list of key decisions continues to be iterated on each year. The two approaches together provide a more thorough identification process. The identified key decisions are "candidates" for the roadmapping until they are approved at the annual ACR.

2.4.1.4 Developing Decision Linkages

Once candidate key decisions are identified, the next step is to assess how these key decisions are "linked" to each other so that a recommended sequence of decision-making may be developed in the next phase of the roadmapping process. For each candidate key decision identified in the previous step, the dependencies on and for other key decisions are cataloged.

In some cases, the dependencies can be defined as "prerequisites" when a given decision depends on the outcome of other, earlier decisions. For example, a landing site selection decision may be highly dependent on the prioritization of utilization (technology demonstration or science) objectives, making that prioritization decision a prerequisite to the landing site decision. Additionally, there may be other types of prerequisites to a given decision, such as capability or knowledge gaps that must be filled before a decision can be made.

It is important to note that prerequisites and flow-downs are fundamentally the same type of precedence relationship, just viewed from either the downstream (prerequisite) or upstream (flowdown) perspective. Also, the specification itself of prerequisite versus flow-down is a strategic choice that is likely to impact the outcome of the architecture, so this should be done carefully. For this step of the process, teams simply begin identifying decision dependencies *for the purpose of initiating stakeholder collaboration and input for further decision definition.* Finally, if these decision dependencies are predicated on specific assumptions (for example, that a partner provides a given capability or that a new high-temperature material will be developed) or constraints (for example, a particular payload shroud's diameter), those assumptions and/or constraints are also documented, particularly if changing the assumption or constraint would make that decision obsolete or change the comparison of the decision options.

Linkages between decisions are captured in a digital decision space model. An architecture decision space model catalogs key decisions, records decision definition data, and maps the dependencies between each key decision to visualize the impacts and importance of various decisions. The model also supports the creation of decision-making sequences as inputs to the deliberations by stakeholders about the recommended sequence (i.e., the "roadmap"). Finally, the decision space model also records decision outcomes, when available, and tracks any revisions to decision outcomes, if needed.

Crucial to the model is an ontology that sets the model's foundation and defines how data is structured — and input is captured — within the model. NASA developed a decision space modeling ontology for the Moon to Mars Architecture to respond to the inadequacy of a traditional databasing approach at capturing the complex dependencies and impacts between key architecture decisions. For this model, candidate key decisions are instantiated as nodes, categorized as either an "architecture characteristic decision" or an "architecture constraint decision." Note that these terms are used in the modeling environment for the purpose of linking decisions to one another

Architecture characteristic decision **–** Decisions that define an architecture feature or characteristic, where the selection of an alternative option would be considered a different architecture. Options for these types of decisions fundamentally change the architecture trade space. Examples include number of crew to the surface or power generation or propulsion technology selections.

Architecture constraint decision **–** Decisions that apply across all possible architecture variants but do not directly define an architecture characteristic. Options for these types of decisions do not narrow or expand the feasible architecture trade space; for example, establishing a loss-of-crew threshold or payload allocations to meet "inspiration" goals.

The ontology also defines types of decision options—including simple and compound options and how each decision's set of options are captured in the model along with constraints, bounds, and units. [Figure 2-8](#page-50-0) depicts notionally how the decision ontology is used to build the decision space model, including nodes that are either decisions or decision options. Next, the dependencies for each decision are modeled as relationships (or edges) between the nodes. It is at this time that dependencies may be characterized as either prerequisites or flow-downs, but this may still be re-evaluated later during the process as the position of decisions on the architecture roadmap is assessed. The decision model is built in a modeling tool that supports team collaboration and is configuration controlled.

Figure 2-8. The Decision Space Ontology is Used to Build the Decision Space Model

Although the intent of the decision roadmapping is to define a recommended sequence of decision making, the reality is that — for various unforeseen reasons — key architecture decisions may not always be made in the recommended order. Therefore, the model is designed to accommodate updates.

2.4.1.5 Perform Roadmappping to Sequence Architecture Decisions

The decision space model described in Section 2.4.1.4 is being developed to capture all the needed key decisions that have been identified. The decisions, dependence relationships between decisions, decision options, and compatibilities between decision options contained in the model form a graph through which a decision-making path must be planned or "roadmapped." However, there are many possible paths through the decision space, and so a method is needed for identifying "good" paths and then down-selecting to a recommended path.

To be effective, the dependencies between decisions must be understood before placing decisions on the roadmap. For example, if the number of crew is decided *before* factoring in the top science and technology demonstration priorities, the crew complement decision may have to be changed later if the workload to meet mission priorities is greater than the selected number of crew can accomplish. If this disconnect does not surface until *after* crewed elements are well into development, either the architecture will be unable to meet mission objectives or there will be significant cost and schedule penalties for redesign or replanning. Precise timing and schedules cannot be determined without detailed decision package development, but having a sense of the *relative* timing criticality of one decision versus others will help answer the question, "where to begin?"

In an effort to identify where to initially focus analysis resources, key decisions are bucketed into two broad categories: "priority" and "later." Priority and later decisions are sub-categories of the broader class of key decisions, representing broad "time criticality" in the decision roadmapping process. Key decisions with many identified flow-downs need to be located near the beginning of the roadmap; therefore, they can be categorized as "priority" decisions. Decisions that need more prerequisites can be placed farther down the road and are categorized as "later" decisions. This does *not* imply that one category is more important than the other or that "later" decisions are optional; this is simply an acknowledgement that even critical decisions may not be practical, or even possible, until other decision outcomes are known first. Having an initial sense of the *relative* time criticality of one key decision versus others will help answer the question, "where to begin?" 

In addition to decisions that have significant flow-down impacts, the "priority" category may also include decisions with few or no prerequisites. If there is sufficient available information to make a decision sooner rather than later — even if that decision is not in the critical path of another key decision — and there is relatively little flow-down risk to making an early decision, it should be considered for near-term resolution because the sooner architecture decision outcomes are determined, the sooner investments can be focused and implementation can begin. One caution is that making a decision too early may mean that flow-down impacts are not yet fully understood, which presents a risk of cost or schedule impacts, or even invalidation of certain architecture decision options later. Therefore, the agency should assess the potential impacts to cost, schedule, and risk for both waiting until later to make the decision or making this decision in the near term.

An artistic representation of bucketing "priority" and "later" key decisions is provided in [Figure 2-9.](#page-52-0) In this figure, there are many key decision outcomes needed before NASA can get to the exploration destination (represented by the far-right circle). Priority key decisions are separated from the later key decisions, allowing stakeholders to prioritize their resources on developing the decision packages for the priority key decisions first and the rest later. After this initial bucketing, the priority key decisions are assigned to a specific place in the recommended order of decisionmaking. All architecture decisions will eventually get placed in the recommended order as the roadmapping work is refined over time. Over time, as decision outcomes are completed, they can

be tracked separately and also passed on to implementation organizations, when appropriate in [Figure 2-9,](#page-52-0) these completed decisions are "pinned" along the bottom of the notional timeline.

Figure 2-9. Notional Depiction of Categorizing the Key Decisions Based on Time Criticality

After this initial categorization of the key decisions, the potential decision sequence is considered in additional detail. The graph contained in the architecture decision model yields many alternative decision sequences when analyzed. One source of alternative sequences comes from the presence of decision subsets that are only loosely connected, or even entirely disconnected, from other subsets of decisions based on the dependence relationships. The freedom to sequence loosely connected subsets independently means there is not just one feasible decision sequence. The other source of alternative sequences is a more complicated one, stemming from the presence of feedback loops in the dependence relationships between decisions. For example, if the architecture teams initially determine that Decision A is a prerequisite for Decision B, which is a prerequisite for Decision C, which is a prerequisite for Decision A, then there is a feedback loop that must be addressed. The team must choose which prerequisite to violate, or whether to process interdependent decisions simultaneously; this choice also results in multiple alternative decision sequences.

Roadmapping requires down-selection from among these multiple alternative decision sequences, and down-selection necessitates considering the alternatives in the context of some form of preference or prioritization. This process is straightforward if a single objective can be defined for scoring the alternatives; however, Mars architecture decision roadmapping is a multiobjective problem. To elaborate on this, consider the following potential objectives for decision roadmapping:

1. Shortest Path: desire to select the decision sequence that results in the shortest time to completion of all architecture decisions.

- 2. Preservation of Architecture Flexibility: desire to defer decisions that prune large portions of the trade space to later in the decision sequence, preserving the flexibility in the architecting process for as long as possible.
- 3. Sustainable Decision-Making Tempo: desire to maintain a steady rate of working through decisions, understanding that the capacity of the organization to process decisions rigorously would not support something like a bell-shaped curve of decision package development activities.

Given many alternative decision sequences and multiple objectives for decision roadmapping, a critical first step towards enabling a down-selection is to identify the Pareto front of dominant architecture decision sequences — that is, the set of decision sequences among which improving any one objective can only be achieved at the cost of another objective. Because the number of alternative sequences may be very large, finding the Pareto front necessitates execution of a multi-objective optimization. The nature of this decision sequencing optimization is mathematically described as a binary integer programming problem, which is solved efficiently by modern optimization packages.

With the Pareto front of nondominated decision sequences identified, the second step in the roadmapping process can proceed. The Pareto front presents the tradeoffs to be considered between the decision roadmapping objectives; every alternative that appears on the Pareto front provides a different balance between the objectives, and final down-selection is fundamentally a subjective one that must be made by the roadmapping team with input from stakeholders.

It should also be noted that, although a sequence of decision-making is recommended, that does not necessarily mean that the decision-making process is serial. It may take time to address individual decisions, and there is no reason that certain decisions cannot be addressed in parallel for many decisions and then finalized as prerequisite decision outcomes become available. This approach may compress the overall architecture decision timeline, although the decision timeline will be highly dependent on resource availability, coordination with stakeholders, and proceeding to the relevant decision authority.

2.4.1.6 Initiating Key Architecture Decisions

Once a candidate architecture decision has been identified, defined, modeled, and precoordinated with internal NASA organizations and relevant decision authorities, it is presented at ACR for consensus for agency workload prioritization. This step provides rationale for relevant organizations to allocate resources for their individual contributions to decision package development, which may include research, analysis, integration.

2.4.1.7 Documenting Architecture Decision Outcomes

The actual decision-making process for each key decision will vary depending on the decision authority, but in all cases, relevant internal organizations will participate in decision package development. Once supporting data has been collected and analyzed, input has been collected, options have been identified, flow-down impacts for each option have been traced, and recommendations have been developed, a decision package is presented to the relevant authority to determine the decision outcome. If an internal NASA organization does not concur with the decision outcome, an appeals process is invoked, in accordance with NASA Procedural Requirements (NPR) 7120.5F, NASA Space Flight Program and Project Management Requirements. Different decision authorities will have different technical courts of appeal and resolution processes, but in all cases, appeals and resolutions will be captured in the decision outcome documentation, which will also summarize all options considered, supporting data,

rationale for the decision, flow-down impacts to the architecture and remaining decisions in the decision roadmapping, and a high-level overview of the proposed implementation plan, including descope and fallback options.

Once an architecture decision outcome has been released, the resulting impacts to the architecture are documented and reported at the next ACR and the internal decision roadmapping is updated.

2.4.2 Lunar Architecture Key Decision Outcomes

Lunar key decisions include both legacy decisions (those made prior to publication of the ADD) and priority decisions.

2.4.2.1 Legacy Key Decision Outcomes

Legacy key decision outcomes refer to the major architectural decisions that were made prior to development of the agency Moon to Mars Objectives and associated strategy described here in the ADD and development of the Architecture Decision Roadmap. The overarching rationale for these legacy key decisions can primarily be found in Section 2.2.1 Key Lunar Decision Drivers.

2.4.2.1.1 Enable Human Exploration on the Surface of Planetary Bodies

A fundamental decision was made that the agency would pursue human exploration — not just robotic exploration — on the surface of planetary bodies. This will be accomplished by launching and transporting crew to lunar orbit with the Space Launch System and Orion and landing the crew and surface element(s) on the Moon. Future campaign segments will send the crew to Mars and look beyond to other exploration sites.

2.4.2.1.2 Deep Space Element(s) in Microgravity in Preparation for Long-duration, Crewed Exploration

This will be accomplished by deployment of the Gateway station in lunar orbit. This allows for preparation for Mars exploration with crew in cislunar space.

2.4.2.1.3 Lunar Landing Region Selection

The lunar South Pole has been chosen for the initial lunar landing region for crewed missions. This does not preclude non-polar sortie missions, but the primary exploration region for initial crewed surface missions will be the lunar South Pole.

2.4.2.1.4 Crewed Lunar Orbit

The Moon to Mars Architecture will use the NRHO for crewed lunar orbital operations.

2.4.2.1.5 Integrated Crewed Lunar Mission Cadence

Integrated crewed missions, combined orbital plus surface mission segments, are being planned for an annual mission cadence to the Moon.

2.4.2.1.6 Number of Crew to Cislunar Space

The decision has been made to include up to four crew members during an integrated mission (orbital plus surface operations) for initial architecture campaign segments, namely Human Lunar Return and Foundational Exploration.

2.4.2.1.7 Lunar Crewed Surface Stay Duration Capability

Crewed lunar surface missions will build on initial capabilities in the Human Lunar Return architecture campaign segment to enable crewed surface durations of up to 33 consecutive days for the Foundational Exploration campaign segment.

2.4.2.2 Priority Key Decision Outcomes

Ongoing and future decisions will be either directed and/or made in accordance with the architecture decision roadmapping process and will be denoted as priority key decisions. Priority key decisions align with current Moon to Mars Objectives and associated strategy. Two initial directed decisions are included. This section will be updated as more decision outcomes are available.

2.4.2.2.1 Lunar External Power Augmentation

A decision was made that the agency would pursue trades to balance element design, aggregate power demand, total surface landed mass, mission to mission flexibility, and architecture robustness to utilize power augmentation methods on the lunar surface.

The Foundational Exploration segment of our lunar human exploration will be constrained by the amount of energy available to power crew life support systems, provide keep-alive support to surface elements, utilization payloads and equipment, and to make, move, or environmentally maintain critical infrastructure. This strategic decision focused on how to balance delivered mass and volume, accessible areas, power generation, energy storage, and aggregate user power demand across the architecture in an efficient manner. Augmenting surface elements with power generation and/or energy storage capabilities and acknowledging that integrating external power assets as a strategy in Foundational Exploration and beyond is needed to achieve segment goals. This does not down-select between technologies, sizing, or concepts which will be established in future studies.

2.4.2.2.2 Lunar Logistics Strategy

A decision was made that the agency would pursue a hybrid strategy for delivering required logistics to elements on the lunar surface using a variety of solutions ranging from small portable carriers to large mated carriers.

During the Foundational Exploration segment of our lunar human exploration missions, it is critical to provide items such as food, water, air, spare parts, and other similar products required to sustain life, maintain systems, and allow for productive science and utilization activities — logistics items. As the exploration architecture is conceptualized and planned, the estimated total amount of logistics items required to keep the crew alive and healthy, to maintain systems, and to perform productive science and utilization can be relatively large. The architecture must assess suitable logistics sub-architectures to deliver those needs and the need to have flexible and robust means to support these missions requires a hybrid strategy using smaller crew portable carriers as well as larger mated logistics carriers.

2.4.3 Mars Architecture Key Decision Outcomes

2.4.3.1 Mars Primary Surface Power Generation Technology

Nuclear power technology (specifically, fission power) was selected at ACR24 over non-nuclear power technology (in particular, photovoltaic arrays with energy storage) to be baselined as the primary surface power generation technology in the initial Humans to Mars architecture segment. This decision was driven primarily to mitigate loss of mission risk: although solar power may have

a lower per unit cost, fission power is more robust to Martian environmental and atmospheric conditions, providing consistent power generation across a wide range of potential landing sites, around the clock, and during global dust storms, and a landed mass and volume advantage at the power levels needed for human Mars exploration.

2.5 TECHNOLOGY GAP ASSESSMENTS

As use cases and functions are identified for future lunar and Mars missions, NASA also identifies gaps between currently available functional capabilities and desired future capabilities. While many of these capability gaps may be closed with engineering or operational solutions, a subset of these capability gaps will require technology investment for future missions to ensure necessary performance or capabilities beyond the current state of the art. In the context of this document, these **architecture-driven technology gaps** are defined as areas where technology development is required to close the gap between the current state of the art and the Moon to Mars Architecture's anticipated performance or capability targets.

It is important to note that this is a narrow definition: a technology gap is not simply an area of the architecture that requires further work or the initiation of an element. If NASA can initiate a project or program to meet an architectural need using existing technology, then that area is not a technology gap. Architecture-driven technology gaps require entirely new technologies or significant performance advancement in existing technologies to establish a capability needed to achieve the Moon to Mars Objectives.

Technology gaps are identified through an assessment of architecture documentation, including use cases and functions decomposed from NASA's exploration objectives, key architecture decisions, and historical data. The state of the art for a technology is then compared to the notional architecture performance targets to identify architecture-driven technology gaps. Each architecture-driven technology gap includes a gap title, gap description, architecture impact and benefits, target performance metrics, and current state-of-the art metrics. These gaps are iterated with the architecture teams to ensure the gap data is fully aligned with the current state of the architecture. The architecture-driven technology gaps are designed to be solution-agnostic, focusing on a documented capability need, not a specific technology solution to achieve the capability. Appendix C.1 of this document lists the initial set of identified architecture-driven technology gaps and contains descriptive data about each gap and its relationships to the architecture (e.g., campaign segments in which the gap is needed, use cases and functions it addresses, and relevant key decisions and sub-architectures).

2.5.1 Technology Gap Prioritization

To inform technology investment strategies and investments both internally and externally to NASA, the architecture-driven technology gaps are prioritized from an architectural perspective using a set of priority metrics. A priority metric is a gap attribute that captures an aspect of architecture preference and can be evaluated for every gap. Four priority metrics were identified: criticality, urgency, breadth, and depth.

• **Criticality**: measures the degree to which closing the technology gap would enable or enhance the Moon to Mars Architecture. This metric was scored based upon architecture trade studies and alignment with the use case and function decomposition.

• **Urgency**: measures how soon investment in a technology gap is needed to ensure the capability is available for future missions. This metric was scored by comparing gap closure timelines with the estimated technology development timelines to capture longlead developments.

• **Breadth**: measures the prevalence of a technology gap's applicability across subarchitectures. Technology gaps were mapped to sub-architectures, and gaps that address cross-cutting capabilities scored higher relative to single-application gaps.

• **Depth**: measures the degree to which closing the gap is dependent on future architecture decisions. Gaps were scored based upon mapping to decisions, along with an assessment of how much those decisions affect the need for the gap's closure.

Figure 2-10. Architecture-Driven Technology Gap Prioritization Process Flow and Weighted Prioritization Rating Formula

The four priority metrics were weighted and combined to determine an overall prioritization rating as shown in [Figure 2-10.](#page-58-0) The relative weightings were determined through comparison of each metric's importance to the Moon to Mars Architecture. Architecture teams weighted the metrics in the following descending order: criticality, urgency, breadth, and depth. The resulting prioritized list is included in Appendix C.2. Note that implementation-specific metrics, such as cost, are not considered in the gap prioritization process as they are not tied to an architectural demand signal for the capability.

Technology gaps' overall prioritization rating fall into distinct groupings of preference, referred to as priority bins, which are included in both Appendices C.1 and C.2. Note that all of these gaps, even those in the lowest priority bin shown, are highly architecture driven.

The architecture-driven technology gaps and priorities are useful for two main reasons. First, the prioritized list of gaps can be used to inform technology investment strategies that align with the Moon to Mars Architecture needs. This data is expected to inform and help NASA technology development organizations, ESDMD programs, industry, interagency groups, international partners, and academia plan investments. Second, this demand signal provides focus for the architecture teams to engage with technology developers on technology options based upon their potential benefits, schedule drivers, and risk reduction relative to the gaps.

2.5.2 Technology Gap Evolution

The current list of gaps and gap priorities represents a snapshot in time and will be updated annually as part of the Strategic Analysis Cycle as the Moon to Mars Architecture matures and technology advances. As later campaign segments are better defined, existing technology gaps may be re-prioritized and new architecture-driven technology gaps may be identified. The focus

on architecture-driven technology gaps in this document excludes risks already being tracked or addressed by current programs but can include related technology gaps requiring additional advancement for future segments. The Human Lunar Return Segment contains technology development and investment by the current programs, so the technology gaps captured in this document do not trace to Human Lunar Return. Instead, the gaps map to the other three segments: Foundational Exploration, Sustained Lunar Evolution, and/or Humans to Mars.

2.6 DECOMPOSITION OF OBJECTIVES

2.6.1 Lunar Goals, Objectives, and Characteristics and Needs

2.6.2 Mars Goals, Objectives, and Characteristics and Needs

3.0 MOON TO MARS ARCHITECTURE

The architecture methodology process described in Sectio[n 1.3](#page-13-0) has yielded a structured approach to objective decomposition and applicability to system definition to establish the architecture.

Return — The architecture starts with the development and demonstration of the systems that transport crew and exploration capabilities to target destinations. The successful Artemis I mission was the first step in this progressive expansion of the capability envelope over a series of missions where a minimum crew of four can support missions in deep space and on the lunar surface, and eventually future destinations.

Explore — Using an evolutionary approach, the architecture enables high-priority science, technology demonstrations, systems validation, and operations for crew to live and work on a non-terrestrial planetary surface, with a safe return to Earth at the completion of the mission(s). Key characteristics include operating and designing the lunar systems with Mars risk reduction in mind, from a systems, operations, and human perspective. The architecture accommodates this approach in the context of available capabilities and differences in the lunar and Mars environments. Initially, this is done at the element level, then through combined operations that eventually culminate in several precursor missions in the lunar vicinity, where the crew experiences long durations in the deep space environment coupled with rapid acclimation to partial gravity excursions using Mars-like systems and operations. The Mars-forward exploration systems also have the goal of maximizing crew efficiency for utilization, which will be tested by a continuum of excursions to a diverse set of sites driven by science needs. The balance between diverse site access and long-duration infrastructure objectives will inform the allocation of functions across systems.

Sustain — The Foundational Exploration capabilities serve as a basis to increase global access, industrial-scale ISRU, and crew durations beyond NASA's initial needs. Although evolution of the Lunar architecture along the lines of these greater capabilities would seem to occur later in the architecture, the implications of the potential future lunar states are initiated at the very beginning of the architecture with the early reconnaissance missions, where factors like access to and purity of volatiles in several regions may dictate the role and level of ISRU.

The Lunar architecture is developing, deploying, and operating systems for lunar vicinity exploration; performing science at diverse locations and returning lunar samples; preparing for further exploration with Mars-capable systems, operations, and precursor missions; and establishing a permanent lunar presence that could one day support a lunar economy. The Mars architecture can follow the same basic approach as the Moon to achieve a human presence, explore, and then sustain development.

The architecture has been structured to reflect the incremental buildup of capabilities and objective satisfaction. These campaign segments have been crafted along the return, explore, and sustain approach to further delineate the continuum of evolving capability and objective satisfaction. They are described in [Table 3-1](#page-91-0) below. Although the segments appear sequential in the table, they are not exclusively serialized, as the segments build upon each other and focus on how systems will work together to achieve objective satisfaction.

Table 3-1. Moon to Mars Campaign Segments

The initial segment is **Human Lunar Return**. This segment includes the initial capabilities, systems, and operations necessary to re-establish human presence and initial utilization (science, etc.) on and around the Moon. This segment's primary focus is establishing the missions and supporting infrastructure to perform sortie crewed missions to the Moon. The systems and support span Earth, cislunar orbiting platforms, and the foothold capabilities on the lunar surface. The initial support of utilization focuses on the human-conducted science, sample collection, human research, and initial capabilities, among others, for the first time outside LEO in over 50 years.

The **Foundational Exploration** segment includes lunar excursions to diverse sites of interest with increasingly complex missions, enabling science and other utilization exploration. This segment also contributes to evaluating the systems, operations, human adaptation, or technologies required for Mars. These missions will enable increasingly extended time in deep space coupled with missions to the lunar surface of increasing duration and mobility that address identified research, testing, and demonstration objectives to enable Mars missions. Prior to the crewed Mars mission, these precursor missions would be performed in time to inform element design, testing, and operation. Foundational Exploration also starts the development of a sustainable human presence with the deployment of demonstrations and capabilities that will enable long-term infrastructure and sustained surface operations in the third segment.

The third segment, **Sustained Lunar Evolution**, is the broad and undefined end state that builds on the foundation of the first two segments and enables capabilities, systems, and operations to support regional and global utilization (science, etc.), expanded economic opportunity, and a steady cadence of human presence on and around the Moon. Here, we can envision various uses of the lunar surface and cislunar space to enable science, commerce, and further deep space exploration initiatives.

The fourth segment, **Humans to Mars**, captures the capabilities, systems, and operations necessary to enable the initial human exploration of the Red Planet. These systems will represent the transportation, logistics, utilization, and more required to enable the missions. This segment is an enabling capability of continued deep space exploration with additional efforts to be identified as architectural progress occurs.

As objectives are accomplished or added in the future, additional segments will be defined to enable continued exploration. These segments will be captured to reflect agency objectives and continue the expansion of human/robotic exploration of the solar system. These efforts will enable NASA led efforts to go, explore, and sustain for continued discovery on the Moon, Mars, and beyond.

3.1 HUMAN LUNAR RETURN SEGMENT

The Human Lunar Return (HLR) segment of the exploration campaign includes the inaugural Artemis missions to enable returning humans to the Moon and demonstrate both crewed and uncrewed lunar systems, including the support to initial utilization (science, etc.) capabilities. This segment will be used to demonstrate initial systems to validate system performance and to establish a core capability for follow-on campaign segments. It captures the missions that test NASA's deep space crew and cargo transportation system(s), deploy the initial cislunar capabilities to support lunar missions, deploy and establish lunar orbital communication relays, and bring two crew members to the lunar surface and return them safely to Earth. Additionally, a variety of other efforts are working to support data-gathering and risk-reduction activities to help inform future decisions. These currently include, but are not limited to, the Cislunar Autonomous Positioning System Technology Operations and Navigation Experiment (CAPSTONE), Commercial Lunar Payload Services (CLPS) provider landers, and the Volatiles Investigating Polar Exploration Rover (VIPER).

3.1.1 Summary of Objectives

The objectives that drive the HLR segment include achieving science, inspiration, and national posture goals around and on the surface of the Moon. Initial missions will be used to deliver science value through operations in cislunar space and on the lunar surface, along with the return of samples to Earth. Key science objectives addressable during HLR include 1) exploring the lunar South Pole region to understand chronology, composition, and structure of this region (e.g., LPS-1 and LPS-2); 2) understanding volatile composition and the environment of shallow permanently shadowed regions (PSRs) near the lunar South Pole (e.g., LPS-3); 3) assessing the history of the Sun as preserved in lunar regolith (e.g., HS-2); 4) characterizing space weather dynamics to enable future forecasting capabilities (e.g., HS-1); and 5) characterizing plant, model organism/systems, and human physiological responses in partial-gravity environments (e.g., HBS-1). These HLR science priorities were identified by the Science Mission Directorate (SMD).

To achieve these key science, inspiration, and national posture goals, the HLR segment is focused on demonstrating initial capabilities, systems, and operations necessary to re-establish human presence around and on the Moon. This segment began successfully with the Artemis I mission to systematically and progressively test areas such as crewed transportation to cislunar space (TH-1, TH-2), supporting ground infrastructure (OP-4), and deep space communications and tracking systems (OP-2). The next steps are crewed transportation to and from cislunar space, initial Gateway deployment (OP-6), rendezvous and docking, uncrewed Human Landing System demonstration, initial human landing (TH-2), and initial surface EVA capability, and uncrewed payload delivery. It encompasses the return of humans to the Moon for approximately

six-day surface missions and establishes the foundational capabilities that will enable future campaign segments.

The objectives linked to the HLR segment will be a subset of the total, and even of those linked, some will be only partially satisfied; however, the segment serves as the starting point to define and validate capabilities and functions in later segments that will be driven by the objectives. The complete set of objectives can be found in Appendix A.

3.1.2 Use Cases and Functions

The objectives and mapping to the use cases and functions (shown in Appendix A) are used to drive the elements for this segment. Because many HLR elements are operational or in design/development stages, these elements form the basis of satisfying the functional needs. The mappings help identify functional gaps that must be addressed in the follow-on segments. Section 3.1.5 shows the mapping of the use cases and functions to the elements. Many of the use cases and functions will require additional elements or new functional capabilities that go beyond what is being assigned to the HLR elements described below. Key gaps between planned HLR capabilities and Moon to Mars Objectives needs are noted later in this document and will continue to be expanded through the ACR process. Note that not all use cases (UC-#) and functions (FN- #) are sequential in this segment mapping. The numbering represents use cases and functions that have been identified through the overall objective decompositions process, but not all are applicable to the HLR segment.

The mapped elements in HLR segment and their corresponding descriptions are in the respective sub-sections of Section 3.1.3. While commercial launch vehicles will play a vital role in the architecture, they are not mapped here, as they are subject to future implementations and procurements.

3.1.3 Reference Missions and Concepts of Operations

As described in the objective decomposition methodology, use cases may be grouped into reference missions to provide examples of how several use cases may be accomplished with a particular concept of operations. Appendix A.3 shows the full set of lunar use cases, so only a representative subset is discussed below in two reference missions. While there is a certain temporal aspect to these reference missions, as the architecture capabilities are grown and enhanced, each individual reference mission simply represents an example of how architecture capabilities can be used; these are not planned missions to be flown.

3.1.3.1 Crewed Initial Lunar Surface Reference Mission

As the first crewed mission returning to the lunar surface, this reference mission encompasses many use cases that will be repeated throughout the Moon to Mars campaign. Starting with transportation, use cases include transporting crew and systems from Earth to cislunar space, staging crewed lunar surface missions from cislunar space, assembling integrated assets in cislunar space, transporting crew and systems between cislunar space and the lunar surface, and returning crew and systems from cislunar space to Earth. The surface portion includes use cases such as crew operations on the lunar surface, frequent crew EVAs on the surface, and crewconducted utilization activities (including science, crew health and performance, and other operations) on the surface and in space.

3.1.3.2 Crewed Gateway and Lunar Surface Reference Mission

Building up from the initial return mission to the lunar surface, more capabilities in cislunar space address additional use cases, particularly for lunar orbital operations. As a habitable outpost located in NRHO, Gateway enables additional use cases in HLR beyond those in the initial crewed mission to the lunar surface. In particular, Gateway allows for crew to conduct utilization activities in cislunar space; allows for ground personnel and science teams to directly engage with astronauts on the surface and in lunar orbit, augmenting the crew's effectiveness at conducting science activities; enables crew and/or robotic emplacement and set-up of science instrumentation in lunar orbit with long-term remote operation; and includes autonomous/semiautonomous mission operations in cislunar space.

3.1.4 Sub-Architectures and Element Descriptions

Elements represent capabilities that are available in the HLR campaign segment that meet the designated agency objectives and derived functions needed to support those objectives. The elements are described in the sub-architectures they support; they are not in chronological order.

3.1.4.1 Communication and Positioning, Navigation, and Timing Systems

During the HLR, C&PNT services will be provided through a combination of assets on Earth, in lunar orbit, and on the lunar surface. NASA will lead a distributed team of government, commercial, and international partners to implement this approach. Cooperation among multiple service providers and users across government, industry, and international partners requires coordination and planning through established and new interface and operations standards. This will enable a long-term, scalable, and interoperable architecture that provides communication and position, navigation, and timing services as needed across all the assets.

This infrastructure, which will provide both communication and PNT functionality to users in cislunar space and on the lunar surface, is called "LunaNet." LunaNet 5 is an internationally coordinated framework for lunar interoperability, envisioned as a set of cooperating networks providing C&PNT and other services for users on and around the Moon. The LunaNet concept is based on a structure of mutually agreed-upon standards, protocols, and interface requirements that enable interoperability, known as the LunaNet Interoperability Specification (LNIS). The International Communication Systems Interoperability Standard⁶ was developed to enable collaborative operations for the user community. Reference systems and time are fundamental to safety of navigation, precision science, and interoperability at the Moon. Lunar reference systems and time standards must be defined, agreed to, and implemented while lunar C&PNT infrastructure is in the early stages of development. As at Earth, standards are agreed to internationally, but often implemented by individual nations, so close coordination is essential. US policy on these topics is in development⁷ and international coordination is already underway⁸.

⁷ Policy on Celestial Time Standardization in Support of the National Cislunar Science and Technology (S&T) Strategy," Office of Science and Technology Policy, Washington, DC, 4 April 2024,

⁵ LunaNet Interoperabilty Specification," National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Washington, DC, 2022. https://www.nasa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/lunanet-interoperability-specification-v5 draft.pdf?emrc=6f4483 and https://www.nasa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/lsis-afs-v1-draft- .pdf?emrc=33f92a

⁶ International Deep Space Interoperability Standard. www.internationaldeepspacestandards.com

https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Celestial-Time-Standardization-Policy.pdf ⁸ Resolutions to be Voted on at the Upcoming XXXII General Assembly," International Astronautical Union, accessed 6 August 2024, https://iau.org/news/announcements/detail/ann24013/

Direct-to-Earth (DTE, also known as Direct-with-Earth (DWE)) service needs will be met through a combination of an upgraded Deep Space Network (DSN); NASA's Near Space Network (NSN), including Lunar Exploration Ground System (LEGS) and other assets; the European Space Agency's European Space Tracking (Estrack) network; and other international and commercial ground assets. Together, these will provide near-continuous coverage of the near side of the Moon and NRHO. Orbiting assets such as Gateway, the Lunar Communications Relay and Navigation System (LCRNS), and partner assets will provide service to users without line-of-sight to Earth and reduce the required size, weight, and power for a user's communications and PNT systems while accounting for real-time and store-and-forward data needs and real-time position, velocity, and time knowledge to provide robust services under challenging conditions systems. The LCRNS will initially, in this segment, cover a service volume from -80° S to the South Pole of the Moon and up to 125 km altitude. C&PNT services will be supported by one S-band bidirectional link and one simultaneous Ka-band return link, as well as broadcast service through an Augmented Forward Signal (AFS). In the later part of the HLR segment, LCRNS service will expand the service volume to 75° S and up to 200 km and include two to bidirectional simultaneous S-band and Ka-band links and multiple AFS links. Surface-to-surface communications may initially rely on legacy systems such as ultra-high frequency (UHF) and WiFi but will seek to leverage terrestrial standards such as 3GPP/5G within this segment of the architecture to increase mobility, positioning, and capacity. NASA's PNT architecture is comprised of both the infrastructure described above for radionavigation sources and user capabilities. Infrastructure also includes critical reference system components and a time standard upon which C&PNT rely. User-side capabilities include the onboard systems that collect, process, and filter the data required to successfully navigate. These could include cameras and optical sensors, light detection and ranging (lidar) payloads, solar compasses, and inertial measurement units to determine specific force, angular rate, and orientation. The growth of C&PNT services throughout the HLR segment, through technology demonstrations and initial operational support, will enable the near-term exploration objectives of the HLR segment while providing a robust foundation upon which a scalable infrastructure can grow to support the needs of a sustained lunar presence, including precursor missions that will inform and validate a Mars architecture.

Figure 3-1. LunaNet C&PNT Sub-architecture for HLR

The functions the lunar relay, LCRNS, fulfills in the HLR campaign segment are shown in [Table](#page-109-0) [3-2.](#page-109-0)

The functions the DSN and NSN fulfill in the HLR campaign segment are shown in [Table 3-3.](#page-109-1)

3.1.4.2 Habitation Systems

3.1.4.2.1 Gateway⁹ Crew-Capable Configuration Overview

The Gateway architecture is composed of several modules incrementally launched and assembled in NRHO around the Moon in a system that provides for continuous architectural evolution. Individual Gateway modules are launched either as co-manifested payloads (CPL) on the Space Launch System (SLS) along with the Orion crew vehicle or on commercial launch vehicles. The modules combined in the Gateway architecture represent a meaningful series of demonstration steps in the direction of enabling the more extensive exploration effort in the future.

The HLR campaign segment comprises the Gateway Crew-Capable Configuration: Power and Propulsion Element (PPE), Habitation and Logistics Outpost (HALO), International Habitation Module (I-Hab), and Gateway Logistics Element. For this segment, Gateway capability represents a minimum functional core to support the initial human landing missions to the lunar surface. The I-Hab is being provided by the European Space Agency (ESA), with contributions from the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA). These modules provide pressurized volume for the crew to move between the docked vehicles, space for crew habitation activities (food and water consumption, sleep, hygiene), and internal and external utilization capabilities. They also provide initial life support services and docking ports for additional modules and visiting vehicles. The

⁹ For more information, please visit[: www.nasa.gov/gateway](http://www.nasa.gov/gateway)

Moon to Mars Architecture Definition Document (ESDMD-001 Rev-B) 87

PPE is a commercially based spacecraft that provides electrical power, attitude and translational control, and communication for Gateway. The PPE maintains attitude using reaction wheels and a chemical propulsion system. When uncrewed, translation maneuvers and orbital maintenance are primarily performed using a solar electric propulsion (SEP) system. The PPE has power storage and the systems necessary to convert and distribute power to the rest of Gateway. It provides internal avionics systems and is one part of an integrated command and control architecture for Gateway.

Figure 3-2. Gateway Crew-Capable Configuration

The integrated PPE/HALO configuration also provides communication via PPE and the ESA HALO Lunar Communications Systems (HLCS) for space-to-Earth and space element–to–space element; with visiting vehicles during rendezvous, proximity operations, and docking/undocking; and between lunar surface systems and Earth. NASA utilizes deep space logistics (see Section [3.1.4.6\)](#page-101-0) to deliver cargo and other supplies to Gateway, including critical spares and outfitting for HALO and I-Hab, cargo stowage, and trash disposal. Gateway will launch with an initial suite of internal and external science utilization payloads, provided by NASA, ESA, and JAXA, that will operate and collect data in transit and in NRHO during crewed and uncrewed operations. External payload sites and future robotic attach points will be provided by the Canadian Space Agency (CSA) on PPE, HALO, and I-Hab. The Gateway Crew-Capable Configuration is shown in [Figure](#page-97-0) [3-2.](#page-97-0) Expansion of Gateway is planned to include additional capabilities and systems as part of the Foundational Exploration segment.

The functions Gateway Crew-Capable Configuration fulfills in the HLR campaign segment are shown in [Table 3-4.](#page-110-0)

3.1.4.3 Human Systems

The humans who embark on the exploration missions are the most critical component of the campaign to get humans to the Moon, to Mars, and beyond. Proper vehicle and mission design for the crew encompasses a complex and extensive list of human system integration and crew

health and performance needs that must be considered. If inadequately addressed, these can translate into negative crew health and performance outcomes both during and after the mission. The HLR campaign is the first step in deep space exploration and presents a human systems challenge that is different from Apollo and the International Space Station. These challenges and experiences will build with each successive mission across the campaign segments. [Figure 3-3](#page-98-0) shows a crewmember working in a pressurized volume in space.

Figure 3-3. Crewmember Working in Space

To emphasize the unique capability and impact to exploration of the crew, they are represented in the Moon to Mars Architecture as both a sub-architecture and an element. As such, crew are required to achieve several of the functions and use cases driven by the Moon to Mars Objectives. Humans are a unique exploration resource, capable of flexibility and adaptation, real-time analysis and independent decision making, and fine motor-skill operations. Humans also have unique sensory and perceptive capabilities that are often difficult to reproduce in hardware. As such, humans are irreplaceable in their ability to perform highly varied and complex tasks in space and on planetary bodies. There will be unanticipated non-conformances that humans are best qualified to detect and resolve. And working toward increasing Earth-independent operations, the humans onboard will be the most adaptive, inductive problem-solving systems available to address emergent, unforeseen time-critical vehicle/habitat issues. Vehicle systems must be designed to enable crew to execute these operations with reduced ground support.

Complex and highly varied tasks will be necessary to accomplish mission objectives such as surface infrastructure installation, geological site analysis and sample collection, planetary science payload deployment, and in-space biological experiments. Without human presence, each of these goals would require highly specialized robotic systems and remote human input. Human assets also present the opportunity to study and assess human-rated systems, human

operations, human factors, and other aspects of human research in an environment similar to future Artemis or Mars missions. These studies will provide critical data related to performance, efficiency, and safety, which will inform future technology development, operational planning, and risk assessment for Artemis and Mars missions. Ultimately, humans are critical as operators, subjects, and inspirational figures throughout the Artemis missions and are intrinsic to the Moon to Mars and agency strategic goals of furthering human presence on the Moon and beyond.

3.1.4.4 Infrastructure Support

3.1.4.4.1 Exploration Ground Systems¹⁰ Overview

Figure 3-4. Exploration Ground Systems

The Exploration Ground Systems (EGS) Program was established to develop and operate systems and facilities necessary to process, launch, and recover vehicles. EGS provides the ground infrastructure for launch and landing in support of processing and launch of the SLS and Orion. EGS also provides recovery capabilities for the Orion spacecraft. EGS utilizes the Vehicle Assembly Building (VAB) for integration and testing and vertical stacking on the Mobile Launcher (ML). The ML with the fully stacked SLS and Orion secured is moved to Launch Pad 39B by the crawler-transporter. Vehicle testing, vehicle final propellant servicing, launch countdown, and launch take place at Launch Pad 39B. Additional capabilities, such as the Mobile Launcher 2 (ML2) will be included in the infrastructure of EGS to support the SLS Block 1B missions. The VAB is shown in [Figure 3-4.](#page-99-0)

The functions EGS fulfills in the HLR campaign segment are shown in [Table 3-5.](#page-111-0)

3.1.4.5 In-Situ Resource Utilization Systems

3.1.4.5.1 ISRU Demonstrations

Permanently shadowed region classification and environmental characterization are aided by current orbital missions, such as the Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter, and planned near-term

¹⁰ For more information, please visit: www.nasa.gov/exploration/systems/ground/index.html

technology demonstrations. The Polar Resources Ice Mining Experiment-1 (PRIME-1) is an example of a planned near-term demonstration to assist in understanding lunar resources, which will help to fulfil the function "Collect water/ice from the polar region of the lunar surface".

Scheduled to launch on a CLPS mission, PRIME-1 will be the first in-situ resource utilization demonstration on the lunar surface. For the first time, NASA will robotically sample and analyze sub-surface material for ice below the surface. PRIME-1 includes two components, both of which will be mounted to a commercial lunar lander. The Regolith and Ice Drill for Exploring New Terrain (TRIDENT) will drill up to one meter deep, extracting lunar regolith, or soil, up to the surface. The instrument can drill in multiple segments, pausing and retracting to deposit cuttings on the surface after each depth increment. Mass Spectrometer observing lunar operations (MSolo), a modifiedfor-spaceflight, commercial-off-the-shelf mass spectrometer, will evaluate the drill cuttings from multiple depths for water and other chemical compounds. The data from PRIME-1 will help us understand in-situ resources on the Moon, including resource location mapping, and demonstrate the performance and operation of these important instruments before use in the subsequent VIPER mission.

The VIPER mission will explore the relatively nearby but more extreme environment of the lunar South Pole region around Nobile crater in search of ice and other potential resources. VIPER will characterize the distribution and physical state of lunar polar water and volatiles and minerals outside, near, and inside small PSRs. VIPER will help evaluate the resource potential for ISRU at the lunar polar regions and help determine how to harvest the Moon's resources for future human space exploration. VIPER has three instruments and a 3.28-foot (1-meter) drill to detect and analyze various lunar soil environments at a range of depths and temperatures. VIPER's instruments will also make important science measurements. Determining the distribution, physical state and composition of these ice deposits will aid in understanding the sources of the lunar polar water, giving insight into distribution and origin of water and other volatiles across the solar system.

To advance the technologies and operations associated with extracting and processing lunar resources into usable products as well as demonstrating other lunar infrastructure–related capabilities for sustained lunar presence, NASA, in partnership with industry, is planning one or more demonstrations. The purpose of these demonstrations is to evaluate the performance of critical technologies and capabilities with actual lunar regolith and under lunar environmental conditions, instead of simulants and terrestrial environmental simulation facilities, to reduce the risk associated with incorporating them into subsequent lunar systems and missions. Following subscale demonstration missions, NASA, in partnership with industry, is planning to demonstrate the end-to-end system and operations associated with resource extraction to product generation and storage to reduce the risk of missions relying on ISRU products for mission success. Referred to as the ISRU Pilot Plant, this demonstration will be performed for a duration and at a scale that will significantly reduce the risks associated with deployment and the commercial life of a fullscale system and demonstrate the quality of the product produced. Several pilot plant concepts are under consideration, including liquefaction and storage of oxygen extracted from regolith, oxygen and hydrogen liquefaction and storage from water extracted from within a permanently shadowed region, and metal and silicon extraction from regolith to produce solar cells and wires for future in-situ production of solar arrays and electrical power transmission cables.

Figure 3-5. PRIME-1 Payload on CLPS Lander

3.1.4.6 Logistics Systems

3.1.4.6.1 Gateway Logistics Element

Exploration activities will need logistics deliveries to satisfy objectives. Logistics items represent all equipment and supplies that are needed to support mission activities that are not installed as part of the vehicle. Logistics typically includes consumables (e.g., food, water, oxygen), maintenance items (planned replacement items), spares (for unexpected/unplanned failures), utilization (e.g., science and technology demonstrations), and outfitting (additional systems/subsystems for the elements), as well as the associated packaging. Logistics deliveries of critical pressurized and unpressurized cargo and payloads will be needed to support activities with and without crew. In the HLR segment of the exploration campaign, the Gateway Logistics Element (GLE) will provide logistics delivery to cislunar space.

Figure 3-6. Gateway Logistics Element (Image credit: SpaceX)

During HLR, GLE will be used for transporting cargo, payloads, equipment, and consumables to enable exploration of the Moon and Mars. Logistics flights are necessary to supply Gateway with critical cargo deliveries and maximize the length of crew stays on Gateway. The Gateway Logistics Services contract and technical capability are extensible to deliver unique payload configurations and supply cargo deliveries to other destinations. Additional capabilities may be added in future segments. At least one logistics services delivery is anticipated for each Artemis mission to Gateway of 30 days. Dragon XL is shown in [Figure 3-6](#page-102-0) as one of the providers of Gateway logistics.

The functions the GLE fulfills in the HLR campaign segment are shown in [Table 3-6.](#page-112-0)

3.1.4.7 Mobility Systems

3.1.4.7.1 Exploration Extravehicular Activity System Overview

Figure 3-7. Exploration Extravehicular Activity System

The Exploration Extravehicular Activity (xEVA) System allows crew members to perform extravehicular exploration, research, construction, servicing, repair operations, and utilization and science on the lunar surface. EVA traverse and tasks may be augmented by robotics and rovers. The xEVA System includes the EVA suit, EVA tools, and vehicle interface equipment. Through Exploration Extravehicular Activity Services, Axiom Space has been selected to build the next generation of spacesuit and spacewalk systems.

The functions the xEVA fulfills in the HLR campaign segment are shown in [Table 3-7.](#page-112-1)

3.1.4.8 Transportation Systems

Figure 3-8. Space Launch System

The SLS is a super-heavy-lift launch vehicle that provides the foundation for human exploration beyond Earth orbit (BEO). With its unprecedented power and capabilities, SLS is the only launch vehicle that can send Orion, astronauts, and payloads directly to the Moon on a single launch. The SLS is designed to be evolvable, which makes it possible to conduct more types of missions, including human missions to Mars; assembly of large structures; and robotic, scientific, and exploration missions to destinations such as the Moon, Mars, Saturn, and Jupiter. Humans will be transported safely, and different payloads will be delivered efficiently and effectively, to enable a variety of complex missions in cislunar and deep space. The first SLS crew transportation system, called Block 1, uses an Interim Cryogenic Propulsion Stage (ICPS) to send the Orion spacecraft on towards the Moon. Block 1 was used for Artemis I and is planned for use for Artemis II and III. The Block 1B variant will use an Exploration Upper Stage (EUS) to enable more ambitious missions, such as carrying the Orion crew vehicle along with large cargo (co-manifested payload) in a single launch. SLS also enables free-flyer science payloads in cislunar space and beyond as secondary payloads. Although Block 1 and Block 1B Crew are the only two variants in HLR, Block 1B Cargo and Block 2 Crew and Cargo variants are key capabilities for future campaign segments. [Figure 3-8](#page-104-0) exhibits the SLS in the Block 1 configuration for Artemis I.

The functions the SLS fulfills in the HLR campaign segment are shown in [Table 3-8.](#page-113-0)

¹¹ For more information, please visit: www.nasa.gov/exploration/systems/sls/index.html

3.1.4.8.2 Orion12 Overview

Figure 3-9. Orion Spacecraft

The Orion spacecraft, NASA's next-generation spacecraft to take astronauts on a journey of exploration to the Moon and on to Mars, is shown in [Figure 3-9.](#page-105-0) The Orion spacecraft serves as the primary crew vehicle for Artemis missions for transporting crew between Earth and lunar orbit. The vehicle can conduct regular in-space operations in conjunction with payloads delivered by the SLS. The Orion spacecraft includes the Crew Module (CM), Service Module (SM), and Launch Abort System (LAS). The CM is capable of transporting four crew members beyond the Moon, providing a safe habitat from launch through landing and recovery. The SM, made up of the NASA-provided Crew Module Adapter (CMA) and the ESA-provided European Service Module (ESM), provides support to the crew module from launch through separation prior to entry. The SM provides in-space propulsion for orbital transfer, power and thermal control, attitude control, and high-altitude ascent aborts. While mated with the crew module, the SM also provides water and air to support the crew. The LAS, positioned on a tower atop the CM, can activate within milliseconds to propel the vehicle to safety and position the CM for a safe landing.

The functions the Orion spacecraft fulfills in the HLR campaign segment are shown in [Table 3-9.](#page-113-1)

¹² For more information, please visit: www.nasa.gov/exploration/systems/orion/index.html

3.1.4.8.3 Human Landing System—Initial and Integrated Lander Configurations Overview

Figure 3-10. Human Landing System—Initial and One of the Integrated Lander Configurations as Awarded (Image credit: SpaceX)

Figure 3-11. Human Landing System—One of the Integrated Lander Configurations as Awarded (Image credit: Blue Origin)

The Human Landing System (HLS) will transport crew members, support payloads, cargo, and logistics between a crew staging vehicle (either Orion or Gateway) orbiting the Moon in NRHO and the lunar surface. On the lunar surface, HLS provides the habitable volume, consumables, and design features, enabling crew surface stay and execution of lunar surface EVAs, along with utilization accommodations inside the cabin as well as external attached payloads. The specific HLS architecture is subject to commercial provider design implementation approach.

The initial HLS configuration supports a crew of two and will operate between Orion in NRHO and a landing site in the vicinity of the lunar South Pole. Additionally, in this configuration, HLS will deliver the cargo and support logistics to NRHO from Earth prior to the start of the crewed phase of the mission. The initial human landing mission will be a demonstration of this initial HLS configuration and of the minimum basic technologies and innovation required to safely transport crew and utilization cargo to and from the lunar surface.

The HLS integrated lander will build on the initial configuration's base capabilities to enable the full range of crewed lunar mission objectives, including accommodating additional internal and external payloads. More ambitious missions will also be pursued as lunar surface exploration evolves toward the Foundational Exploration segment. Missions with the HLS integrated lander will require HLS to support landing a crew of up to four, leveraging additional habitable surface assets to support the larger crew for the duration of the lunar stay. These missions may include the capability to land and operate at non-polar landing sites or for extended durations at the lunar South Pole. This HLS configuration has increased performance capabilities, allowing for enhanced up and down mass and increased darkness survivability. These missions will also seek sustainable HLS designs that may include reusable elements or interactions with other systems in the lunar vicinity. All missions with the HLS integrated lander will begin and end at Gateway enabling extended missions on the lunar surface, as Orion will be able to remain in lunar orbit longer docked with Gateway. The initial HLS and HLS integrated lander configurations are shown in [Figure 3-10](#page-106-0) and [Figure 3-11.](#page-106-1)

The functions the HLS fulfills in the HLR campaign segment are shown in [Table 3-10.](#page-115-0)

3.1.4.8.4 Cargo Landers—Commercial Lunar Payload Services (CLPS) ¹³ **Provider Landers**

Lunar surface exploration will require the delivery of assets, equipment, and supplies to the lunar surface. While some supplies and equipment may be delivered with crew on HLS, cargo landers provide additional flexibility and capability for robust exploration. In the HLR segment of the exploration campaign, additional cargo delivery can be provided through NASA's CLPS Provider Landers.

NASA's CLPS initiative allows rapid acquisition of lunar delivery services from American companies for payloads that advance capabilities for science, technology, exploration, or commercial development of the Moon. Investigations and demonstrations launched on commercial Moon flights will help the agency study Earth's nearest neighbor under the Artemis approach. Companies are encouraged to fly commercial and other partner payloads in addition to the NASA payloads. NASA has awarded 11 task orders to 6 different CLPS lander providers for delivery of more than 40 payloads to the lunar surface during the HLR exploration segment. Additional task orders will be awarded as mission and payload definition continues. Current CLPS Provider Landers deliveries are sending science and technology payloads. SMD plans to continue annual calls for new payload suites through the Payload and Research Investigations from the Surface of the Moon (PRISM) solicitation. PRISM will enable high-priority science and will be complemented by other NASA-sponsored payloads.

The functions CLPS Provider Landers fulfill in the HLR campaign segment are shown in [Table](#page-116-0) [3-11.](#page-116-0)

¹³ For more information, please visit: www.nasa.gov/clps

Moon to Mars Architecture Definition Document (ESDMD-001 Rev-B) 98
3.1.4.9 Utilization Systems

3.1.4.9.1 Utilization Payloads and Equipment

The transportation, delivery, deployment, and operation of utilization payloads and equipment to cislunar space and the lunar surface, as well as the return to Earth of samples and other cargo, is a key service provided by the Moon to Mars Architecture and a critical enabler of every NASA utilization objective. Utilization payloads and equipment are broadly characterized here to encompass any item transported and supported by the Moon to Mars Architecture that is primarily in support of and attributed to utilization objectives, as distinct from other components in the baseline platform of services provided by the architecture. Utilization payload is defined to include science/research payloads, technology demonstrations, etc. Utilization equipment includes other internal and external hardware tools, supplies, etc. Examples of utilization systems include:

Utilization Payloads

- Secondary SLS payloads, including CubeSats
- Externally mounted scientific sensors on Gateway, HLS, logistics modules, and other surface elements
- Science experiments and technology demonstrators deployed to the lunar surface by the crew or by robotic landers
- Internally operated experiments in every crew volume, including Orion, Gateway, and HLS
- Portable devices used to make scientific observations of the lunar surface, including cameras and other instruments
- Scientific samples and data related to planetary science, human research, space biology, physics, and physical science

Utilization Equipment

- Tools and containers used to collect geological samples from the lunar surface, as well as samples collected from other science experiments and human research activities
- The HLR segment will include a freezer that will be capable of conditioning geology, human research, space biology, and other samples at near -85°C

Note that some payloads and equipment, including some multi-purpose cameras and medical equipment, are dual use, supporting both utilization and operations, and may be considered a part of the utilization systems sub-architecture or a part of other sub-architectures, depending on the context.

The functions Equipment fulfills in the HLR campaign segment are shown in [Table 3-12.](#page-117-0) Mappings to science/research payloads and technology demonstrations are removed for this revision and are forward work.

3.1.5 Exploration Asset Mapping

The following tables map assets to the functions they fulfill. Functions mapped to exploration assets do not indicate that an asset fully satisfies the use case or blueprint objective, or that completion is achieved. While some of the functions are grouped into performance classes, for most of the functions, there is no intent to indicate how well the asset accomplishes the function and supports the use case. Rather, in those cases, it represents the asset contributes to the architecture by providing the associated function. Unmapped functions are indicators of where there are gaps in the current architecture and where future efforts can be focused. Note: mapping to science/research payloads and technology demonstrations are removed for this revision and are forward work.

Table 3-3. Functions Fulfilled by NSN/DSN During the HLR Segment

Table 3-4. Functions Fulfilled by Gateway During the HLR Segment

Table 3-5. Functions Fulfilled by Exploration Ground Systems During the HLR Segment

Table 3-6. Functions Fulfilled by Gateway Logistics Element During the HLR Segment

Table 3-7. Functions Fulfilled by xEVA System During the HLR Segment

Table 3-8. Functions Fulfilled by SLS During the HLR Segment

Table 3-9. Functions Fulfilled by Orion During the HLR Segment

Table 3-10. Functions Fulfilled by HLS During the HLR Segment

Table 3-11. Functions Fulfilled by CLPS Provider Landers During the HLR Segment

Table 3-12. Functions Fulfilled by Equipment During the HLR Segment

3.1.6 Unallocated Functions

Use case and functional decomposition focused on near-term achievability of the lunar objectives has been completed. Once the Mars objectives decomposition is complete, there may be additional lunar use cases and functions to be included in the HLR segment.

The current list of functions that are unallocated for HLR are listed below. Note, mapping to science/research payloads and technology demonstrations is forward work.

Unallocated Functions for the HLR Segment			
		ID	Functions
EM-012-HLR	Unallocated	FN-T-103L	Transport crew from cislunar space to distributed sites outside of the south pole region on the lunar surface
		FN-T-109L	Enable crew habitation during transit from cislunar space to distributed sites outside of the south pole region on the lunar surface
		FN-T-202L	Transport a moderate amount of cargo (1000s of kg) from Earth to south pole region sites on the lunar surface
		FN-T-204 L	Transport a moderate amount of cargo (1000s of kg) from Earth to distributed sites outside of the south pole region on the lunar surface
		FN-T-206L	Transport large exploration asset(s) from Earth to the lunar surface
		FN-T-207L	Transport a small amount of cargo (10s of kg) from the lunar surface to Earth
		FN-T-208L	Transport a large amount of cargo (100s of kg) from the lunar surface to Earth
		FN-T-212 L	Transport a large amount of cargo (100s of kg) from cislunar space to Earth
		FN-T-215L	Transport cargo from Earth to assets in deep space
		FN-T-301 L	Provide resources to condition refrigerated sample containers during transit from the lunar surface to Earth
		FN-T-302L	Provide resources to condition frozen sample containers during transit from the lunar surface to Earth

Table 3-13. Unallocated Functions for the HLR Segment

3.1.7 Open Questions, Ongoing Assessments, and Future Work

Open questions, ongoing assessments, and future work for HLR segment include:

- What options are available to increase down-mass to the lunar surface to support utilization?
- What options are available to enable late access to utilization payloads, including late delivery of actively growing biological specimens, prior to launch?
- What opportunities are available to transport powered cargo to deep space?
- To what extent can current systems be used to support non-polar sorties in the HLR segment?
- What elements need to enable in-situ training of crew in cislunar space?
- What options are available to enable utilization operations at the maximum allowable crew EVA walking distance?
- What options are available to provide power to deployed utilization payloads, during the HLR segment, enabling payloads to survive extended lunar nights on the lunar surface?
- Are any additional functions and use cases needed to address public affairs and outreach?

3.2 FOUNDATIONAL EXPLORATION SEGMENT

The Foundational Exploration (FE) segment builds on the initial capabilities of Human Lunar Return (HLR) and prepares for future segments through the lunar expansion of operations, capabilities, and systems supporting complex orbital and surface missions to conduct utilization and Mars-forward precursor missions. With the continued use of the elements in HLR and the deployment of new capabilities, surface missions will feature increased duration, expanded mobility, and regional exploration of the lunar South Pole. Orbital operations will also increase in duration and, when coupled with the surface mission phases, will serve as Mars mission analogs, validating both the systems and the exploration concepts of operations for future Mars mission profiles. FE will have to initiate activities and capabilities that will be influenced by the future needs in the Sustained Lunar Evolution (SLE) and Humans to Mars segments. Such activities include reconnaissance, Mars risk reduction, and initial infrastructure supporting the long-term SLE evolution.

3.2.1 Use Cases and Functions

As seen in the HLR segment, by starting with the agency objectives and their associated characteristics and needs, particular use cases and functions may be defined. As the FE segment continues to be matured, so will the functional breakdown from the objectives. The complete set of objectives can be found in Appendix A.

As a representative example, objective TH-3 (develop system(s) to allow crew to explore, operate, and live on the lunar surface and in lunar orbit with scalability to continuous presence; conducting scientific and industrial utilization as well as Mars analog activities) drives several characteristics and needs. These include demonstration of capabilities to allow crew to live and work inside habitable spaces and to exit them to conduct EVA activities in both cislunar space and on the lunar surface. Sample use cases that contribute to fulfilling those characteristics and needs include crew operations, habitation, EVA, collection of samples, and crew emplacement and setup of science and utilization packages. Some of the functions that map to these use cases include

transportation, crew health and human performance, habitation, and integrated human-robotic operations.

For FE, several elements are in design/development stages; these elements form the basis of satisfying some of the functional needs. Element mappings for elements that have passed NASA's Mission Concept Review¹⁴ are provided in Section [3.2.5.](#page-145-0) As additional elements are added to the architecture for FE, updates to the element mapping will be provided. Many of the use cases and functions will require additional elements or new functional capabilities that go beyond what is being assigned to the current FE elements described below. Key gaps between planned FE capabilities and Moon to Mars Objectives needs are noted later in this document and will continue to be expanded through the ACR process. Note that not all use cases (UC-#) and functions (FN-#) are sequential in this segment mapping. The numbering represents use cases and functions that have been identified through the overall objective decompositions process but not all are applicable to the FE segment.

3.2.2 Summary of Objectives

Increased mission durations, expanded capabilities, and the ability to access various regions of the lunar surface enable a growth in utilization during both crewed and uncrewed mission phases. A variety of science objectives may be addressed during the FE segment, ranging from lunar and planetary science to human and biological science and science-enabling and applied science goals. During the FE campaign segment, enhanced architecture capabilities would further enhance the ability to address and achieve science objectives, including 1) expanding accessible regions of exploration from the South Pole region to key locations across the Moon to further advance understanding of the chronology, composition, and internal structure of the Moon (LPS-1 and LPS-2), 2) characterizing the distribution, source, and composition of volatile-bearing materials across the lunar south polar region, including within larger PSRs (LPS-3) and determine their viability for ISRU, 3) generating forecasting capabilities for space weather monitoring off the Earth-Sun line (HS-1), 4) characterizing plant, model organisms/systems, and human physiological responses to long-term exposure to extreme environments with microgravity or partial gravity (HBS-1, HBS-3), 5) characterizing physical systems in partial-gravity environments and associated models (HBS-2), and 6) conducting relativity and quantum physics experiments in the lunar environment (PPS-1, PPS2). These FE science priorities were identified by NASA's SMD, Human Research Program (HRP), Space Technology Mission Directorate (STMD), and other stakeholders in FE execution.

All of the lunar infrastructure (LI) objectives help define FE. Expansion of the power (LI-1), communications/position/navigation/timing (LI-2, LI-3), transportation (LI-5, LI-6), mobility (LI-6), ISRU (LI-7), infrastructure (LI-4, LI-8), and utilization (LI-9) sub-architectures builds toward the LI goal of "[creating] an interoperable global lunar utilization infrastructure where U.S. industry and international partners can maintain continuous robotic and human presence on the lunar surface for a robust lunar economy without NASA as the sole user, while also accomplishing science objectives and forward testing for Mars."

The transportation and habitation (TH) objectives drive the additional capabilities in mobility, habitation, and transportation systems during FE. For example, TH-1, TH-2, and TH-11 all address a need for transportation systems to transfer crew and cargo to and from Earth, through cislunar space, and between lunar orbit and the surface, enabling scientific and utilization objectives. TH-3 (develop system(s) to allow crew to explore, operate, and live on the lunar surface and in lunar orbit with scalability to continuous presence; conducting scientific and

¹⁴ Mission Concept Review as defined in NASA Procedural Requirement 7120.5F, <https://nodis3.gsfc.nasa.gov/displayDir.cfm?t=NPR&c=7120&s=5F>

industrial utilization as well as Mars analog activities) and TH-4 (develop in-space and surface habitation system(s) for crew to live in deep space for extended durations, enabling future missions to Mars) define FE as a campaign segment.

A number of operations (OP) objectives drive the capabilities needed for FE. The overall operations goal is to "conduct human missions on the surface and around the Moon followed by missions to Mars. Using a gradual build-up approach, these missions will demonstrate technologies and operations to live and work on a planetary surface other than Earth, with a safe return to Earth at the completion of the missions." These objectives encompass the need for extended-duration missions in deep space and partial-gravity environments to test systems and crew concepts of operations in preparation for the initial human Mars exploration campaign (OP-1, OP-2, OP-4, OP-5, OP-6, OP-7). Additionally, the need to develop methods to work with robotic systems (OP-9, OP-10) and characterize in-situ resources (OP-3) defines other aspects of FE.

3.2.3 Reference Missions and Concepts of Operations

As described in the Objective Decomposition section, use cases may be grouped into reference missions to show examples of how several use cases may be accomplished with a particular concept of operations. Expanding on the types of mission phases expected in HLR, several notional reference mission phases are presented below, showing progress toward the FE objectives. Reference missions represent how architecture capabilities can be used; these are not planned missions to be flown.

3.2.3.1 Sortie Reference Mission with Unpressurized Mobility

The FE segment will build on the types of lunar surface exploration conducted in the HLR segment, which includes crew habitation in an EVA-capable crew lander. Additional FE use cases may be implemented with the addition of an unpressurized mobility platform to extend EVA range and scientific exploration. This enables the use case for crew excursions to locations distributed around the landing site and has the potential to enable others, such as robotic assistance of crew exploration, the locating of samples and resources, and retrieval of samples; crewed/robotic collection of samples from PSRs; and deployment of power generation, storage, and distribution systems at multiple locations around the lunar South Pole, among others.

3.2.3.2 Reference Mission with Pressurized Mobility

Working toward the objectives to expand exploration for longer durations while conducting scientific and industrial utilization, developing surface habitation systems, and performing Mars risk reduction activities prompt the inclusion of additional functional capabilities. With initial surface crew sizes, one method to accomplish these objectives is by adding functionality for pressurized mobility systems. This function may enable use cases such as crew intra-vehicular activity (IVA) research, expanded durations for crew operations on the lunar surface (including additional habitation functions), logistics and waste management, crew excursions to locations distributed around the landing site, EVA egress/ingress, crew/robotic collection of samples, and crew relocation and exploration in a shirt-sleeve environment.

With the addition of pressurized habitation and mobility, as well as potentially increased number of crew, mission durations, and sites, other needs will arise, such as logistics transport and stowage, trash disposal, maintenance, and other infrastructure services and support. Challenges with the lunar environment, such as dust, plasma interactions, radiation, etc., will become increasingly complex and will need to be mitigated.

3.2.3.3 Robotic Uncrewed Operations

Even with the opportunity to extend surface mission durations from those in HLR, assets on the surface of the Moon are currently planned to be uncrewed for the majority of each year in the FE segment. Functions regarding autonomous, local tele-operations, or Earth-based remote operations enabled by the C&PNT sub-architecture provide additional exploration and utilization opportunities during the uncrewed portions of the year. Assuming a main function of autonomous and/or tele-operations, these robotic functions could include cargo unloading, logistics transfers, surface and/or sub-surface sample collection, and infrastructure development (e.g., landing site scouting or preparation). These functions contribute to use cases like robotic survey of potential crewed landing sites to identify locations of interest (including nearby PSRs), uncrewed relocation of mobility elements to landing sites around the lunar South Pole, and autonomous deployment of science and utilization packages.

3.2.3.4 Extended Cislunar Operations at Gateway

A key aspect of FE is preparing for crewed exploration of Mars through lunar precursor missions. In addition to an extension in duration for surface mission segments from HLR, other main characteristics are to provide numerous long-duration crew increments in cislunar space to compliment crewed surface mission segments and to support crew transitions from microgravity to partial gravity. Extended mission segments in cislunar space at Gateway and accompanying visiting vehicles also allow for increased time for IVA science and utilization. A main use case to accomplish these characteristics and needs is to utilize precursor Mars mission profiles with extended durations in NRHO, followed by lunar surface missions. Although these missions are not identical, they allow for long-term physiological, psychological, team performance, and operational assessments of crew and systems as a precursor to Mars missions.

Other use cases applicable to Gateway reference missions include staging of crewed lunar surface missions from cislunar space, remote diagnosis and treatment of crew health issues during extended increments in cislunar space, crew emplacement and setup of science and utilization packages in cislunar space (with long-term remote operation as applicable), and crew IVA research in dedicated science workspaces in cislunar space.

3.2.3.5 Extended Surface Habitation Operations

The addition of dedicated surface habitation enables longer-duration missions, increased crew size, and enhanced surface utilization and exploration to help meet objectives that lead to continuous presence. With dedicated habitation capability, additional use cases to support science and utilization are achievable, enhancing crew EVA exploration, sample collection, and emplacement of science and/or utilization packages. Performing in-situ science through allocated workspaces and demonstrating progressively regenerative and self-sustaining ECLS systems are example use cases that might be addressed with additional surface habitation capability. Increased functional capabilities that support longer-duration deep space and partial-gravity crew habitation include robust crew medical systems and health kits; space-based manufacturing techniques allowing repairs and replacement; enhancing surface EVAs; and providing interfaces for logistics transfers (e.g., solid and fluid consumables, maintenance, utilization, and waste) all further contribute towards fulfilling Moon to Mars Objectives focused on building a sustained lunar presence. Systems that were originally sized to maintain elements during extended uncrewed periods and early FE missions will need augmentation to permit increased objective satisfaction and longer-duration human presence.

3.2.3.6 Non-Polar Lunar Sortie Reference Mission

Although the focus for lunar surface exploration is the South Pole, several objectives, particularly those related to science and utilization, motivate looking at landing sites beyond the South Pole. The use case of transportation of crew to non-polar landing sites would allow for exploration of alternative locations with enabling functions like crew descent, landing, and ascent at non-polar sites. Each area presents its own challenges and points of interests. This allows for sample collection and/or return from various locations of interest across the lunar surface via EVA without surface mobility.

3.2.3.7 Cislunar Orbit Only

During the FE segment, there may be periods where strategic objectives or mission implementation necessitate crew missions to orbit only without a subsequent landing on the lunar surface. This exploration strategy would require capabilities to not only perform crew missions in cislunar orbit (i.e., NRHO), but also the ability to control lunar surface assets from Earth and lunar orbit. This would allow faster control response by the crew (near–real time), which could include cargo unloading, logistics transfer, surface and/or sub-surface sample collection, and infrastructure development (e.g., landing site scouting or preparation).

3.2.4 Sub-Architectures and Element and Functional Descriptions

Elements introduced in HLR will continue to be utilized, as additional capabilities will become available, flowing from the agency objectives. As element concepts mature, they have been added to the FE segment. Other concepts can be grouped into general functional categories and/or associated sub-architectures. As the architecture matures and the Artemis campaign advances, new elements will be conceptualized to meet these needs. Other important aspects to consider include interoperability between elements, the associated functions necessary to achieve interoperability, and the impacts of functional groupings on the overall architecture.

Forward work remains to further define the sub-architectures and their expansion for FE. In addition to integrating with particular elements, the sub-architectures bridge elements and operations, necessitating high levels of long-term planning and coordination across the overall exploration architecture. For other sub-architectures, notional, non-comprehensive functions are included here. Images shown are examples of concepts that may meet (or partially meet) the capabilities in these functional descriptions; they should not be taken as recommendations for design solutions or treated as the only concept(s) under consideration.

3.2.4.1 Communication and Position, Timing, and Navigation Systems

Building upon the HLR segment, the C&PNT capabilities expand in the FE segment to include greater coverage, availability, and more capable system capacity. Greater C&PNT coverage and availability involves expanding the orbital relay service to increase coverage and availability over the South Pole and other lunar regions of interest. A surface wireless networking infrastructure enables direct surface/local communication and aggregates data for backhaul transmission to Earth and offers supplemental local PNT. An increasingly capable orbital relay network will provide additional communication and PNT services to the expected increase in number of surface users/assets and support increased data volume and growth, while improving accurate and timely PNT services over the global lunar surface volume. As more elements are deployed to the surface, many will be telerobotically controlled or operate autonomously under remote supervision, including the commanding of rovers and control and monitoring of science payloads. Each of these elements and users will have a variety of communication and PNT needs to accurately land, move, localize, time-stamp, and navigate about the surface; travel to and record

locations of interest and samples; communicate and exchange data with other elements on the surface, with Gateway, and with operations on Earth; and collect and return telemetry, video, and other science data. As the number of simultaneous users increases, the PNT architecture for global coverage would not require a parallel increase in orbital nodes. NASA's current spectrum plans and coordination for LunaNet incorporate the Interagency Operations Advisory Group (IOAG) Architecture, the International Communication System Interoperability Standards (ICSIS), the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), and the Space Frequency Coordination Group (SFCG). As future elements are defined, example functions (from the current function list in Appendix A) that are new or significantly enhanced in the FE segment for this sub-architecture include:

• Provide high bandwidth, high availability communications and data exchange between assets on the lunar surface

• Provide high bandwidth, high availability communications and data exchange between cislunar space and the lunar surface

Figure 3-12. LunaNet C&PNT Sub-Architecture for FE

The functions the lunar relay, LCRNS, fulfills in the FE campaign segment are shown in [Table](#page-146-0) $3 - 14.$

The functions the DSN and NSN fulfill in the FE campaign segment are shown in [Table 3-15.](#page-146-1)

3.2.4.2 Data Systems and Management Sub-Architecture

The data systems and management sub-architecture will leverage initial capabilities put in place in HLR for managing and moving data across the architecture; it is highly dependent on the C&PNT, and Human Systems sub-architectures. Capabilities to be added in FE focus on a more

robust data management strategy that considers data quality, interoperability, security, privacy, latency, and compliance to ensure that the full potential of the expansive amount of lunar data can be harnessed. This sub-architecture, like many others, spans not only the lunar surface and cislunar space, but also includes the data obtained, needed, stored, or shared on Earth. With elements yet to be defined, example functions (from the current function list in Appendix A) that are new or significantly enhanced in the FE segment for this sub-architecture include:

- Collect, store, and locally distribute data on the lunar surface
- Collect, store, and locally distribute data between assets in cislunar space
- Process data locally on the lunar surface

3.2.4.3 Habitation Systems

Building upon the initial Gateway capability described in HLR, both cislunar and surface habitation are expanded during FE. Concepts for such expanded functionality are under assessment and may support Mars analogs in the lunar vicinity. For such analogs, long-duration habitation system operations in a relevant environment will support risk reduction and crew preparation for Mars transit. For the lunar surface, extending durations and crew size beyond HLR durations of more than seven days on the surface with two crew will afford opportunities to achieve several Moon to Mars Objectives. Examples of expanded functional capabilities in the FE segment (from the current function list in Appendix A) for this sub-architecture include:

- Enable a pressurized, habitable environment in cislunar space for moderate (months+) durations
- Enable a pressurized, habitable environment on the lunar surface for short durations (days to weeks)
- Enable a pressurized, habitable environment on the lunar surface for moderate duration (month+) use
- Operate habitation system(s) in uncrewed mode between crewed missions on the lunar surface

3.2.4.3.1 Gateway Expanded Capability Configuration

The FE segment includes planned upgrades from the Gateway Crew-Capable configuration, described in HLR, to the Gateway Expanded Capability configuration. These upgrades include the previously described Gateway External Robotic System (GERS) to be provided by CSA, the European System Providing Refueling Infrastructure and Telecommunications (ESPRIT) Refueling Module (ERM) to be provided by ESA, logistics resupply to be provided by JAXA, and the Gateway airlock provided by the Mohammed Bin Rashid Space Center (MBRSC). The Gateway airlock is a multipurpose element that provides the capability for EVAs while supporting scientific research and day-to-day Gateway operations with a specialized science airlock. By leveraging the capabilities provided by GERS/Canadarm3, the science airlock will allow scientific experiments and Gateway hardware to move between the pressurized cabin and unpressurized destinations outside of Gateway. The Gateway airlock is also planned to provide an additional docking port for visiting vehicles, supplementary storage, and the capability for unattended robotic maintenance of Gateway. NASA expands on the flexible deep space logistics capabilities (see Section 3.1.4.3) to deliver elements (i.e., GERS), payloads, cargo, experiments, and other supplies to Gateway, to extend the duration of crewed missions. The ERM enables the Gateway PPE's refueling and provides the capability for external viewing of the Moon and cislunar space.

The ERM will include a docking port for the logistics module and supports expanded cargo stowage for Gateway. The Gateway Expanded Capability Configuration is shown in [Figure 3-13.](#page-134-0)

Figure 3-13. Gateway Extended Capability Configuration

The functions Gateway Expanded Capability Configuration fulfills in the FE campaign segment are shown in [Table 3-16.](#page-147-0)

3.2.4.3.2 Initial Surface Habitat

The FE segment also includes the initial surface habitat. The initial surface habitat builds upon HLR to conduct expanded exploration capabilities, establish opportunities for Mars-forward precursor missions, and increase the crew size, range, and enhanced utilization achieved during exploration missions. The habitat can house two crew members as they live and work on the lunar surface for a minimum of 7 to 33 days with logistics resupply. The habitat enables EVAs and science and technology utilization during crewed and uncrewed periods. It will also support general habitation functions, such as provision of medical systems and utilization hardware accommodation, supplying ECLS capabilities, and supporting logistics transfer. As stated in NASA's 2024 "Lunar Mobility Drivers and Needs" white paper, several factors may drive NASA to select habitation points that are separated from landing sites. This means the architecture will need to provide capabilities for elements, including the initial surface habitat, to move away from landers once on the surface, either using independent or integrated mobility systems. A representative initial surface habitat is shown in [Figure 3-14.](#page-135-0)

Figure 3-14. Representative Initial Surface Habitat

The functions the initial surface habitat fulfills in the FE campaign segment are shown in [Table](#page-148-0) [3-17.](#page-148-0)

3.2.4.3.3 Habitation Concepts

FE emphasizes extended duration and preparing for crewed Mars mission profiles through analog missions in lunar vicinity. An important aspect is long-duration mission segments in the deep space microgravity environment, which mimics the transit phases between Earth and Mars. To that end, a growth in cislunar orbital operations will occur as Gateway's capabilities expand (as shown in [Figure 3-15\)](#page-136-0) and visiting vehicles, such as a Mars transit habitat, can be deployed. This expansion will support extended mission durations in preparation for Mars missions (e.g., objectives TH-3, TH-4, TH-8, HBS-1, HBS-2, HBS-3, OP-1, OP-4).

Figure 3-15. Gateway Expanded Capability Configuration with Visiting Expanded Habitation Example Concept

Figure 3-16. Example Concepts for Surface Habitation

With objectives aiming for long-term surface exploration, additional capabilities for surface habitation beyond the initial surface habitat allow progressive advancement toward sustained human lunar operations. General habitation functions may be common across surface habitation elements and can include providing IVA workspaces, supporting internal and external utilization, supplying ECLS capabilities, enabling EVAs, and supporting logistics transfer. Such functions may be shared between several elements of varying designs and levels of capability. Other unique functions that may be implemented include support and storage of ISRU-produced materials and/or consumables, demonstration of bioregenerative ECLS systems, and demonstration of plant growth sub-systems. Some notional surface habitation concepts are shown in [Figure 3-16.](#page-136-1)

3.2.4.4 Human Systems

In HLR, FE, and other campaign segments, vehicles, systems, training, and operations all must be designed for the "human system" — the crew, the crew support systems, and supporting mission systems and ground teams. Knowledge and lessons learned from missions accomplished in HLR will be incorporated and advanced to support longer-duration missions in space and on the lunar surface. Activities in FE will be more complex, will involve crew moving between more elements when compared to HLR, and will incrementally utilize increasing Earth-independent operations. Therefore, additional capabilities will be necessary. Example functions (from the current function list in Appendix A) that are new or significantly enhanced in the FE segment for this sub-architecture include:

- Provide in-mission crew training on the lunar surface
- Provide hardware for crew medical care on the lunar surface
- Provide crew countermeasure system(s) to support the crew for moderate (month+) to long (year+) durations in cislunar space

3.2.4.5 Infrastructure Support

EGS is a key pillar of the infrastructure sub-architecture in HLR and throughout the follow-on campaign segments, established to develop and operate systems and facilities necessary to process, launch, and recover vehicles. As human exploration expands into cislunar space, the Moon, Mars, and beyond, capabilities and lessons learned from Earth infrastructure will be applied to the exploration destinations and expanded capabilities on Earth. The infrastructure subarchitecture supports the other sub-architectures in terms of facilities, systems, equipment, and services on the ground (Earth), in space, and while on the surface. The infrastructure subarchitecture will expand to support other sub-architectures as they mature.

The functions EGS fulfills in the FE campaign segment are shown in [Table 3-18.](#page-150-0)

3.2.4.6 In-Situ Resource Utilization Systems

Knowledge and lessons learned from the demonstration activities in HLR will be applied to the next steps in the ISRU sub-architecture for FE. The shift from reconnaissance, initial resource assessment, and sampling to resource reserve estimation, acquisition, and processing occurs in this segment. Because of the significant differences in resource understanding and characteristics, terrain, environments, extraction, and processing technologies, and ISRU products, a dual path that includes both water mining in PSRs and oxygen and/or metal extraction from regolith is being pursued. Demonstrations to prove out technologies to enable both pathways are envisioned. Both pathways support surface construction activities that occur in this segment. In addition, the ISRU sub-architecture is directly tied to the power sub-architecture given the significant power demands of supporting large-scale ISRU; to the C&PNT sub-architecture for command, control, and monitoring for ISRU operations and navigating about the lunar surface to locations of interest; and to the mobility and logistics sub-architectures to move and/or transfer commodities between exploration assets on the lunar surface. Example functions (from the current function list in Appendix A) that are new or significantly enhanced in the FE segment for this sub-architecture include:

- Produce scalable quantities of water from in-situ materials on the lunar surface
- Process and refine scalable quantities of in-situ feedstock resources on the lunar surface

• Conduct additive/subtractive manufacturing utilization payload and/or equipment operations on the lunar surface

3.2.4.7 Logistics Systems

For the HLR segment, logistics deliveries include logistics modules to Gateway and what can be transported with the crew to the lunar surface in the HLS. Additionally, during HLR, any trash or waste generated that remains on the lunar surface will be positioned so as not to impact operations. As capabilities expand for the FE segment, dedicated lunar surface delivery platforms are needed to support more crew and longer durations on the lunar surface. To align with the recurring tenet of maximizing crew time for exploration, NASA needs a strategy that minimizes crew-time needed for logistics operations while also maximizing delivery efficiency. The first step is to understand the amount and types of logistics items needed, which, along with the interfaces of the planned surface elements, drive the type and quantity of the logistics carriers needed. Carrier types would include those suitable for EVA transfer and sized to be carriable through a hatch or an airlock while accommodating various logistics items including dry goods and water. Other carrier types, such as tanks, would be used to transport gases, unless there is an umbilical transfer capability. Additionally, pressurized carriers that use a berthing/docking-type interface will be used, when possible, to replace or house the smaller, carriable carriers to allow for shirt-sleeve transfer of the logistics items. Finally, certain unpressurized items (e.g., oversized items or those for external utilization) may require specialized carriers that account for operational considerations. Once these carriers have been used for logistics delivery, they will be used for long-term storage of trash and waste. As capabilities to recover or process trash and waste become available, they may be incorporated into the sub-architecture. Example functions (from the current function list in Appendix A) that are new or significantly enhanced in the FE segment this sub-architecture include:

- Manage waste from habitable asset(s) on the lunar surface
- Transfer gases to habitable assets on the lunar surface
- Transfer water to habitable assets on the lunar surface

The functions the GLE fulfills in the FE campaign segment are shown in [Table 3-19.](#page-150-1)

3.2.4.8 Mobility Systems

Mobility capabilities are necessary to enable exploration in the FE segment beyond the EVA walking range of the crew described in the HLR segment. The lunar terrain vehicle (LTV) and the pressurized rover (PR) are elements in development to meet several of the mobility-related Moon to Mars Objectives. Functions that typically fall into this category include providing local unpressurized and pressurized crew and uncrewed surface mobility, as well as autonomous and/or tele-operations and enabling additional science and utilization. Additional capabilities beyond the LTV and PR are currently under assessment. Example functions (from the current function list in Appendix A) that are new or significantly enhanced in the FE segment of this subarchitecture include:

- Reposition a moderate amount of cargo (1000s of kg) at the south pole region on the lunar surface
- Enable crew surface extravehicular activities at the lunar far side region
- Enable pressurized surface mobility in sunlit areas and non-PSRs

3.2.4.8.1 Exploration Extravehicular Activity System Overview

With the addition of the airlock at Gateway, the xEVA System allows crew members to perform extravehicular exploration, research, construction, servicing, repair operations, and utilization and science in cislunar orbit in addition to on the lunar surface. EVA traverse and tasks may be augmented by robotics and rovers. The xEVA System includes the EVA suit, EVA tools, and vehicle interface equipment. Gateway EVAs and lunar surface EVAs will utilize xEVA suits, which could be from different vendors or include upgrades (utilizing the common vehicle interfaces).

The functions the xEVA fulfills in the FE campaign segment are shown in [Table 3-20.](#page-151-0)

3.2.4.8.2 Lunar Terrain Vehicle

The LTV is an unpressurized rover with the primary role of transporting two suited crewmembers and secondary role of supporting science, exploration, and operations objectives. The LTV provides reliable and safe transportation between waypoints for two suited crew members and cargo. The LTV can carry cargo, including various payloads, work packages, logistics supplies, science tools, samples, and associated stowage containers, etc., across the lunar surface. The LTV can act as a communications relay in the surface architecture and can provide PNT to support crewed and uncrewed traverses, as well as uncrewed science payload operations, enhancing coverage and range for exploration. It can also be used for landing site reconnaissance and payload utilization. It can be operated manually by a single suited crew member, remotely by teleoperators, or via some autonomous operations. Another of its primary functions will be to provide the crew a companion platform in the event of another mobile asset's failure to return to the habitation asset. Two mobility platforms operating together allows for farther crewed traverses than would be possible utilizing a single mobility platform.

Figure 3-17. Lunar Terrain Vehicle (Artist Rendition)

The functions the LTV fulfills in the FE campaign segment are shown in [Table 3-21.](#page-152-0)

3.2.4.8.3 Japanese Pressurized Rover

The Japan-provided PR is a mobile habitable vehicle whose primary purpose is to support crew, utilization, operations, and Mars analog objectives. The PR provides reliable and safe transportation of two crew members inside a pressurized cabin. It can support various payloads, work packages, logistics, science tools, samples, and associated stowage containers. The PR can be operated manually by a single IVA crew member from the cabin, remotely by tele-operators on Earth, or via some autonomous operations. The PR will travel distances compatible with exploration traverses, as well as uncrewed traverses. The PR can perform extended exploration missions lasting up to 28 days with logistics resupply necessary for missions longer than 14 days. When operated in conjunction with the LTV, the traverse distance could be increased over the limitations of the PR alone, since the LTV can be used as a backup mobility asset in the event of a failure.

Figure 3-18. Pressurized Rover (Artist Rendition)

The functions the PR fulfills in the FE campaign segment are shown in [Table 3-22.](#page-153-0)

3.2.4.8.4 Mobility Concepts

The current defined mobility elements, LTV and PR, are primarily for crew transportation, with limited cargo mobility functions. Other planned near-term robotic missions, such as those being delivered through the CLPS program, provide only small-scale mobility. Cargo offloading and handling will need to be conducted before the crew arrives at each landing location (point of origin) and then again at local lunar exploration and habitation sites (point of use). These exploration and habitation sites will likely be located away from each landing location, requiring mobility and handling capabilities to transport cargo of varying size and mass for full utilization within the architecture. Additional mobility and handling concepts are under study to support manipulation and movement of cargo between and at points of use. As discussed in NASA's 2024 "Lunar Mobility Drivers and Needs" white paper, these additional capabilities may include the ability to aggregate infrastructure, driven by larger elements such as habitation systems.

3.2.4.9 Power Systems

The baseline power strategy for HLR is element self-sufficiency, which presumes that every element can provide its own power and energy storage needed to perform the intended mission for a given time span. The HLR approach is to locate elements at lunar South Pole sites with favorable solar illumination and short eclipse periods. Lunar missions beyond a few specific South Pole locations will require power production through the approximately 360-hour lunar night, which significantly impacts power system mass and volume. As the lunar surface architecture expands and likely becomes more integrated, the power sub-architecture will likely expand to include internal augmentation (e.g., power added after delivery of an asset to the surface), external augmentation (e.g., a surface asset can connect to a single independent power element to charge/recharge) and/or a power grid (e.g., multiple independent power elements that form a power network for elements and other surface assets to utilize). These capabilities will be further refined through future assessments. In addition, transitioning samples and other utilization packages from the lunar surface, through cislunar space, and back to Earth will require interoperability and resources (e.g., power). A key objective is to develop an incremental lunar power generation and distribution system that is evolvable to support continuous robotic/human operation and is capable of scaling to global power utilization and industrial power levels. Example functions (from the current function list in Appendix A) that are new or significantly enhanced in the FE segment this sub-architecture include:

- Generate power in the south pole region on the lunar surface
- Store energy in the south pole region on the lunar surface
- Provide power for deployed surface utilization payload(s) and/or equipment
- Distribute power in the south pole region on the lunar surface

3.2.4.10 Autonomous Systems & Robotics Systems

As the number of astronauts and the availability of the surface crew to perform tasks could be limited, a balance of crewed and uncrewed operations will maximize crew exploration time. Robots are well suited to performing tasks that are tedious, highly repetitive, or dangerous. In addition, uncrewed operations can continue throughout the year while crew are not present on the surface or in space. Robots may be operated autonomously with or without human supervision, remotely by nearby crew, or by mission controllers on Earth, with progressive reductions in situational awareness and response time. Although the Autonomous Systems and Robotics (AS&R) sub-architecture is apparent during HLR with the use of rovers, such as PRIME-1 and VIPER, to perform various objectives, the human-robotic partnership is embraced starting in the FE segment. Robotic and autonomous systems are being used as precursor explorers preceding crewed missions to inform scientific investigations, mission planning, identification and availability of usable resources, and ISRU technologies. Robots can serve as crew assistants in space and on the lunar surface and as caretakers for conducting utilization and science activities. Robotic reconnaissance (e.g., scouting, surveying, mapping, collecting samples), site preparation ahead of human exploration missions, and robotic and autonomous systems capable of offloading, handling, staging, and prepositioning cargo and logistics supplies can save valuable crew time. The first of many capabilities is GERS. GERS provides the capability to deploy and retrieve external utilization payloads; inspect the Gateway system; capture, berth, and relocate robotic spacecraft or modules; support contingency maintenance; support self-maintenance of robotic components; and support crew EVAs. As there are comparable needs for robotic manipulation on the lunar surface (among other robotic use cases), synergistic opportunities will continue to be assessed to identify additional capabilities and elements needed to achieve Moon to Mars Objectives. Example functions (from the current function list in Appendix A) that are new or significantly enhanced in the FE segment of this sub-architecture include:

- Control robotic system(s) in cislunar space by in-situ crew
- Control robotic system(s) in PSRs on the lunar surface from Earth and/or cislunar space
- Interface robotic system(s) with logistics carriers on the lunar surface
- Perform robotic manipulation of payloads, logistics, and/or equipment on the lunar surface

3.2.4.11 Transportation Systems

The Transportation Systems sub-architecture builds upon the SLS, Orion, HLS, and CLPS Provider Landers accomplishments planned during HLR and continues to emphasize these elements in the FE segment. As the Moon to Mars Objectives point to expansion of crew size and longer durations on the surface, cargo landers and return vehicles become a necessity. The Human-class Delivery Lander (HDL) and small-to-medium class payload landers are needed to deliver cargo to the lunar surface, ranging from utilization payloads and logistics to additional surface elements like the PR and surface habitation. An increase in capabilities for the HLS Integrated Lander is also planned to accommodate four crew and longer durations on the lunar surface. Additional capabilities that may be grouped into this sub-architecture include spacecraft aggregation in cislunar space, cargo delivery (e.g., science, utilization, technology, crew logistics) from Earth and unloading on the lunar surface, logistics transfer (e.g., fluids and gasses), cargo return (e.g., increased cargo return mass and size) from the lunar surface to Earth, and in-space and/or surface cryogenic storage of propellant. Additional example functions (from the current function list in Appendix A) that that are new or significantly enhanced in the FE segment for this sub-architecture include:

- Transport a large amount of cargo (100s of kg) from lunar surface to Earth
- Provide precision landing for cargo transport to the lunar surface
- Transport crew from cislunar space to distributed sites outside of the south pole on the lunar surface
- Transport a limited amount of cargo (100s of kg) from Earth to the far side of the lunar surface

The functions the SLS fulfills in the FE campaign segment are shown in [Table 3-23.](#page-155-0)

The functions the Orion spacecraft fulfills in the FE campaign segment are shown in [Table 3-24.](#page-155-1)

3.2.4.11.1Human Landing System Integrated Lander

Additional capabilities planned for the HLS Integrated Lander will be exercised in the FE segment. Missions with the HLS Integrated Lander will use the HLS land a crew of up to four and will leverage additional habitable surface assets to support the larger crew for the duration of the lunar stay. These missions may include the capability to land and operate at non-polar landing sites or to operate for extended durations at the lunar South Pole. This HLS configuration has increased performance capabilities, allowing for enhanced up and down mass to and from the lunar surface and increased darkness survivability. These missions will also seek sustainable HLS designs that may include reusable elements or interactions with other systems in the lunar vicinity.

Figure 3-19. Human Landing System—One of the Integrated Lander Configurations as Awarded (Image credit: SpaceX)

Figure 3-20. Human Landing System—One of the Integrated Lander Configurations as Awarded (Image credit: Blue Origin)

The functions the HLS fulfills in the FE campaign segment are shown in [Table 3-25.](#page-156-0)
3.2.4.11.2 Human-class Delivery Lander

A large cargo lander will support delivery missions to the lunar South Pole region and will be capable of delivering a wide range of small to large lunar surface assets as cargo. The large cargo lander can support cargo that remains integrated with the lander on the lunar surface and can provide offloading capability to deliver cargo such as a rover directly to the lunar surface. Examples of large cargo that may be delivered are the PR, surface habitation elements, and surface power elements. Smaller cargo items can also be delivered co-manifested with the larger items or as several small items that are grouped together or individually. The large cargo lander is not intended to deliver crew. Crew interaction with the large cargo lander occurs primarily through EVA access to cargo. For cargo that remains integrated with the lander, such as a surface habitat, this includes EVA ingress/egress capability. During transit from the Earth and while on the lunar surface, the large cargo lander will support the cargo with services until the cargo is ready to operate independently. Once the large cargo lander completes its operations and enables the cargo to operate independently, it will transition to a safe condition/state.

The functions the Human-class Delivery Lander fulfills in the FE campaign segment are shown in [Table 3-26.](#page-158-0)

3.2.4.11.3 Lunar Surface Cargo Lander

The lunar surface cargo lander will deliver cargo to the lunar surface, similar to HDL and CLPS. The payload capability is anticipated to be much smaller than that of HDL, with the lunar surface cargo lander targeted to support delivery of logistics, utilization payloads, power systems, communications systems, and other potential payloads. The lunar surface cargo lander will provide all services necessary to maintain cargo from launch vehicle integration through landing on the lunar surface until the cargo is either offloaded from the lander or in an operational state. [Figure 3-21](#page-144-0) shows a representative concept of a lunar surface cargo lander.

Figure 3-21. Lunar Surface Cargo Lander Representative Concept

The functions the lunar surface cargo lander fulfills in the FE campaign segment are shown in [Table 3-27.](#page-159-0)

3.2.4.11.4Cargo Lander Concepts

In addition to the large surface elements delivered by the HDL landers and lunar surface cargo lander, the longer duration, larger crew sizes, and more extensive lunar surface operations

possible in the FE segment will require the routine delivery of equipment and supplies to the lunar surface. The FE segment will also require continued delivery of utilization payloads for reconnaissance and scientific observations across many potential exploration regions. Additionally, there is the need for delivery of technology demonstration payloads, mobility systems, and logistics to support longer-duration surface missions and resupply of a variety of surface assets. While some of these items may be delivered with crew on HLS or co-manifested with larger elements on HDL, additional cargo landers will provide flexibility and capability for robust exploration. Options for cargo landers to deliver these assets include those under NASA's CLPS program described in previous sections and other cargo landers still in formulation.

The functions CLPS Provider Landers fulfill in the FE campaign segment are shown in [Table 3-28.](#page-159-1)

3.2.4.12 Utilization Systems

The utilization sub-architecture will continue to expand on the accomplishments of HLR to take advantage of new architecture capabilities, including extended traverse capability with mobility platforms; enhancement of the end-to-end sampling capability, including returning of conditioned samples from PSRs; extended-duration mission capability on the lunar surface and in cislunar orbit; and increased facilities for IVA and EVA research. A common enabler of utilization accomplishments is the capability to deliver to and return from the lunar surface larger quantities of cargo. Each of these aspects is currently being assessed to drive conceptual elements that can aid in achieving the capabilities needed to accomplish NASA's utilization objectives. Example functions (from the current function list in Appendix A) that are new or significantly enhanced in the FE segment for this sub-architecture include:

- Provide intravehicular activity facilities utilization accommodation, and resources, operable during crewed and uncrewed increments, on the lunar surface
- Provide capability to recover and package surface and/or shallow sub-surface samples, maintaining scientific integrity of the samples, from PSRs on the lunar surface
- Provide capability to recover and package sub-surface samples from non-PSRs and sunlit regions on the lunar surface
- Provide capability to recover and package sub-surface samples maintaining scientific integrity of the samples, from PSRs on the lunar surface
- Stow collected samples on exploration assets while on the lunar surface, while maintaining scientific integrity of the samples

The functions Equipment fulfills in the FE campaign segment are shown in [Table 3-29.](#page-160-0) Mappings to science/research payloads and technology demonstrations are removed for this revision and are forward work.

3.2.5 Exploration Asset Mapping

The following tables map assets to the functions they fulfill. Functions mapped to exploration assets do not indicate that an asset fully satisfies the use case or blueprint objective, or that completion is achieved. While some of the functions are grouped into performance classes, for most of the functions, there is no intent to indicate how well the asset accomplishes the function and supports the use case. Rather, in those cases, it represents the asset contributes to the architecture by providing the associated function. Unmapped functions are indicators of where there are gaps in the current architecture and where future efforts can be focused. Note: mapping to science/research payloads and technology demonstrations are removed for this revision and is forward work.

Table 3-14. Functions Fulfilled by LCRNS During the FE Segment

Table 3-15. Functions Fulfilled by NSN/DSN During the FE Segment

Table 3-16. Functions Fulfilled by Gateway Expanded Capability During the FE Segment

Table 3-17. Functions Fulfilled by Initial Surface Habitation During the FE Segment

Table 3-18. Functions Fulfilled by Exploration Ground Systems During the FE Segment

Table 3-19. Functions Fulfilled by Gateway Logistics Element During the FE Segment

Table 3-20. Functions Fulfilled by xEVA System During the FE Segment

Table 3-21. Functions Fulfilled by Lunar Terrain Vehicle During the FE Segment

Table 3-22. Functions Fulfilled by Pressurized Rover During the FE Segment

Table 3-23. Functions Fulfilled by SLS During the FE Segment

Table 3-24. Functions Fulfilled by Orion During the FE Segment

Table 3-25. Functions Fulfilled by HLS During the FE Segment

Table 3-26. Functions Fulfilled by Human-Class Delivery System During the FE Segment

Table 3-27. Functions Fulfilled by Lunar Surface Cargo Lander During the FE Segment

Table 3-28. Functions Fulfilled by CLPS Provider Landers During the FE Segment

Table 3-29. Functions Fulfilled by Equipment During the FE Segment

3.2.6 Unallocated Use Cases and Functions

As the architecture matures and the FE segment is refined, use cases and functions will be mapped to FE elements, with a partial mapping already completed. The complete list of unallocated functions appears below. Note, mapping to science/research payloads and technology demonstrations is forward work. The following is an abbreviated list of topics areas for those functions:

- Habitation for moderate (month+) to extended (year+) durations
- Repositioning moderate and large cargo
- Dedicated power generation and distribution
- Crew far side activities
- Most ISRU functions
- Crew working with autonomous systems
- Transfer of water and gases between assets

Table 3-30. Unallocated Functions for the FE Segment

3.2.7 Open Questions, Ongoing Assessments, and Future Work

With forward work remaining to define the FE segment, there are open questions on the segment, from the architectural approach(es) to accomplish the objectives to specific element and subarchitecture planning and design. The open questions here are non-comprehensive examples of the types of areas that will be addressed in future work; they are only notionally binned for FE. This section will be updated in future revisions of the ADD.

- What is an attainable balance in mission types and locations to address infrastructure buildup objectives and scientific exploration of diverse sites objectives?
- How can Gateway and future cislunar assets along with lunar surface assets be utilized to prepare for crewed Mars exploration?
- With the expansion of mission types and durations, what are the options for logistics resupply, both for delivery to cislunar space and the lunar surface and for transfer to the necessary location(s)?
- What waste management and element repurposing, recycling, or disposal approaches should be utilized for sustainable exploration?
- What assets should be available to support non-polar sorties?
- What benefits do various levels of ISRU provide for the lunar surface activities?
- How can the architecture expansion in FE, such as deep drilling and expanded access to regions of interest beyond the South Pole region, enable key science and technology needs (e.g., polar volatiles, ISRU, biological, planetary protection, environments)?
- What options are available to increase sample return and conditioned cargo from the lunar surface to Earth?
- What options are available to significantly enhance cargo return from the lunar surface?
- What assets should be available to support sustained scientific activity in the South Pole region (e.g., external power augmentation)? How should the assets be distributed, and what are the supporting infrastructure dependencies?
- What strategies should be considered for maintaining asset health through uncrewed periods?
- When should ISRU strategies be applied to the architecture?
- What assets should be available to support surveillance and reconnaissance of the lunar surface from lunar orbit?

Even as FE expands on what was accomplished in HLR, the FE missions set the stage for Sustained Lunar Evolution and make progress toward Humans to Mars.

3.3 SUSTAINED LUNAR EVOLUTION SEGMENT

3.3.1 Summary of Objectives

In the Sustained Lunar Evolution (SLE) campaign segment, NASA aims to build, together with its partners, a future of economic opportunity, expanded utilization (including science), and greater participation on and around the Moon. The focus of SLE is the growth beyond the FE segment to accommodate objectives of increased global science capability, long-duration/increased population, and the large-scale production of goods and services derived from lunar resources.

This segment is an "open canvas," embracing new ideas, systems, and partners to grow to a true sustained lunar presence. The steps for obtaining use cases for the SLE segment will involve broad coordination. Given the maturity of this segment, there is insufficient depth to allocate functions at this time beyond the high-level capabilities associated with the objectives. However, for context, notional examples of the future use case and the sub-architecture dependencies over time are discussed as a placeholder for the initial work that needs to be completed.

Sustained lunar presence represents responsible long-term exploration of the surface and the establishment of a robust lunar economy. This segment is driven by RT-9 (Commerce and Space Development: foster the expansion of the economic sphere beyond Earth orbit to support U.S. industry and innovation), TH-3 (Develop system(s) to allow crew to explore, operate, and live on the lunar surface and in lunar orbit with scalability to continuous presence conducting scientific and industrial utilization as well as Mars analog activities), and the infrastructure objectives with the overarching goal of: "Create an interoperable global lunar utilization infrastructure where U.S. industry and international partners can maintain continuous robotic and human presence on the lunar surface for a robust lunar economy without NASA as the sole user, while accomplishing science objectives and testing for Mars." A sustained architecture at the lunar surface would further enable achievement of key science objectives in lunar/planetary science, heliophysics, human and biological science, and physics and physical science and facilitate addressing new science objectives identified as a result of discoveries made during the previous campaign segments.

3.3.2 Use Cases and Functions

Architecting from the right requires the development of use cases that are coordinated with NASA's partners and based in economic plausibility to derive the functional needs. [Table 3-31](#page-169-0) is an example set of interconnected notional paths worked in parallel to incrementally achieve sustained states of increased duration and population, increased economic opportunity, and increased science capability as guided by the objectives and recurring tenets. Future work will involve developing uses cases in coordination with NASA's partners.

Table 3-31. Example Sub-Architectures and Use Case Evolution for SLE Segment

3.3.2.1 Increased Science Capability

The science objectives are supported by the ability to deliver science instruments to various locations in cislunar space and the lunar surface and return the acquired data or samples to Earth. In addition, providing real-time human interaction where science activities are being performed increases the ability to rapidly react to discoveries and to determine optimal areas and samples to explore. When coupled with the ability to update, replace, and repair the systems for performing science, human presence is extremely beneficial. Prior to this segment, science capability is governed by the initial orbital platforms, landers, and regional exploration infrastructure, coupled with the HLS's ability to support global lunar sorties, including to the lunar far side. Although the FE segment will include the function to return the required science samples gathered during a 30 day–class mission, approaches to increase the science capability as mission duration and available power grow beyond the previous segment's limits will have to be addressed. A notional path working across the sub-architectures to increase science abilities beyond the previous segment is discussed next, in the context of the objectives and key characteristics.

Increasing science capability is enabled by enhancing multiple sub-architectures, with trades within those architectures to understand the best approach. If global concurrent lunar science activities represent the desired end state, then the lunar communications and navigation subarchitecture will need to evolve via interoperability, scalability, and reconfigurability to allow concurrent science missions distributed across the lunar globe to send back data via high-speed links. This would represent a continued evolution beyond the initial communications/navigation infrastructure that features direct-to-Earth for the lunar near side, relay service for the South Pole region and limited relay services for non–South Pole regions. NASA and its partners can trade different approaches for satellite constellations, surface relay infrastructure and technologies such as optical links to enable high-data-rate communications.

Working backwards from and forward to the notional use cases across the segments informs key sub-architecture questions like what access and purity for viable ISRU are needed; what power interface and standards can enable a power grid that evolves to industrial scale; and what communications, navigation, and positioning architecture features will be required to scale to an evolved lunar future.

3.3.2.2 Increased Economic Opportunity

Economic opportunity on and around the Moon in the context of this discussion means that governments are no longer the sole source of support for the funding of the lunar activities and that non-governmental entities would like to invest in, and profit from, activities at the Moon. NASA aims to reduce the barriers of entry for activities on and around the Moon and to provide capabilities others can leverage. Artemis is making the foundational investments for access to the Moon from a transportation, exploration, and science perspective. Building upon investments initiated in HLR and FE, the opportunity for industry at this point is to leverage those investments to enable regular and likely reusable lunar access (both robotic and human) to additional governmental entities, scientific institutions, international entities, and industry partners. Additional investments in communications, navigation, ISRU, power, and transportation subarchitectures will be needed to enhance access and return, facilitating the beginning of new supporting service economic opportunities in those areas.

Economic opportunity/profitability could progress along the lines of 1) information transfer, 2) delivering goods, 3) providing services at the Moon to enable others, and 4) bringing resources from the Moon to other destinations. Larger-scale economic opportunity begins to emerge when lunar reach and access are expanded, small-scale ISRU propellant production grows to industrial scale, aggregate power grows from kilowatts to megawatts, and the use of in-situ material and manufacturing become more economical than importing everything from Earth. Once ISRU production is of sufficient scale, exporting propellant and material beyond the lunar surface manifests as an economic opportunity.

3.3.2.3 Increased Duration and Population

Increased science capability influences economic opportunity, which overlaps both with the need to increase the population of humans at the lunar South Pole region and the need for them to stay there longer. However, humans currently require a significant quantity of resources imported from Earth to survive, along with large amounts of pressurized volume in which to live safely. To significantly increase the size and duration of the lunar population, local resources will eventually be required to provide water, support food growth, and build out infrastructure, with commercial or internationally provided crew transportation systems infused to increase mission frequency and crew population. As an interim step, small modular systems could be supplied by multiple partners to act as a bridge between the initial FE capabilities and the full-up ISRU systems to provide additional habitation and logistics. Fission power augmentation will also be required to achieve a year-round population at the lunar South Pole region, as available sunlight oscillates by month and season. At some point in this evolution, the possibility of lunar tourism appears, possibly at first with Earth-provided modular systems at a higher cost, then later at a larger, more affordable scale once lunar resources can be fully leveraged.

3.3.3 Reference Missions and Concepts of Operations

Given the maturity of this segment, future work will include defining reference missions and detailed concepts of operations as the architecture matures.

3.3.4 Elements and Sub-Architectures

Although the notional use cases discuss the implications of sub-architecture evolution across those use cases and time, actual element functional allocation and sub-architecture evolution will require the development of the use cases by the appropriate stakeholders before further decomposition can be performed.

3.3.5 Open Questions, Ongoing Assessments, and Future Work

Increased science capability, economic opportunity, and duration/population at the lunar South Pole region have the potential to evolve and merge in the future to form the first sustained human civilization beyond Earth. The capabilities put in place during the initial Artemis segments feed forward and enable the future enhancements, and the partnerships forged grow to incorporate a broader community. As Artemis solidifies its implementation of the previous segments, planning for the SLE segment needs to begin in earnest, as the ideation of both the future lunar state and the path(s) for getting there will impact what comes before it. Given the objective decomposition process as described in Section [1.3.1,](#page-14-0) the notional use cases and functions described in this section need to be replaced with ones developed by the segment stakeholders in future revisions of the ADD.

Input from across Moon to Mars workshops, DARPA's LunA-10 study, the Lunar Surface Innovation Consortium, (LSIC) and the Consortium for Space Mobility and In-space servicing, assembly, and manufacturing (ISAM) Capabilities (COSMIC) have indicated the need to identify "demand signals" for services that would begin in FE segment and grow in the SLE segment. These services include logistics, mobility, robotic servicing, ISRU propellant, power/energy, crew habitation, assembly and construction, exploration/science systems, and communications/data/navigation systems. Work has begun to take these inputs and derive an initial vision of what SLE could be after the FE segment is complete. New reference missions for the SLE segment are in the process of being identified and should help drive mapping of use cases for the SLE segment.

3.4 HUMANS TO MARS SEGMENT

3.4.1 Summary of Objectives

NASA's Moon to Mars Strategy laid out specific tenets and goals to guide the development of an integrated Moon to Mars Architecture. In addition to the cross-cutting science and operations goals, Mars-specific goals both in infrastructure and in transportation and habitation provide further architecture implementation guidance.

3.4.2 Use Cases and Functions

The decomposition of objectives into characteristics and needs, use cases, and functions is provided in Appendix A for the Humans to Mars (H2M) segment. The decomposition follows a similar philosophy to the HLR, FE, and SLE segments, whereby beginning with agency objectives for the Mars segment, the use cases and functions necessary to accomplish the objectives are identified. As the H2M segment continues to be matured, so will the functional breakdown from the objectives. As the use cases and functions for this segment are still in flux and elements have not been defined, mapping to elements has not begun yet and remains as forward work.

As a representative example, objective TH-04-M ("Develop in-space and surface habitation systems for crew to live in deep space for extended durations, enabling future missions to Mars") drives several characteristics and needs. These include capabilities to allow crew to live in deep space, to manage crew health and performance, and to conduct missions on the Martian surface. Sample use cases that contribute to fulfilling those characteristics and needs include, but are not limited to:

- UC-H-102-M, Habitation for extended duration (year+) crew mission(s) in deep space and/or Mars vicinity
- UC-H-103-M, Habitation for crew mission(s) on the Martian surface
- UC-H-104-M, Crew living for extended duration (year+) crew mission(s) in deep space and/or Mars vicinity
- UC-H-105-M, Crew living for mid-duration (month+) crew mission(s) on the Martian surface

Some of the functions that map to these use cases include:

- FN-X-101-M, Manage crew health and performance (medical, physiological, psychological, environmental, task support, etc.) for extended duration (year+) in deep space and/or Mars vicinity
- FN-X-103-M, Enable crew exercise in deep space and/or Mars vicinity
- FN-L-301-M, Manage waste/trash and housekeeping for nominal and contingency use for extended duration (year+) crew mission(s) in deep space and/or Mars vicinity
- FN-H-105-M, Manage a pressurized habitable environment for crew for extended duration (year+) in deep space and/or Mars vicinity

Note that the numbering applied to Mars use cases and functions does *not* follow sequentially from the lunar functions; all numbers in each category (e.g., Transportation, Habitation, Infrastructure Support, etc.) start over from 001 and are mapped only to the H2M segment.

Additionally, the decomposition considered the existence of certain "support functions" that are inherent to almost all spaceflight elements and therefore need not be explicitly mapped within every single objective. These support functions are documented, but they are mapped to other objectives that more specifically address the functional area. For example, MI-01-M, "Develop Mars surface power sufficient for an initial human Mars exploration campaign" is the objective that was decomposed to a variety of Mars surface power functions; however, these surface power functions are "support" and therefore not mapped to every single objective whose decomposed use cases would feasibly need power. Instead, it is understood that support functions such as those under MI-01-M are needed to enable other use cases. Support functions generally cover power, communications, command and data handling, positioning, navigation, and timing. Support functions are applicable to use cases performed in any location — including Earth vicinity, deep space, Mars vicinity, or the Martian surface.

Finally, the term "deep space and/or Mars vicinity" has been used intentionally in the objective decomposition. Per the glossary, "deep space" is the vast region of space that extends to interplanetary space, to Mars and beyond. The term "Mars vicinity" here refers to the region of space around the Mars system, including Mars orbit. As the Mars architecture continues to be defined over time, there will be more information about where and how certain use cases and functions are performed, such as on what trajectory or in what orbit, so the only appropriate level of specificity at this time is "Mars vicinity."

3.4.3 Mars Trade Space, Reference Missions, and Concepts of Operations

For the purpose of initial analysis, a technically feasible early practical Mars mission was used. For example, a Mars surface mission would be too challenging for a solo explorer, so two crew to the surface is the current practical minimum working assumption. However, the trade space remains wide open. Definition of the full trade space, along with updated reference missions and concepts of operations, are being developed in the context of the Moon to Mars Objectives and will aid in developing the Mars architecture decision roadmap.

3.4.3.1 "How" to Get to Mars and Back?

Figure 3-22. Major Mars Architecture Transportation Options Trade Space

Because the first challenge of any Mars mission is simply to get to Mars safely and return to Earth, the Earth-Mars transportation system elicits a substantial amount of discussion relative to the "How?" trade space. To that end, recent analysis was designed to explore the pros and cons of different transportation system options across a wider range of mission profiles than previously considered. The initial metric of interest for recent assessments was total roundtrip mission duration, due to the significant duration-related flow-down impacts to crew health and performance, technology investment, development timelines, and cost. Historically, Mars mission duration has been treated as a binary choice: either an approximately two-year opposition-class mission characterized by at least one high-energy transit leg and a very short Mars stay (measured in days), or a three-or-more-year conjunction-class mission characterized by lowenergy transits with at least a year-long loiter period at Mars. In truth, mission duration can be thought of as a continuum: the architecture can be optimized for any given duration for a particular opportunity year or a range of durations over different opportunities.

To inform the total mission duration decision, which in turn will inform a host of other decisions (including transportation propulsion technology investments), stakeholders will need several pieces of information: an understanding of system-by-system performance sensitivity over the entire duration trade space and an integrated campaign and risk assessment for the various possible implementations, including integrated risks to the human system. To that end, the Mars architecture concepts presented here are intended to populate a broad swath of the "How" trade space, allowing decision-makers to see how different implementations of four different transportation systems fare in the context of different reference missions (the "Why," "What," and "Where").

As shown in [Figure 3-22,](#page-173-0) transportation system concepts currently under evaluation include hybrid nuclear electric propulsion/chemical (NEP/Chem), nuclear thermal propulsion (NTP), hybrid solar electric propulsion/chemical (SEP/Chem), and all-chemical (All-Chem). Additional transportation system concepts, such as hybrid nuclear thermal/electric propulsion, have been added to the trade space and will be evaluated in the future. For comparison purposes, a common transit habitat (TH) is assumed for all crew transportation systems in the crewed variant; cargo variants of each concept are also available. Two different Mars Descent System (MDS) concepts have also been developed: a relatively small 25 metric ton (t) payload capacity "flat-bed" lander and a larger vertical lander capable of landing the minimum total surface payload cumulative mass of 75 t. For comparison purposes, a common set of surface systems is assumed for all architectures, as is a common Mars Ascent Vehicle (MAV) concept. To bound the trade space, recent analysis has focused on a minimal two-crew MAV concept that relies on Earth-delivered ascent propellant, but more complex options capable of ferrying larger crew complements using ISRU propellants have been studied and will be revisited for later sustained exploration missions as the Mars architecture evolves. Details of these concepts are provided in subsequent sections of this document.

3.4.3.2 Mars Initial Analysis Assumptions

Human Mars mission requirements will be developed under an eventual human Mars exploration program. In lieu of requirements, guidance provided by NASA leadership heavily influenced the architecture concepts used for human Mars mission architecture development.

Recent analysis assumptions used to assess impacts for the Mars exploration campaign's architecture development include the following:

- A light initial exploration footprint: as few as two or as many as six crew members to Mars orbit, and a minimum of two crew members descending and living on the surface for a minimum 30-sol surface stay
- Multiple Mars landers, with the first lander(s) pre-deploying cargo to prepare for a later crew landing
- Modest initial surface infrastructure: a 10 kWe minimum FSP system and communications infrastructure, but no surface habitat, and no return-mission-critical ISRU propellant production
- "All-up mission" approach: crew depart Earth with all the transit propellant they need for the round-trip journey, a consequence if there is no ISRU for early missions

Note that these assumptions are considered for a basis of comparison only. More complex mission scenarios will be addressed in subsequent analysis cycles, but the initial step is to define a practical architecture for the first human Mars mission campaign, from which subsequent missions can expand. It is important to note that none of these assumptions are fixed; they provide a framework for direct architecture comparisons, and all decisions will be made with architecture evolution in mind.

3.4.3.3 Reference Missions for Assessments

To provide stakeholders with a sense for how the Mars architecture changes as just a single constraint is varied, three reference missions of different total durations — but all with the same surface and transit operational constraints, such as environmental exposure, communication delays, and blackout periods — are defined to enable assessment of the architecture to inform the eventual decision roadmap [\(Figure 3-23\)](#page-175-0): Reference Mission 0, with an Earth-Mars-Earth transit duration not to exceed 760 days; Reference Mission 1, with a moderate transit duration of 850 days; and Reference Mission 2, with a more relaxed transit duration of up to 1,100 days.

Reference Mission 0 is an opposition-class mission where at least one leg of the transit requires substantial energy to close the distance gap between Earth and Mars rather than loitering in Mars orbit to take advantage of planetary motion, as in Reference Mission 2. Reference Mission 0 reflects the desire to shorten the roundtrip mission duration in an attempt to reduce long-duration spaceflight risk to the crew.

Reference Mission 2 represents the traditional conjunction-class corner of the trade space, taking advantage of minimum-energy trajectories by loitering in Mars' vicinity for up to a year, which in turn reduces overall propellant mass and launch costs. This reference mission represents the desire to minimize the total mass of the transportation system by minimizing the energy required for the roundtrip journey.

Figure 3-23. SAC22 Humans to Mars Reference Missions for Transportation System Assessments

Reference Mission 1, though accelerated, is not strictly an opposition-class mission; rather, it is on the continuum between traditional opposition-class and conjunction-class missions. This reference mission represents a compromise between Reference Mission 0 and Reference Mission 2 in an attempt to understand the middle ground of this particular trade space.

The rationale for multiple reference missions is twofold: first, to assess candidate transportation propulsion system performance across the continuum from opposition-class to conjunction-class

missions, and second, to answer the question, "Is nuclear propulsion needed to enable crewed Mars missions?" A given propulsion concept may perform well for one mission class type but not others; by considering different mission class types, decision-makers can better compare these architectures and understand how constraints such as total mission duration influence performance.

3.4.3.4 Mars Architecture Element Categories

To aid in assessing extensibility of Mars elements to other destinations or programs and vice versa, the Mars architecture elements can be bucketed into four major categories: 1) Mars surface systems that enable crew to live and work on the planetary surface; 2) entry, descent, landing, and ascent (EDLA) systems that are able to move crew and surface systems from Mars orbit to the Mars surface and return crew and cargo back to Mars orbit; 3) transportation systems that are able to move crew and cargo from Earth to Mars orbit and back again; and 4) crew support systems that cross multiple missions, phases, and destinations, such as EVA spacesuits, distributed communications networks, or crew healthcare systems. These categories, and the key architecture considerations associated with each category, are outlined in [Figure 3-24.](#page-177-0)

Mars Architecture Key Decisions

(full list under analysis)

Crew Ingress/Egress Technology Type and Cabin Atmosphere

Human Rating Approach and Crew/Mission Risk Tolerance

Element Life and/or Re-Use

Crew and Uncrewed Communications Architecture

High Priority Technology Demonstration Objectives

Figure 3-24. Major Mars Architecture Categories and Sample of Related Architecture Key Decisions

As noted above, major decisions (the "Why" or "When," for example) will heavily influence subsequent decisions within each architecture category. Because decisions in one architecture category will ripple across the other categories as mass, cost, or complexity, NASA will study the effects of options across the end-to-end architecture under various decision structures. This process will enable NASA to develop a roadmap of key architecture decisions. It is important to note that [Figure 3-24](#page-177-0) and the description provided in this document are not intended to provide an exhaustive list of decisions and categories, but rather to begin development of the integrated Mars architecture decision roadmap for eventual implementation. Key decisions that will affect all four Mars architecture system categories (i.e., Surface, EDLA, Transportation, and Crew Support) are the Mars architecture Loss-of-Crew Risk Posture and Loss-of-Mission Risk Posture decisions. The loss-of-crew Safety Reporting Thresholds (SRTs) and loss-of-mission requirements specify the minimum tolerable/allowable levels of crew safety (maximum tolerable level of risk) and mission loss, respectively, for the design in the context of the proposed design reference mission(s). These are key early steps in the human-rating certification process that will aid in allocating reliability requirements and identifying safety/risk technological areas that require further development, prioritization, and/or demonstration.

3.4.4 Mars Surface Systems

The initial focus for Mars exploration is the development of a modest first exploration mission, framed as a first step to a sustained human exploration campaign. For the sake of comparison, initial analysis assumes the same surface system elements, regardless of how those systems are transported or deployed to the Martian surface. Long-duration crew stays at Mars will be assessed as future work related to sustained human exploration analysis.

3.4.4.1 Functions

The primary function of human Mars surface systems is to protect crew and utilization payloads from the Mars environment for the duration of the Mars surface mission. Mars surface systems will also be critical to enabling science investigations before the crew arrives, while they are on the surface, and after they depart. For utilization payloads, this includes the pre-deployed cargo phase prior to crew arrival and an extended robotic operations phase following crew departure. Capabilities required to perform this function include utilities such as power and communications, surface mobility assets, and habitable volumes.

3.4.4.2 Key Drivers

Virtually every other surface system decision will hinge on the desired number of crew members on the surface ("Who?") and their purpose ("Why?"). Other decisions could be made first, but these two decisions may be considered anchoring decisions for a logical flow of subsequent surface architecture decisions. Understanding the relationships between these decisions is vital to developing an integrated surface architecture.

3.4.4.2.1 Surface Mission Purpose

The Mars surface systems architecture will vary significantly depending on whether the surface mission purpose is confined to a narrow set of specific human-assisted science objectives, a set of tasks intended to lay the groundwork for sustained human presence, or some combination of the two. Key decisions related to mission purpose will include Science Objectives Priorities, Target State, and High Priority Technology Demonstration Objectives.

Note that decisions involving the surface mission purpose will have impacts beyond the surface systems architecture. For example, Science Objective Priorities and Target State will inform landing site selection, which will drive the EDLA and transportation architectures. These decisions also potentially influence the payload capacity and/or number of landers required.

3.4.4.2.2 Number of Crew Members to the Surface

The minimum practical number of crew members to be sent to the surface is assumed to be two, given NASA's long-standing "buddy rule" for critical spaceflight operations. Initial crew complements as high as six have been analyzed, but ultimately the number of crew members required will be tied to the surface mission purpose, with more crew members needed for more elaborate mission plans and managing critical operations in an environment where communication delay precludes Earth-based ground support. Technology autonomy may support reducing the number of crew; however, architecture design supportive of effective human system integration will be a necessity, especially if the number of crew is minimized. Whether to split crew (with some remaining in orbit while others descend to the surface) will depend on orbital and surface tasks, technology autonomy, and risk to crew and mission during critical operations. Iterative analyses may be required to assess different architectures and concepts of operations.

Designs for systems such ECLSS (and associated maintenance and spares logistics) are driven by the number of crew, as are logistics consumables such as oxygen, food, water, medicine, clothing, and hygiene supplies. The number and type of science objectives that can be addressed is also contingent on the number of crew available to perform utilization tasks.

3.4.4.2.3 Surface Stay Duration

Minimum surface stay duration will be a function of the surface mission purpose and how many crew are available to accomplish the mission. Depending on the architecture, there may be logical stay duration break points, beyond which additional elements may be required to complete the mission.

3.4.4.2.4 Habitation Options

The multiple habitation options are largely based on architecture decisions about crew size, surface mobility strategy, EDLA and transportation capability, utilization needs, and the location of initial and subsequent crewed Mars missions. Numerous studies have analyzed the necessary habitable volumes for a surface crew for various mission scenarios, as well as the EDLA and transportation architectures that must deliver these elements. Habitat reuse or repurpose from previous missions must also be considered as part of the surface habitation strategy.

3.4.4.2.5 Crew and Logistics Ingress/Egress

Habitation decisions will, in turn, inform crew ingress/egress options, with key considerations being dust mitigation, planetary protection, logistics management, contingency access, system maintenance needs, and operational efficiency. Crew and logistics ingress/egress strategy is expected to be substantially informed by Artemis experience on and around the Moon, along with mission-specific constraints such as schedule, mass, and cost. Options include ingress/egress via airlocks, hatches directly into the habitable volume, and/or use of a (suit) port that allows crew to directly don a spacesuit via a detachable hatch mounted directly to the exterior of the habitable volume.

3.4.4.2.6 Surface Mobility Options

Surface mobility options will be derived from decisions related to mission purpose (e.g., where do we need to go to meet the objectives and what do we need to do there?), stay duration (e.g., how long do we have to get there and back to the MAV?), cargo movement (e.g., what payload
elements need to be moved from one location [e.g., the lander deck] to other locations?), and habitation (e.g., are the habitable volumes moveable? what are the traverse distances to/from habitat, landing site, and ascent stage?). Each of these individual considerations will influence the overall exploration radius. Because mobility includes EVA systems, crew ingress/egress must also be considered, as it will influence EVA suit design and operation. Mobility systems may also be required to support autonomous or remotely commanded operations before the crew arrives or after they depart, which may influence the communications architecture. Vehicle mobility systems, such as a pressurized rover, tend to be large, so mobility decisions will impact the EDLA and transportation architectures that must deliver these elements. The functions of the Mars surface mobility systems will need to be supported by PNT systems. Definition of the PNT architecture will be informed by the lunar experience, although the lunar PNT architecture will be intermeshed with Earth-based and Earth-vicinity resources. The Mars PNT architecture will be shaped as the Mars mission(s) is (are) defined.

3.4.4.2.7 Surface Communication Options

Surface communications decisions will ultimately depend on how many surface assets are deployed; their relative proximity to each other and whether there are potential line-of-sight obstructions between them; the mobilization plan as assets move around the surface; which assets need to communicate with each other, with orbiting assets, and/or with Earth; data rates required between various assets; and power available to each asset. Surface communications decisions are expected to be substantially informed by Artemis experience on and around the Moon, and there is likely to be iteration across the elements as mass, power, complexity, or other constraints are balanced.

3.4.4.2.8 Surface Power Options

Fission surface power (FSP) is the leading candidate for primary Mars surface power because of the prevalence of dust storms that have proven difficult for solar-powered Mars surface systems. Although solar-powered short-duration surface missions might have acceptable risk, longer-stay missions or missions pre-deploying powered cargo will likely require surface power technologies, such as FSP, that are resistant to environmental disruption. Initial analysis has identified a minimum power level needed to achieve a 30-sol, light-footprint exploration mission, but assessing and integrating power needs for science and technology demonstration remains as forward work. Therefore, the power level, number of units, and operations plan (e.g., leave surface power system on the lander it arrives on or deploy elsewhere) also remain as forward work.

3.4.4.2.9 Surface Architecture Life and Reuse

Operating life limits, including reuse for subsequent missions, will depend on total surface mission duration (including the pre-deployed cargo and post-crew departure robotic science mission phases) and whether subsequent human missions will return to the first mission landing site.

3.4.4.2.10 Return Propellant Strategy

Return propellant strategy — whether manufacturing propellant in-situ on Mars, using Martianderived resources or Earth-delivered resources — drives surface system mass, power, operational timelines, and potentially landing site selection. The Martian atmosphere is a readily accessible feedstock anywhere on the planet from which oxygen, carbon, and other commodities can be acquired. Water, from which hydrogen and oxygen can be derived, is known to exist in various forms and in discrete locations on the surface or in the near sub-surface across the planet. Acquiring these feedstocks and the choice of propellants to manufacture drive surface system mass, power, operational timelines, and potentially landing site selection.

3.4.4.3 System Concepts

[Table 3-32](#page-181-0) summarizes the minimum set of surface concepts based on functional needs currently being evaluated in the Mars surface architecture. Note that these are in the conceptual design phase; subsequent publications will contain additional surface concept reference detail as they mature, and more concepts may be added as additional functions are defined.

Functions	Example Concept(s)		Heritage and Status	
Provide power for all surface elements	Surface Power		FSP derivative of the Kilopower concept is in formulation for a lunar demonstration mission. Other options have been evaluated but may not meet constraints.	
Provide power storage and distribution from the source to surface end-users or distribution points			Derivative of cables used in Earth applications (e.g., solar farms, offshore wind farms, undersea cabling). Various deployment concepts are being evaluated.	
Enable automated cargo handling			Robotic cargo handler: simple design and components. Should be scalable to multiple cargo types or sizes. Various concepts have been studied; lunar analogs may offer new insights.	
Enable autonomous or remoted-controlled fine motor-control manipulation of mechanisms and other components, such as cables, hoses, etc.	Robotics		Robotic manipulator heritage from ISS robotics, Robonaut, etc.	
Provide aerial exploration and contingency support			Advanced generation of Ingenuity, a robotic helicopter landed with Perseverance and currently in use on Mars	
Provide ability for crew EVA	Refer to Mars Crew Support Architecture, Section 3.4.7			

Table 3-32. Mars Surface System Functions and Example Concepts

3.4.4.4 Concept of Operations

The Mars surface concept of operations will be a function of the key architecture decisions and considerations, such as science objective priorities, crew complement to the surface, surface infrastructure availability, orbital assets, and other factors. Many examples of surface concepts have been published in the past, on varying points the complexity spectrum. Specific concepts of operations are utilized to help evaluate the trade space and understand the implications of different decisions.

3.4.5 Mars Entry, Descent, Landing, and Ascent Systems

All surface system assets, plus the crew's ascent system, must descend and land on Mars. The landed mass required for a human mission exceeds the practical limits of heritage robotic mission EDL systems such as parachutes, airbags, or sky cranes. Two different types of landing systems are currently being assessed: a "flat bed" lander where the payload is mounted on a cargo deck relatively close to the surface and a "vertical lander" that could accommodate higher-mass payloads. The number of landers needed for a particular mission will depend on the lander's payload capacity (both mass and volume) and any pre-deployment timing constraints. For the sake of comparison, it is assumed that both types of landers could deliver the same surface cargo, including the same surface and ascent system with Earth-origin propellants. There are alternative ascent system schemes employing in-situ propellant manufacturing, but because these options stray from the first mission's "light exploration footprint" assumption, those options are deferred to subsequent analysis cycles.

3.4.5.1 Functions

Regardless of design, all Mars EDLA systems must provide a minimum set of functional capabilities to support the integrated Mars architecture.

3.4.5.1.1 Protect Crew and Cargo During Mars Entry, Descent, and Landing

The Mars EDL system must accommodate rapid changes in temperature, pressure, and gravity while decelerating from orbital velocities without transmitting damaging loads to crew or cargo. Because of a combination of potential crew deconditioning, lengthy communications delays with Earth, and the rapid pace of dynamic events during EDL, Mars EDL systems must be designed for autonomous operation with limited real-time crew input.

3.4.5.1.2 Protect Crew and Cargo During Mars Ascent

The Mars ascent system must accommodate rapid changes in temperature, pressure, and gravity without transmitting damaging loads to crew or cargo. The ascent vehicle will also be responsible for providing a habitable environment to support the crew during ascent from the Martian surface.

3.4.5.1.3 Protect Against Cross-Contamination of Martian and Earth Environments

Descent systems will need to minimize the transfer of uncontained Earth material to prevent forward contaminating the Martian environment to maintain pristine scientific samples to the maximum extent possible. Similarly, ascent systems will need to minimize the transfer of uncontained Martian material to prevent backward contaminating Earth return vehicles.

3.4.5.1.4 Provide Integration Interfaces to Mars Transportation and Surface Systems

Mars EDLA elements must receive services (such as power, data, or thermal control) from the Mars transportation system during transit and must provide similar services to the cargo payloads they carry during transit, entry, descent, landing, and surface operations prior to accessing power from surface infrastructure (i.e., from the FSP).

3.4.5.1.5 Provide Precision Landing Capability to Enable Multi-Lander Surface Operations

Lunar landing systems will be insufficient to meet precision landing requirements on Mars. Technologies developed for the Moon may be applicable but insufficient because of differences in EDL on Mars, primarily because of the presence of the Martian atmosphere. Architectural decisions, such as Mars parking orbit, can also impact the required precision landing technology development because of differences in flight path angles and relative velocities during key phases of EDL. Additionally, there may be constraints on landing precision technology imposed by the need to land multiple landers in close proximity for operational purposes while simultaneously maintaining safe distances from previously landed assets to mitigate the potential damage caused by ejecta lofted by terminal descent rocket engines.

3.4.5.2 Key Drivers

EDLA design will be heavily influenced by two human Mars mission requirements and two constraints. Total required payload mass to the surface and return to Mars orbit is informed by "Why" we are going to Mars and "What" we will do there, which in turn drives the number of crew members we need to land on the surface and return to orbit, the equipment we need to land, and the number of crew members and cargo we need to return to orbit. Whether these systems need to be extensible to larger future payloads may also influence EDLA design. EDLA design will also be constrained by the largest indivisible payload item (mass and volume) and whether the EDLA system is required to support all crew to surface and back to orbit together, and split crew operations, in which some crew members land while others remain in orbit. EDLA design may also be constrained by potential human system risks associated with physical deconditioning from the lack of gravity during the transit phase. This deconditioning can also impact crew readiness timelines for Mars surface EVA. EDLA design may also be influenced by requirements on payload protection from entry environments and orbital debris.

3.4.5.2.1 Payload Mass Landed on the Mars Surface

The largest payload landed to date on Mars is about 1 t, but even the most modest human Mars mission is estimated to require at least 75 t of total landed payload for even a short-duration surface stay. Longer, more ambitious missions will require more landed mass. Total landed payload mass, in combination with EDL technology availability, will determine how many landers are needed to complete the mission, which in turn will inform lander production, launch, and delivery cadence, with flow-down impacts to the Earth-Mars transportation architecture. The number of landers will also inform surface system concepts of operations, depending on how far apart landers are deployed, which payloads need to move between landers, and the power and communications strategy between them.

3.4.5.2.2 Payload Mass Ascended to Mars Orbit

Ascent from the Mars surface has never been attempted. The Mars Sample Return Program's Mars Ascent Vehicle is the first planned ascent from another planet. Mars atmosphere and gravity make this a high "gear ratio" operation, meaning several kilograms of ascent propulsion mass are required for every kilogram lofted back to orbit. At a minimum, ascending just two crew members — even without any return cargo — is estimated to require more than 30 t of propellant to a 5-sol Earth transportation vehicle parking orbit. Each additional kilogram of cargo mass further increases ascent propellant mass; either this mass must be added to the landed payload allocation noted above or propellant production mass and additional power must be added to the landed payload mass, with flow-down impacts to the surface operations timeline.

3.4.5.2.3 Largest Indivisible Payload

Total landed payload mass can be distributed across smaller landers, which could minimize the EDL technology development burden, but the limiting factor will be the largest indivisible payload. For modest missions, this is likely to be the MAV. Propellant can be off-loaded onto other landers or manufactured on the surface to reduce landed mass. MAV hardware (e.g., tanks, engines) assembly is possible, but extremely risky, especially for initial missions. For more ambitious, longer-duration missions, a large surface habitat might be the pacing payload mass item, depending on how much/how fast outfitting could be installed after landing. Note that payload volume will be constrained by the payload shroud of Earth launch systems, potentially requiring additional Earth launches or Mars landers for large items that can be modularized, or larger launch and lander vehicles for those items that cannot be segmented and exceed current payload shroud size.

3.4.5.2.4 Orbital Crew Operations

If all crew members are to land on the surface, then direct entry options are possible, but if the architecture is required to support "split crew" operations (where some crew members remain in Mars orbit), then both the transportation and EDL systems may need to support orbital operations. The parking orbit has a significant impact on vehicle design, orbital operations, and timelines. Landing and ascent durations and time required to accommodate multiple launch/landing opportunities are highly dependent on the parking orbit. Additionally, mass of the MAV, which is already identified as a "high gear ratio" element impacting the design of several other architecture elements, is highly sensitive to parking orbit altitude. In general, EDLA systems favor lower parking orbits. However, in-space transportation systems tend to favor high parking orbits.

Therefore, the optimal parking orbit is an integrated problem between EDLA systems, in-space transportation systems, and crew operations.

3.4.5.2.5 Landing Site Selection

The terrain of a selected Mars landing site location will obviously influence EDLA design, with landing site latitude and elevation affecting both ascent and descent propellant mass, creating flow-down impacts to landed payload mass and surface operations related to MAV fueling strategy. Terrain and whether subsequent missions will return to a given landing site can also influence landing precision requirements. Key reconnaissance parameters (e.g., high-resolution imaging or surface properties assessments) may be needed to inform EDLA design. In addition, the landing site's lighting constraints during the descent phase of the mission could have integrated impacts to the in-space transportation system.

3.4.5.2.6 Ascent Propellant Acquisition Strategy

Options include landing a fully fueled MAV on Mars or landing an empty or partially fueled MAV on Mars and either transferring propellant from another lander or manufacturing propellant from in-situ resources. All of these options result in flow-down impacts to other systems: a fully fueled MAV drives MDS payload capacity and Earth launch capacity; a partially fueled MAV drives surface propellant transfer mass and complexity; and in-situ propellant manufacturing drives surface system mass, power, and operational timelines. Constraints such as Earth launch fairing diameter and Mars parking orbit can also have significant constraints on ascent vehicle design choices and propellant acquisition strategy. For example, cryogenic propellant-based MAV to a five-sol orbit challenges the geometry of an 8.4 m diameter Earth launch system fairing due to low density propellants combined with increased propellant loads for higher parking orbits. Workarounds to the Earth launch shroud constraint in turn impact the transportation system by potentially driving it to a lower Mars orbit (at a higher propellant penalty) or require the addition of a "taxi" element to bridge the gap between how low the transportation system can dip into the Mars gravity well and how high the MAV can ascend on a lighter propellant load.

3.4.5.2.7 Element Reuse

Reuse cannot be an afterthought for EDLA systems. It must be integral to the design. Feasibility of reusing EDLA systems is tightly coupled between system design and concept of operation. Initial reference designs are not practical for reuse, but changes to design and operation can enable reuse. Certain designs may be more "evolvable" for reusability than others. Operating life limits, including reuse for subsequent missions, will depend on total surface mission duration (including the pre-deployed cargo and post-crew departure robotic science mission phases), and whether subsequent human missions will return to the first mission landing site.

3.4.5.3 System Concepts

Table 3-33. Mars Entry, Descent, Landing, and Ascent Functions and Example Concepts

3.4.5.4 Concepts of Operations

Refer to HEOMD-415¹⁵ for the initial surface concepts of operations for various mission and architecture implementations, including MAV fueling strategies; that document will be updated as the architecture evolves.

3.4.6 Earth-Mars Transportation Systems

Earth-Mars transportation systems serve to transport the crew, surface systems, and EDLA systems to Mars and return crew to Earth. All Earth-Mars transportation architectures will consist of a propulsion and power backbone paired with one or more payload elements. For the purpose of this document, this integrated transportation system stack is referred to as the "deep space transport" (DST). A single DST design could be used for both crew and cargo deliveries, but to

¹⁵ *Reference Surface Activities for Crewed Mars Mission Systems and Utilization,* National Aeronautics and Space Administration (2022). HEOMD-415.

optimize for cost, development schedule, or other metrics of interest, variants may be mixed within a single campaign: for example, a slower, less-expensive, non-nuclear transport for pre-deployed cargo with a faster, higher-powered nuclear system for crew transport. In the crew-variant DST, the payload is a crew habitation system and all the utilization payloads, logistics, supplies, and spares for the in-space portion of the mission, including contingency operations. For the purpose of current analyses, a common habitation system is assumed for all transportation architectures. In the cargo-variant DST, payloads include surface systems, surface utilization payloads, EDLA elements, or other support system payloads.

Selection of a human Mars transportation system will be a complex decision shaped by numerous factors, such as mission objectives (the "Why?" question), exploration partner contributions and commitments, programmatic factors, schedules, and integrated risk assessments. The four transportation propulsion systems presented here represent the range of options currently being analyzed.

Specific implementation of the different transportation systems will depend on the reference mission of interest and a balance between the optimization of the system and the robustness to other mission parameters. For each reference mission, transportation systems can be optimized, from both a configuration perspective and a performance perspective, for the specific requirements of that reference mission. But an optimized transportation implementation might come at the cost of compromising the extensibility and flexibility to other mission design parameters that may be of interest.

3.4.6.1 Functions

Regardless of propulsion type, all Earth-Mars transportation systems must provide a minimum set of functional capabilities.

3.4.6.1.1 Provide Sufficient Energy to Transport Crew and Cargo from Earth Vicinity to Mars Vicinity and Back Again

The planetary alignment between Earth and Mars constantly changes over a roughly 15- to 20 year synodic cycle, so the amount of energy needed to make the transit will vary depending on the mission opportunity. If the transport is designed for only the "easiest" opportunity, Mars missions may be possible only once per synodic cycle; if designed for the "hardest" opportunity, the transportation system will be robust for all mission opportunities, but will be over-powered for most opportunities and will likely require more upfront technology investment. If the transport carries all required propulsive energy from Earth, its design must ensure that energy remains available throughout a long round-trip mission duration; if it plans to acquire return energy at Mars or an interim destination, the transport design must accommodate refueling or resupply operations with additional systems. To bound energy requirements, current analyses assume all propellant required for the round trip is launched from Earth and carried roundtrip, without the need to resupply. For the purpose of sizing the transportation concepts, a complement of four Mars crew is currently under evaluation. This is likely a minimum practical limit for the purposes of addressing risk and redundancy; however, larger crew complements would require larger habitats and more consumables, which in turn will increase transportation energy requirements.

3.4.6.1.2 Protect Crew and Cargo from the Deep Space Environment for Transit Duration

In addition to the temperature extremes and near-vacuum pressure common in LEO, Mars transit will have additional complications of increased radiation exposure and prolonged microgravity risks. To protect crew and cargo during the long transit duration, the transport and integrated habitation systems must be sized and configured to mitigate these risks. Leveraging the extensive complement of logistics and consumables (needed due to limited resupply options to address routine and contingency operations) and habitation system arrangement may mitigate long-term radiation exposure while crew exercise and countermeasure systems will address long-term crew health impacts from microgravity. Note that as more mass is added to protect crew and cargo, more energy will be required to transport crew and cargo to Mars and back.

3.4.6.2 Key Drivers

3.4.6.2.1 Total Mission Duration

The in-space transportation architecture is dictated by the celestial mechanics of Earth, Mars, and the Sun. The total roundtrip mission duration for a Mars mission is the primary driver for any inspace transportation decisions. Longer mission durations (approximately three years) typically require lower energy, as they can rely on the more favorable alignments between Earth and Mars to perform two optimal transfers between the planets. Shorter missions would require more energy to complete, as the in-space transportation system will need to complete the roundtrip mission while fighting against the natural orbital energy of the two planets. The energy required, and therefore the propulsion technology and total propellant mass, scales exponentially with mission duration, so the shorter missions are exponentially harder than the longer missions. The total mission duration decision also cannot be made solely on the basis of the in-space transportation system; factors such as crew health and performance as a function of total mission duration must also be considered. This decision has broad implications for crew systems, crew health, Mars orbit time, and Mars surface time, which in turn will influence the scope of utilization activities.

3.4.6.2.2 Mars Vicinity Stay Time

The decision on Mars vicinity stay time is driven by three factors: the Mars surface mission duration, the Mars orbital operation requirements, and the total roundtrip mission duration. The minimum surface stay duration will be the minimum duration that the in-space transportation system needs to remain in Mars orbit. However, additional time is required to prepare and transfer crew to the MDS prior to the surface mission, as well as time for the MAV to rendezvous, dock, and transfer crew and cargo back to the transport after ascent from the surface. The current assumption for these activities is 10 Martian sols prior to descent and 10 sols following ascent, totaling 20 sols, but assessment of operational needs and constraints is required to guide the final Mars orbit stay time decision. Finally, the total roundtrip mission duration will also have significant impact on the orbit stay time. The shorter mission durations will have a lower bound for the orbit stay time, as the interplanetary trajectory is more energy efficient, with more total duration in deep space, rather than in Mars orbit. For longer-duration missions, the need to await optimal planetary alignment for the return journey will likely mean there will be a significant Mars orbit stay time available.

3.4.6.2.3 Mission Operation Mode

Mission operation mode refers to how the end-to-end mission is conducted and has significant implications to all other Mars decisions. The current assumption for the mission mode is an "allup" mode, where the crew transportation stack departs Earth with all the propellant and logistics required to support the roundtrip mission. This is assumed for crew risk mitigation considerations, as the crew does not need to rendezvous with any propellant or logistics assets after Earth departure to return safely, potentially descoping the surface mission in the event of an anomaly. Shorter duration missions with higher energy may necessitate the pre-deployment of propellant at Mars to reduce the overall size of the transportation system.

To support the surface missions, the current assumption is that the surface assets are predeployed to the surface to wait for the crew. Potential options exist to integrate the surface elements with the crew stack so that no rendezvous is required in Mars orbit to support surface missions.

3.4.6.2.4 Mars Parking Orbit

The selection of the parking orbit at Mars for staging and aggregation of the mission will depend on the architecture and mission mode decisions and surface abort timing constraints. The current assumption for Mars parking orbit is a five-sol orbit, with the perigee of the parking orbit directly above the landing site to support a direct landing. This high-altitude parking orbit is beneficial to the transportation system because it does not require the whole transportation stack to insert deep into Mars' gravity well, but it puts an additional burden on the MAV, as the energy and time required to reach five-sol orbit are higher than for a lower parking orbit.

3.4.6.2.5 Mars Landing Site

Related to the selection of the parking orbit, the final selection of the landing site will have significant impact on the transportation system. This decision will be interlinked with the Mars EDLA system. Assuming the EDL system does not have its own cross-range capability, the transportation system needs to deliver the EDL system to the appropriate parking orbit for descent to the surface. This could mean the transportation system needs to perform additional orbital maneuvers to change the orbital parameter of the parking orbit to align for the descent and potentially ascent portions of the mission. This impact is particularly profound for the crew transportation system, as the integrated end-to-end trajectory needs to both bridge between the Mars arrival and departure interplanetary directions and satisfy the potential parking orbit constraint due to the landing site selection.

3.4.6.2.6 Number of Crew Members

The total number of crew members required will have a significant impact on the design of the transit habitation systems. Systems such as ECLSS (and associated maintenance and spares logistics) need to be scaled up as the number of crew increases, as do habitable volume and logistics consumables such as oxygen, food, water, medicine, clothing, and hygiene supplies, which has flow-down effects on the transportation systems. Conversely, selection and design of the propulsion system will also impact the decision about the number of crew members because of maintenance, repair, operational variations, and launch vehicle limitations between the different transportation system options.

3.4.6.2.7 Transit Habitation System

The primary decision about the transit habitation system concerns the integration between the habitat and the in-space transportation system. The habitation system can be integrated as part of the in-space transportation system or can be designed as an independent system. The current assumption for the transit habitation system is an independent system that will first facilitate early long-duration Mars precursor missions and Artemis activity in conjunction with Gateway before serving as the habitation system for the Mars missions. Another aspect to be decided is whether the habitat should be a monolithic unit or modular in nature.

3.4.6.2.8 Propulsion Technology

There are multiple options for the transportation propulsion system. The decision will be informed by a plethora of other decisions, including total mission duration, transit habitation strategy, mission mode operation, and others. Nuclear versus non-nuclear propulsion systems and highthrust ballistic systems versus low-thrust systems versus hybrid high-/low-thrust systems are just a few of the propulsion technology decisions that must be made. However, propulsion system performance alone may not be a sufficient discriminator. The target date for a first human Mars mission will establish the propulsion system delivery date, which in turn will constrain technology development timelines — and may eliminate technologies that cannot be developed within the timeframe or dictate a phased strategy wherein early missions rely on available propulsion technologies and more advanced technologies are phased in during later missions. These key decisions will also be informed by non-technical considerations, such as the broader strategy question of long-term exploration objectives or technology development partnering arrangements with other agencies, industry partners, or international partners.

3.4.6.2.9 Aggregation Location & Strategy

The Artemis campaign's Gateway Program lends itself to aggregation of transportation systems in cislunar space, such as NRHO; however, alternate orbits from LEO, medium Earth orbit, and high Earth orbit could also be considered, which may increase the Earth ascent vehicle options. The decision about where to aggregate the in-space transportation system and the strategy associated with it will depend heavily on several factors, such as the selection and design of the propulsion system, the availability of different launch vehicles and their associated launch mass, volume and crew complement capability, the launch cadence of the aggregation campaign, and the parking orbit distance from the Mars surface. Each transportation system option has optimal aggregation locations and strategies based on launch vehicle cadence and capability; however, the integrated nature of the aggregation strategy means that other variables complicate the decision about aggregation location.

3.4.6.2.10Element Reuse Strategy

The reusability of any of the transportation elements is a key driver in the design of the system. If additional follow-on missions to Mars are desired to establish routine access to Mars' surface, then the ability to reuse elements will be a key decision in enabling these missions. If reusability drives in-space transportation system mass, impacts may flow down to the Earth launch campaign. Reuse strategy will include deciding whether to optimize the transportation system for all mission opportunities (enabling missions about every 2 years) or to optimize for other constraints (potentially limiting mission availability). Note that a 15-year service life is currently assumed for the transit habitat, enabling it to support dual roles as a Mars crew transport and for analog and lunar support missions.

3.4.6.3 System Concepts

	Hybrid Nuclear Electric / Chemical	Hybrid Solar Electric / Chemical	Hybrid Nuclear Thermal / Flectric Propulsion	Nuclear Thermal	All Chemical
Reference Mission Short Duration Light Footprint Short Surface Stav	MO-NEP 1.8 - 3.6 MW NEP 3x 25k lbr LCH4/LO2 NRHO Assembly NRHO Refueling SAC21	M0-SEP TBD ConOps TBD Assembly TBD Refueling	MO-NTEP TBD ConOps TBD Assembly TBD Refueling	MO-NTP 4x 25k lbf NTP 12x 7mo Drop Tanks MEO Assembly No Refueling FY20 Analysis	M ₀ -CP TBD ConOps TBD Assembly TBD Refueling
Reference Mission Moderate Duration Light Footprint Short Surface Stay	M1-NEP 0.7 - 1.8 MW NEP 3x 25k lbrLCH4/LO2 NRHO Assembly NRHO Refueling SAC22/SAC24	M1-SEP 1MW Array/400kW SEP 3x 25k lbf LCH4/LO2 NRHO Assembly NRHO Refueling SAC23/SAC24	M1-NTEP TBD ConOps TBD Assembly TBD Refueling	M1-NTP 2x 12.5k lbf NTP 5x 6mø Drop Tanks MEO Assembly No Refueling SAC22/SAC24	M1-CP Depot + Tanker Integrated Surface Payload LEO Assembly LEO Refueling SAC22/SAC24
Reference Mission Longer Duration Minimum Energy Light Footprint Short Surface Stav	M2-NEP TBD ConOps TBD Assembly TBD Refueling	M2-SEP 700kW Array/400kW SEP 6x 1k lbf LCH4/LO2 NRHO Assembly NRHO Refueling SAC22/SAC24	M2-NTEP TBD ConOps TBD Assembly TBD Refueling	M ₂ -NTP 2x 12.5k lb, NTP 5x 6mø Drop Tanks MEO Assembly No Refueling SAC ₂₃	$M2$ -CP Depot + Tanker Integrated Surface Payload LEO Assembly LEO Refueling SAC ₂₂

Table 3-34. SAC22 In-Space Transportation Analysis Trade Space

To better understand the performance of various propulsion system designs in the context of the analysis reference missions, concepts for four different propulsion and power options have been under evaluation: a hybrid nuclear electric propulsion (NEP)/chemical propulsion system, nuclear thermal propulsion (NTP) system, hybrid solar electric propulsion (SEP)/chemical propulsion system, and all-chemical propulsion systems. Hybrid nuclear thermal/electric propulsion concepts have yet to be evaluated. The NEP/chem hybrid and NTP systems are nuclear options, and the SEP/chem and all-chem systems are non-nuclear. [Table 3-34](#page-192-0) summarizes the various potential implementations of each system being analyzed, with respect to each of the three reference missions. Campaign manifest designations represent implementations with enough conceptual design fidelity for preliminary campaign assessments; implementations without such designations remain forward work.

Functions		Example Concept(s)	Heritage and Status
Transport crew from Earth vicinity to Mars vicinity and return	Transit Habitat		Reference conceptual design of an independent transit habitat informed by previous Next Space Technologies for Exploration Partnerships (NextSTEP) Appendix A activities

Table 3-35. Mars Transportation System Functions and Example Concepts

As shown in [Figure 3-25,](#page-196-0) [Figure 3-26,](#page-196-1) [Figure 3-27,](#page-197-0) and [Figure 3-28,](#page-197-1) several conceptual designs of each transportation architecture are being developed to allow stakeholders to better assess performance across the range of mission duration options. These figures demonstrate how vehicle size and complexity vary as just one parameter, total mission duration, is varied.

Figure 3-25. Hybrid NEP/Chem Concepts Across a Range of Total Mission Durations

• Integrated power and propulsion systems

High temperature materials for higher powered, shorter duration variant

Figure 3-26. NTP Concepts Across a Range of Total Mission Durations

Figure 3-27. Hybrid SEP/Chem Concepts Across a Range of Total Mission Durations

Figure 3-28. All-Chem Concepts Across a Range of Total Mission Durations

3.4.6.4 Concepts of Operations

All four major transportation propulsion system architectures will require multiple Earth launches to an aggregation point, as well as in-space assembly, outfitting, and fueling of the deep space transportation system prior to crew boarding. However, the details of where, how, and when these steps occur vary by architecture, optimization choices made, and potential policy direction.

3.4.7 Mars Crew Support Systems

The Mars crew support architecture category covers elements needed to ensure that crew can perform across multiple mission phases. For the purpose of this document, it is assumed that these systems are common across all transportation architectures and surface concepts.

3.4.7.1 Communications

The Mars surface and close vicinity communications architecture is assumed to closely mirror the Lunar Architecture until further study is completed. A unique challenge for a Mars mission will be addressing the approximately two-week period during which the Sun interrupts the line-of-sight path between the crew and Earth, making direct communication impossible. An uninterruptable relay could mitigate this blackout period, though it should be noted that this potentially increases the communications lag time, since the relay must be placed far enough from Mars to maintain line of sight to Earth when the Sun is between Earth and Mars. In addition to this disruption, the relatively long and variable time delay for communications poses a challenge. Both the disruption and delay will drive a need for more advanced Earth-independent operations.

3.4.7.1.1 Functions

The Mars communications system must transmit voice and data between Earth and the various Mars architecture vehicles (crew and cargo DST, MDS, MAV, and Orion), between Mars architecture vehicles, between Mars surface to Mars orbit, and between surface assets.

3.4.7.1.2 System Concepts

The Mars communications system elements will include communication components for EVA suits, mobility platforms, landers, transit vehicles, and uninterrupted Earth relay. Additional relay assets, if required, will be defined in future studies.

3.4.7.1.3 Concept of Operations

The Mars communications system concept of operations will be substantially different from lunar operations because of the delay caused by the increased distance from Earth-based ground support, up to 22 minutes each way, and the annual communications blackout of up to two weeks. The current architecture concepts posit the Mars transit vehicle acting as the primary relay between the surface systems network to Earth-based networks during the crewed surface phase of the mission. Another concept under consideration is having the surface crew rely on the orbital crew (that remain aboard the Mars transportation system) to provide low-latency verbal guidance and expertise to augment the longer latency-Earth support. It remains forward work to fully develop the Mars communications concept of operations that supports both near- and far-range operations with varying magnitudes of latency.

3.4.7.2 IVA and EVA Suits

3.4.7.2.1 Functions

The primary functions of the Mars IVA suit system are to provide life support and mobility to protect crew from the various environments encountered during Earth or Mars launch and landing. This includes potential contingencies such as cabin depressurization, fire, or toxic atmospheres. In addition, the IVA suit system must provide sufficient safety, mobility, communications, and comfort for crew to perform their duties inside a vehicle.

The primary function of the Mars EVA suit system is to protect crew from the various environments encountered during a Mars mission, independent of a pressurized cabin. This includes potential cabin depressurization or external vehicle contingency excursion events in the deep space transit environment, as well as nominal EVA operations on the Mars surface environment. In addition, the EVA suit system must provide sufficient safety, mobility, communications, and comfort for crew to perform their duties inside or outside a vehicle for time periods of up to a full workday. Functionality and design features of the suit must also support vehicle and element assembly, system check-out, maintenance and repair operations, and mission utilization objectives. The Mars EVA suit must also integrate with Mars surface systems to enable safe, rapid crew ingress/egress to and from Mars surface system habitable volumes.

3.4.7.2.2 System Concepts

[Figure 3-26](#page-196-1) summarizes the major IVA and EVA suit system concepts and status. The current Mars architecture assumes that IVA and EVA suit system elements used during Earth and Mars launch/entry and microgravity phases will be substantially like those used for similar operations at the Moon. However, the Mars surface suit, intended for Martian surface operations, will have some important differences from its lunar counterpart. The higher Martian gravity may make mass reduction a priority, and the thin Martian atmosphere will require changes in life support system operation. However, increasing mass can also improve joint design for mobility and suit ingress, so mass increases should not be discounted without accounting for the necessary operational, ergonomic, and injury prevention tradeoffs. As noted above, habitable volumes available to at least the first Mars crew are likely to be different than those available to Artemis lunar crews, so ingress/egress strategy for the Mars crew cabins will influence Mars EVA suit design. Finally, planetary protection requirements for Mars are expected to be more stringent than on the Moon, which may influence permissible leakage rates or venting operations, as well as dust control techniques.

Table 3-36. Mars IVA/EVA System Functions and Example Concepts

3.4.7.2.3 Concept of Operation

The Mars IVA suit system concept of operation is expected to be substantially similar to crew Earth launch/landing, lunar transit, and Gateway operations. Mars descent and ascent operations are expected to be similar enough to crew Earth launch/landing that a common IVA suit can be used for both. The Mars EVA suit system will be designed to allow crew members to perform autonomous and robotically assisted EVA exploration, research, construction, servicing, and repair operations in environments that exceed human capability. Current concepts assume the suit can egress and ingress habitable vehicles and provide life support, thermal control, protection from the environment, waste management, hydration and in-suit nutrition, communications, and mobility/dexterity features designed to interact with spacecraft interfaces and supporting tools and equipment, enabling exploration, science, construction, and vehicle maintenance tasks. Advanced concepts may also include designs that support rapid crew ingress/egress (to improve physical health outcomes associated with reduced pressure in suits and to reduce the risks of decompression sickness in crew) and enhance planetary protection protocols for the Mars environment or habitable vehicle and beyond (forward and backward contamination).

Current concepts assume that the pressure garment provides for resizing and modular component interchanges to enable proper fit across a wide range of anthropometries (1st–99th percentile). Interfaces in the Mars portable life support system and pressure garment enable incremental upgrades to new technologies as the mission and destination evolve. Contamination from Mars dust constitutes a challenge to the design of mobility joints and the like, along with solutions to the introduction of surface contamination to crew habitat. The EVA crew will utilize advanced informatics designed into the suit system. These informatics will grant the EVA crew more autonomy with both tasks and suit monitoring due to the signal latency between Mars and Earth. Developing concepts and operations to address compatibility with the chemically reactive soil, as well as forward (planetary protection) and backward (crew health) contamination during crew ingress/egress operations, remains as forward work. As one important link in breaking the chain of backward planetary protection, current operational concepts assume the Mars EVA surface suits are left behind on Mars and crew members return to Mars orbit in their IVA suits.

3.4.7.3 Logistics Management

Requirements for Mars exploration missions often overlap with those driving the Lunar architecture. Where possible, Mars logistics management requirements should be met by leveraging these architectural similarities. In cases where options are also applicable to either the Moon or Mars, Moon to Mars considerations should drive the selection of a concept that can satisfy both. However, some requirements will be specific to Mars and require a different approach.

3.4.7.3.1 Functions

The primary purpose of Mars logistics management is to provide for the transportation, storage, tracking, and disposal of logistics, including crew consumables (e.g., food, clothing), life support system commodities (e.g., breathing air, water), utilization, maintenance and spares, and other supplies and materials needed to implement crewed Mars missions. The logistics functions include coordination with in-space and surface transportation assets for performing support functions (either manually or with robotic assistants) needed to ensure that logistics arrive at the point of use as efficiently as possible. Functional capabilities assumed are detailed in the sections below.

3.4.7.3.2 Mars Transit Logistics Concepts of Operations

Logistics for the in-space phase of the crewed mission are delivered and aggregated within the transportation and habitation system prior to Earth departure. Because of the amount of logistics required for the crewed Mars mission, the majority of the required logistics are delivered to the transportation and habitation system prior to the actual Mars crew departure. Logistics modules (standalone flights, SLS co-manifested, or commercial co-manifested as needed) are used to both supply logistics for crew Gateway/transportation and habitation system operations in those years and to pre-emplace logistics for the crewed Mars mission.

A final logistics module is delivered to the transportation and habitation system in Earth orbit with the Mars crew immediately prior to the Mars mission. This final logistics module is used to deliver the logistics items that are most critical from a lifetime perspective, such as food, medicines, and crew-specific items. The logistics module is detached and disposed of, along with any trash, prior to trans-Mars injection. Lower–time priority items are delivered to the transportation and habitation system earlier.

The logistics stored on the transportation and habitation system prior to Earth departure include all of the logistics necessary to complete the mission. No pre-emplaced logistics are utilized to complete the in-space segment of the Mars mission. The total logistics include the logistics that are required for the crewed in-space duration of the mission, including time in Mars orbit, for the entire crew. While some or all of the crew will nominally spend a portion of that time on the surface, transportation and habitation logistics are still manifested for that period in case the crew are unable to complete the surface mission and must stay aboard the transportation and habitation system. Additional logistics are also manifested to cover the potential maximum crewed predeparture duration. This period covers the potential Orion launch period, as well as an additional time to allow for logistics transfer and final mission preparations. This will allow Orion enough opportunities to get the crew to the spacecraft in the event of unexpected launch pad delays. Similarly, logistics are manifested to cover the end-of-mission Earth orbital duration, allowing for rendezvous and docking with Orion, as well as any time required for final transfers. If the entire

Orion launch duration is not needed in the transportation and habitation systems, any remaining consumables for that period are disposed of in the logistic module prior to trans-Mars injection.

In addition to the nominal durations listed above, additional logistics are also manifested to cover contingency situations. Contingency gas and water are manifested to cover periods where regenerative ECLSS may be unavailable during repair activities. It is assumed that waste products are stored during this period and then processed after the repair is completed to build the contingency store back up. Additional contingency logistics may be manifested in the safe haven to cover periods where the crew may be forced to shelter there.

Disposal of trash is a key issue for the in-space portion of the Mars mission. Because of the propulsive requirements, it is undesirable to accumulate trash in the transportation and habitation system. Methods to dispose of trash during the transits to and from Mars will be considered to reduce the total transportation and habitation system mass.

3.4.7.3.3 Mars Surface Logistics Concept of Operations

For surface operations, the logistics are pre-positioned in Mars orbit and then delivered to the Martian surface with the crew. Logistics delivery for surface operations is designed to reduce the burden on the crew and to preserve crew time for utilization activities. While logistics may be delivered either internally to the habitable surface elements or in external carriers, it is desirable to deliver the maximum possible amount of logistics in elements directly accessible to the crew, reducing the need to transfer logistics from carriers.

Surface logistics are provided to support the entire surface missions. These include all required consumables and utilization, as well as any maintenance items that are required to provide high availability for surface systems. Logistics are also provided to cover various surface contingency scenarios. This could include consumables to provide protection against system failures, spares for systems, and additional consumables to cover extend duration, if necessary.

Disposal of trash is also a key issue for surface operations. Planetary protection constraints should be considered when disposing of trash on the Martian surface to mitigate forward contamination.

3.4.7.4 Crew Systems

Crew systems for habitability include direct crew care systems, such as food and nutrition consumables and preparation equipment; personal hygiene systems, including body waste management, clothing, housekeeping equipment and consumables; physiological countermeasure systems (such as aerobic and resistance exercise equipment); crew privacy systems; and sleeping accommodations.

Crew systems for in-flight medical operations include medical diagnostic and treatment equipment and consumables typically found in medical kits, plus the appropriate volume and restraints to support and safely restrain an injured or incapacitated crew member. Vehicle systems also need to support accessing and updating crew medical health records, accommodating private medical conferences, and sharing medical data with ground-based flight surgeons. Each program typically includes a more detailed crew health concept of operations document.

Within the architecture, design for crew shall accommodate the physical characteristics, capabilities, and limitations of crew to ensure health, safety, and performance, as well as continued hardware and system functionality. Physical characteristics may include anthropometry as well as range of motion, strength, and visual and hearing acuity. Behavioral capabilities include cognition and perception. Limitations for continued health may include radiation, acceleration and dynamic loads, acoustics, and vibrations, as well as environmental hazards (e.g., thermal,

atmospheric, water). Accommodations may drive design for size of physical volumes, configuration of systems within, placement of restraints and mobility aids, accessibility of translation paths through spaces and hatches, and lighting to support tasks, as well as emergencies and circadian alignment for sleep. For usability, durability, and maintenance and training minimization, systems design shall consider how and how often humans perform system tasking, typically planned for via early human system integration and demonstrated by task analysis and human-in-the-loop testing. Systems shall avoid injury to crew through design, such as smoothing of sharp edges, elimination of pinch points, and prevention of unexpected energy release, electrical hazards, or chemical release, etc. Finally, systems shall be designed to account for crew survival during various defined contingency scenarios.

As much as possible, these systems will be derived from Artemis and International Space Station systems, though the longer Mars mission duration, combined with limited resupply options, minimal spare parts, shelf-life limitations, and longer communications lag times will necessarily require modifications, particularly to medical capabilities and food systems. These systems also need to integrate Earth-independent operations strategies to support associated maintenance, repair, state monitoring and diagnostics, etc., during continuous long-duration operation with reduced/delayed ground support capability.

3.4.8 Open Questions, Ongoing Assessments, and Future Work

As noted, objective decomposition and use case and function definitions for the Mars segment have not been fully completed, and much of the trade space, particularly for sustained human presence, is still being assessed. Ongoing studies are evaluating return propellant strategies, surface infrastructure needs, and EDLA options to build integrated end-to-end campaign models, which in turn will support trade studies between the four candidate transportation technologies. Additional analysis remains to evaluate infrastructure and science objective implementation options, assess end-to-end architecture impacts, and develop integrated concepts of operation. Continuing human health and performance research is being assessed in the context of Mars mission durations and operational challenges, and risk mitigation options are being identified and evaluated. These examples are not intended to be a comprehensive list of open work; this document will be updated as additional analysis and research are identified and completed. NASA also commissioned the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine to perform a study titled "A Science Strategy for the Human Exploration of Mars," which will inform future surface science objectives.

4.0 ASSESSMENT TO THE RECURRING TENETS

Within the Moon to Mars Strategy and Objectives Document, NASA established a high-level set of recurring tenets (RTs) to guide the exploration architecture. These tenets embody common themes that are broadly applicable across all the objectives. They provide guidance related to how objectives should be pursued to ensure successful execution of the Moon to Mars endeavor. Using these objectives as a guide, the Moon to Mars Architecture and the elements will be managed and coordinated through a framework of sub-architectures and campaign segments to organize the decomposition. The essential nature of this framework is to ensure the progression of development toward greater objective satisfaction through campaign segments to return and sustain human presence in deep space. This constant traceability and iteration through the architecture process between the current state of execution and future goals and desired outcome will ensure infusion of technology, innovation, and emerging partners.

To ensure this progression and iteration of approach, assessments of progress and adherence to the RTs is incorporated as an ongoing process. The Moon to Mars Architecture will be assessed against each tenet, evaluating how these guiding principles are reflected in the current architecture. In addition, potential gaps in the current Moon to Mars Architecture will also be identified to help guide future iteration and refinement of the architecture. These assessments will be coordinated with the stakeholders of each tenet. The assessments are not exhaustive and future revisions of this document will continue to update, evaluate, and assess the progress of the architecture in adhering to the tenets.

4.1 RT-1 INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION

RT-1: Partner with international community to achieve common goals and objectives.

Architecture Assessments:

International partnerships are an integral part of the Moon to Mars Architecture. These partnerships help drive human and scientific exploration, advance mutual interests, and promote the use of outer space for peaceful purposes. Coordination and cooperation among established and emerging actors in space are foundational principles of Artemis.

The Moon to Mars Architecture outlines opportunities for international partners to propose cooperation that addresses architecture gaps. To identify mutually beneficial cooperation, NASA and potential partners work together to identify specific technical concepts that address architecture needs. Once a proposed technical capability reaches a sufficient level of maturity and has passed internal NASA reviews, NASA and its partners formalize the cooperation in an international agreement. At this point, the project formally enters the Moon to Mars Architecture and becomes a part of the next ADD.

NASA has already established significant international cooperative activities in support of Artemis and is actively pursuing discussions with prospective partners about other potential cooperation. The following represent cooperative activities that have been formalized:

- **European Service Module (ESM):** The European Space Agency (ESA) provides the ESMs, which power the Orion spacecraft for Artemis lunar missions.
- **Gateway:** ESA, the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA), the Canadian Space Agency (CSA), and the Mohammed Bin Rashid Space Centre (MBRSC) in the United Arab Emirates, are providing key elements for operating this cislunar outpost.
- **Pressurized Rover:** In 2024, NASA and Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) signed an implementing agreement for Japan to provide a pressurized crew rover for the lunar surface. The pressurized rover will provide advanced astronaut mobility and science opportunities for Artemis crewed missions to the lunar surface.
- **Additional capabilities:** NASA is conducting technical studies and discussions with partners such as ESA, JAXA, CSA, MBRSC, the Italian Space Agency (ASI), The French Centre National D'Études Spatiales (CNES), the Australian Space Agency (ASA), the Korean AeroSpace Agency (KASA), and the Luxembourg Space Agency to develop concepts in multiple areas in support of the Moon to Mars architecture, including rovers, cargo delivery to the lunar surface, habitation, and lunar communications.
- **Artemis I:** Several international partners provided research payloads to address key knowledge gaps for deep space exploration. These partners included ESA, the German Aerospace Center (DLR), the Israel Space Agency (ISA), which provided radiation experiments, and JAXA and ASI, which provided CubeSats. Similar international collaboration is planned for the Artemis II mission.
- **Lunar science:** NASA's Science Mission Directorate (SMD) is leading the CLPS initiative, to deliver payloads to cislunar orbit and the lunar surface. NASA has sponsored CLPS deliveries for payloads from ESA, CSA, the Korean Astronomy and Space Science Institute (KASI), and the University of Bern, Switzerland. Additionally, international partners will have opportunities to submit proposals to Artemis science solicitations. Through these annual deployed instrument calls, NASA will select scientific payloads to be deployed on the lunar surface by the crew. In the recent Artemis III Deployed Instruments call, a dielectric analyzer from the University of Tokyo and JAXA was selected.
- **Payload and Research Investigations from the Surface of the Moon (PRISM):** International partners are also joining U.S.-led proposals to PRISM solicitations. CNES is participating in the U.S.-led far-side seismic payload and an electromagnetics experiment. Additionally, university partners from Denmark, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom are participating in U.S.-led lunar surface payloads selected under PRISM.
- **NASA contributions to international-led science missions:** SMD is also partnering on international partner-led missions to achieve science, exploration, and technology development goals and priorities for the Moon. NASA's contributions include: a laser retroreflector on JAXA's Smart Lander for Investigating Moon (SLIM) mission, an infrared imager on CSA's Lunar Exploration Accelerator Program (LEAP) rover, a laser retroreflector on the Indian Space Research Organisation's (ISRO) Chandrayaan-3 mission, a radiation experiment on ISA's Beresheet-2 mission, and a neutron spectrometer on JAXA and ISRO's Lunar Polar Exploration (LuPEX) mission. In addition, NASA contributed the ShadowCam, a camera that scans shadowed areas for ice deposits and landing zones, for the Korea Pathfinder Lunar Orbiter (KPLO), which was launched in 2022.
- **Space life sciences and human research**: NASA's Biological and Physical Sciences Division investigate the properties of physical systems, including their functions and behavior, in the Moon's radiation environment and partial gravity. The Human Research Program (HRP) focuses on developing methods to protect the health and performance of humans in space. In addition to the objectives in the Artemis III Science Definition Team Report, research priorities will be based on the 2023 life and physical sciences decadal

survey. Space and life sciences cooperative activities are discussed with international partners in the International Space Life Sciences Working Group (ISLSWG). Human health and biological sciences utilization on Gateway is also coordinated in working groups established through the Gateway Program.

- **Mars science**: NASA and ESA are partnering to bring the first samples of Mars material back to Earth. The Mars Perseverance rover, currently exploring the Jezero Crater, is the first leg of the joint NASA-ESA Mars Sample Return campaign, which includes several international participants. International partners have contributed in various ways to the NASA-led Mars orbiters, landers, and rovers in the past decades. The International Mars Exploration Working Group (IMWEG) and the Mars Exploration Program Analysis Group (MEPAG) facilitate international dialogue on Mars science.
- **Space communications and PNT**: NASA is engaged in discussions with several space agencies regarding potential Artemis cooperation involving ground stations, lunar relays, navigation assets, and lunar surface communications elements. These international partners include ESA, ASI, JAXA, KASA, ASA, as well as the United Kingdom Space Agency (UKSA), the South African National Space Agency (SANSA), and the New Zealand Space Agency (NZSA), among others. In addition, NASA is coordinating its commercial lunar relay procurement in parallel with a similar ESA commercially supported activity called Moonlight. NASA is also leading an effort to develop and build a ground station network of Lunar Exploration Ground Sites (LEGS), including NASA-owned assets, commercial service–provided assets, and international partner contributions; South Africa and Australia are expected to each host one of these NASA-owned ground stations. NASA is collaborating with other U.S. government departments and agencies to collectively define foundational reference systems and time standards through international standards bodies. The International Committee on GNSS's (ICG) newly formed Lunar PNT Working Group provides a forum for discussing, assessing, and recommending guidance for compatibility, interoperability, and availability among lunar PNT systems.
- **Technology:** International space technology partnerships generally focus on low technology readiness levels and fundamental research, the results of which are then shared publicly. An example of this type of cooperation involves dissimilar but redundant capabilities to augment common technology development objectives, such as NASA's ongoing collaboration with the ASA regarding an alternative lunar surface regolith acquisition capability that will collect and deliver lunar regolith samples to an analysis instrument in support of scientific and ISRU demonstration objectives.
- **Public diplomacy/education:** NASA conducted public diplomacy and educational outreach events before and after the successful Artemis I mission to raise awareness and excitement about the Artemis Program. These efforts included translating the children's book *You Are Going* into languages such as French, German, Italian, and Spanish. Prior to the launch of Artemis I, NASA and the Department of State organized a meeting with all the Artemis Accords signatories to brief them on the mission and NASA's public engagement plans. NASA will continue to consolidate and share Artemis-related educational materials with a global audience.

RT Considerations:

A wide range of international partnerships will support and be enabled by the Moon to Mars Architecture. Cooperation will occur across the full spectrum of opportunities from major elements to utilization. As potential gaps are identified, new opportunities for cooperation will emerge. The architecture will evolve each year as NASA and its prospective international partners discuss collaboration opportunities. International cooperation will advance broad infrastructure, science,

exploration, and space technology goals and objectives, as well as education, inspiration, and public engagement.

In addition to bilateral engagements with international partners, NASA will continue to use multilateral forums to articulate its exploration and science objectives, with an eye toward identifying additional areas of potential cooperation:

- NASA hosts annual architecture workshops to provide international partners with updates to the latest ADD and gather stakeholder feedback on how partnerships can help NASA achieve its Moon to Mars Objectives.
- The International Space Exploration Coordination Group (ISECG) is a coordination forum for interested space agencies to share their objectives and plans for exploration.
- The Lunar Surface Innovation Consortium (LSIC) was established by NASA to foster communication and potential collaborations among industry, academia, government, and international partners on technologies to enable sustained human and robotic presence on the lunar surface.
- The Lunar Exploration Analysis Group (LEAG) was established to support NASA in providing analysis of scientific, technical, commercial, and operational issues in support of lunar exploration objectives and their implications for lunar architecture planning and activity prioritization.
- The Mars Exploration Program Analysis Group (MEPAG) serves as a community-based, interdisciplinary forum for inquiry and analysis to support NASA's Mars exploration objectives. MEPAG is responsible for providing the science input needed to plan and prioritize Mars exploration activities.
- The Solar System Exploration Research Virtual Institute (SSERVI) was formed to address fundamental questions about human and robotic exploration of the Moon, near-Earth asteroids, the Martian moons Phobos and Deimos, and the near space environments of these target bodies. SSERVI funds investigators from a broad range of domestic institutions and brings them together with international partners to enable new scientific efforts.
- The International Mars Exploration Working Group (IMEWG) is a coalition of space agencies and institutions around the world that seeks to advance our collective human and robotic future on Mars.
- The International Space Life Sciences Working Group (ISLSWG) is a forum to coordinate international development and use of spaceflight and special ground research facilities to enhance Moon to Mars Objectives pertaining to space life sciences.
- The Interagency Operations Advisory Group (IOAG) provides a forum for identifying common needs and opportunities for interoperability in mission operations, space communications, and navigation interoperability.
- NASA and the Department of State engage with the community of Artemis Accords signatories to discuss the implementation of the principles of the Accords to ensure safe and sustainable space exploration.

4.2 RT-2 INDUSTRY COLLABORATION

RT-2: Partner with U.S. industry to achieve common goals and objectives.

Architecture Assessments:

NASA has long called upon the U.S. industrial base to provide the development and production of key exploration assets and provide foundational research to advance and enhance exploration capabilities. U.S. industry partners have contributed to the success of the Artemis I flight, which includes major hardware deliveries for three programs: EGS, Orion, and SLS. U.S. industry contributions will be critical throughout the Moon to Mars campaign segments. 2The elements included in the Human Lunar Return segment are already leveraging commercial partnerships. The EVA and Human Surface Mobility Program (EHP), Gateway, and HLS programs are working with multiple U.S. companies to design, deliver, and/or provide services for critical systems for Artemis III through V. Additionally, the Moon to Mars Program holds continual strategic engagements with its partners and suppliers to emphasize the collaborative nature of industry partnerships and ensure critical areas of workforce capabilities, hardware priorities, and overall design, development, testing, and evaluation progress is aligned with mission priorities and schedules.

Historically, NASA has partnered with industry to develop capabilities and technology that are needed for exploration, science, and technological development. STMD is collaborating with industry on technology developments in major areas including, enabling safe landing on the lunar surface, enabling or increasing the ability to live in the lunar environment, and increasing our capability to explore the lunar surface. NASA expects to develop or increase capabilities that lower crew risk and increase crew survivability in harsh environments, provide evolvable communication and power systems, and develop in-situ manufacturing methods. The successful deployment of these capabilities will further enable the development of habitable structures and critical improvements in infrastructure, which will likely increase mission effectiveness, mission durations, and overall safety. To expand our ability to explore during later Artemis missions, NASA is focusing on technologies to increase the ability to map and locate lunar features, navigate in complex terrain, and travel between lunar surface assets.

Through the CLPS Program, NASA has engaged U.S. industry in a new way, introducing members of academia that wish to perform standalone cislunar science missions and corporations that desire to test hardware in the lunar environment to suppliers of multiple launch vehicles and lunar landers. This provides a cost-effective means of transporting a wide variety of payloads with different goals and physical attributes to the cislunar environment or lunar surface.

Future segments will continue this partnership. NASA will continue collaboration with industry to develop technologies that continue to enable exploration, science and technology maturation, or demonstrations in preparation for Mars. The Moon to Mars Architecture will depend on partnership with U.S. industry to provide exploration services and critical technologies in a sustainable and affordable manner.

RT Considerations:

U.S. industry contribution in future segments to enable exploration activities has not been fully captured or leveraged. With significant commercial interest in developing LEO destinations in the near future, NASA needs to investigate opportunities to leverage and potentially supplement those investments to advance the state of knowledge of human spaceflight in support of the Moon to Mars Architecture. NASA will leverage U.S. industry plans for cislunar and lunar commercialization and look for key opportunities for partnering in support of long-term exploration of the lunar surface and Mars in a sustainable way. NASA will team with industry to develop and

mature systems that will contribute to future Artemis missions and are beneficial to the commercial partner. Some potential areas for collaboration of U.S. industry and the Moon to Mars Program are:

- Team with industry to develop, verify, and sufficiently validate new technology that future missions will need.
- Partner with industry to mature current technologies with risk and cost-cutting potential.
- Understand industry goals and how commercial activities could contribute to enabling permanent presence on the moon and future exploration of Mars.
- Involve industry in the development and refinement of future technology/system standards, which could include robotic interfaces; software information and management systems; rover systems; in-space servicing, assembly, and manufacturing (ISAM); power systems; and habitation systems.
- Collaborate with industry through appropriate mechanisms to address and resolve technical issues related to space exploration.
- Request industry develop concepts for the end-to-end management of pressurized logistics, beginning with loading on Earth and ending with the disposal or reuse of containers.
- Request industry develop concepts for the provision of uncrewed transportation capability for lunar surface assets.
- Encourage industry collaboration in specific areas (ground and space-based communication and PNT, infrastructure, imagery, power generation/distribution, logistics supply and handling, autonomous robotic operations, sample preservation and return, compatible/interchangeable components) through the use of technology demonstration and the communication of long-term strategic goals.

4.3 RT-3 CREW RETURN

RT-3: Crew Return: Return crew safely to Earth while mitigating adverse impact to crew health.

Architecture Assessments:

In recognition of the inherent risks associated with human spaceflight, NASA considers the wellbeing and safe return of crews to be of paramount importance. Considerations for safe crew return start well before the mission and are included in the system design, test and verification, and end-to-end mission testing and training using high-fidelity hardware, software, and mission support personnel. The following top-level standards to ensure safe crew return are assessed and appropriately applied across the architecture:

- NPR 8705.2 Human-Rating Requirements for Space Systems
- NASA-STD-8719.29 NASA Technical Requirements for Human-Rating
- HEOMD-003 Crewed Deep Space Systems Human Rating Certification Requirements and Standards for NASA Missions
- NASA-STD-3001 NASA Space Flight Human-System Standard (Volume 1 and 2)

These requirements are tailored and applicable to every crewed vehicle across all campaign segments, including the integrated architecture or system of systems. For each crew mission, the integrated system capabilities will be assessed and certified as acceptably safe to carry NASA or NASA-sponsored crewmembers by meeting the human rating certification criteria, including human rating technical requirements, applicable technical authority design, construction, testing, human system and safety standards, and derived loss of crew/loss of mission requirements. A human-rated system accommodates human needs, effectively utilizes human capabilities, controls hazards with sufficient certainty to be considered safe for human operations, and provides, to the maximum extent practical, the capability to safely recover the crew from hazardous situations. While hazard controls (and required control redundancy) prevent hazardous events from occurring, crew survival methods are an independent layer of protection in the event those controls fail and enable the crew to survive the immediate hazard, reach a safe state, and ultimately return to Earth. The Moon to Mars Program will derive contingency and abort use cases and functions by applying the Human Rating Standard. The results can be broadly categorized as architecture capabilities/system and integrated mission operations, which include strategies, constraints, and vehicle uses to manage crew risk.

Architecture capabilities/system provide:

- Appropriate failure tolerance to catastrophic hazards, which can include similar/dissimilar redundancy, reliability, functional down-moding, etc.
- Medical systems, emergency systems, and crew survival capabilities
- Crew manual control (of vehicle dynamics and systems) and manual override (of software/automation) to prevent a catastrophic hazard
- Crew control of any uncrewed vehicle in the vicinity of the crewed vehicle
- Abort of a mission phase and safe return of the crew
- Crew/vehicle autonomy to return without Earth communication
- Vehicle operation and crew protection at vacuum
- Return of an incapacitated crew to Earth

Integrated mission operations provide:

- A strategy to minimize crew risk and/or the exposure duration during first-time operations or high-risk activities; the strategy may include pre-cursor uncrewed demonstrations and an incremental approach to build up capability (e.g., two crew for HLR; increasing to four crew for FE)
- Clear mission authority, roles, and responsibilities across the entire Artemis team
- Execution of launch commit criteria and go/no-go flight rules prior to critical events
- Ability to monitor, command, and control vehicles and assist the crew from Earth or another remote location
- Operational constraints to ensure safe crew return in the event of a failure (e.g., EVA and rover range/time limits to return crew within suit consumables)
- Crew supporting critical activities, including rendezvous, proximity operations, docking, and undocking (RPODU); landing, ascent, and EVA; emergency response; rover operations; etc.
- Contingency capabilities (e.g., mission phase termination, catastrophic/critical system failure responses)
- Use of abort and crew survival methods (e.g., safe haven, pressure suits)
- Crew training and onboard products for crew to execute all nominal, contingency, and emergency operations with or without Earth communication
- In-flight assessments of crew health and readiness to support activities between crew and ground medical team

The following are mission-specific examples of the architecture/system capabilities and integrated mission operations to safely return the crew to Earth:

- Uncrewed initial lunar mission demonstrated the crewed launch and reentry systems prior to crewed flight.
- Crewed initial lunar mission will demonstrate life support and habitability in the lunar vicinity while minimizing return risk via a free-return trajectory.
- Crewed initial lunar surface mission will demonstrate complex operations with transferring crew across vehicles and conducting an initial lunar landing and EVA as a precursor to increasingly complex lunar surface missions.
- Crewed Gateway and lunar surface missions will demonstrate sustainable crewed and uncrewed mission capabilities in lunar orbit and on the lunar surface.
- As new assets are added in the Artemis campaign program, to extend human exploration further across the lunar surface, ensuring safe crew return will become increasingly complex and crew return will rely on EVA suits, rovers, surface habitats, landers, Gateway, and Orion, plus any supporting architecture, like communication and power systems. Furthermore, NASA's experience is to maintain a crew presence with the crew return vehicle; however, Artemis will demonstrate the concept of landing all crew on the lunar surface while Gateway/Orion is unoccupied.

RT Considerations:

The Moon to Mars Architecture treats the safety of the crew as an utmost concern. However, significant knowledge gaps exist relative to the adverse effects of long-term exposure to the deep space environment. The architecture will be developed to account for known health and medical concerns and for contingency scenarios involving failures in mission elements and systems. Significant knowledge has been gained from ongoing human health research aboard the International Space Station and will continue with lunar orbital and surface missions. Longduration Mars precursor missions conducted in cislunar space and on the lunar surface will address some knowledge gaps and build operational experience. Likewise, knowledge of the reliability gaps with mission hardware, software, and operations will be tested and refined based on knowledge of LEO missions. However, these missions may not be sufficient to provide the necessary data to fully understand the risk associated with roundtrip missions to Mars. Furthermore, while the assets around cislunar space provide crew with safe haven and Earthreturn capabilities, such capabilities may not exist for the Mars exploration crew, regardless of the architecture, and that lack remains a significant challenge to crew safety.

If problems arise in LEO, the crew can return to Earth within hours; for lunar missions, crew return will take days. However, crew return during the Mars campaign may take months, since orbital dynamics make abort or contingency crew return extremely challenging and may not significantly shorten the return. Extending the capabilities outlined above will require a combination of system reliability, system redundancy, vehicle/crew autonomy, critical sparing, abort and crew survival options, crew health/performance/psychological support, and general robustness at a level higher than previous missions. The fault tolerance approach, covered in the previous section, is applicable for Artemis lunar missions but may need to be reassessed for Mars missions.

The following set of challenges are included in the "architecture gap" section for context. Some of these gaps may not be solved by the architecture alone; they are gaps in the knowledge, experience, and technology required to advance, test, and implement more complex lunar and Mars missions.

- Onboard autonomy capabilities for a Mars crew and their vehicle to account for time latency to Earth and time-to-effect events. Essentially, the crew will not have the real-time response capability of the mission control center (MCC).
- In the event of an unrecoverable loss of communication with Earth during lunar and Mars missions, onboard autonomy should provide a safe crew return, which includes vehicle capabilities and full resources for the crew to perform their own mission planning, skills training, return trajectory execution, psychological support, and more, potentially for an extended amount of time.
- Capabilities for a Mars crew to monitor, command, and control any uncrewed vehicle from other vehicles in the Mars vicinity to ensure their safe return. NASA's historical experience is to maintain a crew presence with the crew return vehicle. Artemis will demonstrate the capability to send the entire crew to the lunar surface with MCC oversight of nominal and off-nominal events aboard the uncrewed vehicles.
- Availability of robust crew survival methods, which may include safe havens, additional resources, rescue systems/vehicles, and more.
- Advanced health and performance monitoring and response, both onboard and on the ground.
- High-bandwidth telecom capabilities to upload video learning or instructional materials to guide medical procedures or critical equipment repairs that will be needed during multiyear crewed missions to Mars.

4.4 RT-4 CREW TIME

RT-4: Maximize crew time available for science, research, and technology development activities within planned mission duration.

Architecture Assessments:

One of the three pillars of the exploration strategy that guides the Moon to Mars Architecture is the pursuit of scientific knowledge. Maximizing crew time is a critical driver for the exploration architecture across all segments of the campaign. Specifically, this refers to crew time made available for utilization activities, separate from other crew time allocations, such as maintenance time. During the lunar campaign segments, the architecture and reference missions emphasize crew exploration on the lunar surface. This is enabled by allocating functions to the elements in this phase to minimize maintenance and construction overhead activities. Concurrently, utilization activities at Gateway are conducted in cislunar space to complement the surface exploration activities. The experiences gained in the exploration activities with the optimization of surface exploration missions on the Moon will guide the planning for the initial Mars surface mission to maximize the efficiency of crew time available for science and engineering activities.

Similar to RT-3, the approach is a combination of architecture/system capabilities and integrated mission operations to optimize crew time allocated towards exploration and utilization.

Architecture/System capabilities:

- Lunar campaign elements have allocated limited time for system maintenance on Gateway, HLS, EVA suits, and rover(s). This may be designed and implemented via system reliability, sparing strategy, crew accessibility, ease of use, operational use, and other methods.
- Engineering, operations, and crew evaluations of vehicle mockups and simulations influence capabilities in early design and development to enable reliable and efficient operations.
- Campaign elements incorporate automation/autonomy for routine housekeeping and system management to offload crew.

Integrated mission operations:

- Artemis crew training and integrated Artemis mission simulations (with full team) commence approximately two years and one year before the crew launch, respectively. These milestones drive the vehicle and personnel readiness to allow sufficient time to train critical skills and tasking across all Artemis vehicles and utilization tasks.
- Artemis training philosophy exercises the crew and ground teams in mission planning, decision making, and execution of critical and complex tasks. In addition to the skills, a time multiplier is applied in ground training for every hour of critical/complex mission execution to ensure efficient use of crew time.
- Distribution of system (monitor/control) functions from crew to the MCC to will enable more crew time for exploration and mission objectives.
- Use of tele-robotics, robotic assistance, and autonomous systems to increase crew time and effectiveness for science and utilization. For example, uncrewed operations like prepositioning an asset can reduce the crew task burden before they arrive.
- Development of contingency plans and capabilities, including backup crew, to allow the mission to continue for non-critical events.
- Availability of task lists or alternate plans to efficiently pivot from the nominal plan and optimize the mission results. For example, if a lower-priority EVA or surface utilization task becomes time consuming, the crew may pursue other achievable tasks on the fly to optimize utilization. This may also include get-ahead tasks to support a downstream activity or a future Artemis mission.

RT Considerations:

There are knowledge gaps associated with the increasing exploration infrastructure and capabilities needed for the Foundational Exploration, Sustained Lunar Evolution, and Humans to Mars segments. Although these increases are intended to result in a net benefit to available crew time, there is some uncertainty associated with the operational complexity, maintenance, and refurbishment demands they bring. Additional assessment is needed to bridge the knowledge gap and inform system design and operational planning.

4.5 RT-5 MAINTAINABILITY AND REUSE

RT-5: When practical, design systems for maintainability, reuse, and/or recycling to support the long-term sustainability of operations and increase Earth independence.

Architecture Assessments:

To enable a safe, effective, and affordable architecture that achieves NASA's long-term exploration goals, the Moon to Mars Architecture must be assessed to understand the implication of system maintainability, reuse, and/or recycling in support of long-term operation and increase Earth independence. Almost every element in the architecture is being designed to take advantage of some level of reuse, but understanding of risks associated with maintainability and reuse and their impact on safety, science, and long-term sustainability goals will be vital as the architecture is refined and matured. Beyond the sustainability of elements with maintenance, there is also the opportunity to further enhance crew safety, with proper planning, by enabling the repair of systems that would otherwise put the crew in a survival situation or lead to a catastrophic hazard.

According to NASA-STD-8729.1, maintainability is a measure of the ease with which a system or equipment can be restored to operational status, as a function of equipment design and installation, personnel availability, adequacy of maintenance procedures and support equipment, and the physical environment under which maintenance is performed. In other words, it is the probability that an item will be restored to a specified condition within a given period of time when the maintenance is performed in accordance with prescribed procedures and resources. It is important to note that maintainability does not equate to maintenance. Maintainability is a design attribute, and maintenance is a set or type of operational work.

Two principal areas drive maintainability and reuse within the Moon to Mars Architecture: mass delivery and available crew time. The delivery of mass to lunar orbit, the lunar surface, or Mars has limited opportunities and is a known cost and performance driver. Likewise, crew time is precious and drives three maintenance concepts: 1) reducing/limiting maintenance activities, 2) ensuring that maintenance activities are easy to perform, and 3) automating or having robotics perform maintenance tasks where possible. The last item is currently an architecture gap that needs additional development of concepts, potential operations, and understanding of potential tasks that can leverage the use of robotics and/or automation.

The Moon to Mars Architecture will promote the use of common orbital replaceable units (ORUs) when a common component can be incorporated into designs and must be periodically replaced (e.g., air filters). This philosophy will allow a set of ORUs to be shared across multiple elements within the architecture, thus reducing the amount of logistics and increasing contingency options. In addition, an EVA compatibility standard has been developed to ensure ORUs and worksites are compatible with the spacesuit interaction, range of motion, and do not present hazards to the crewmember.

Because many of the major systems in the Moon to Mars Architecture are designed to be in either lunar orbit or on the lunar surface for multiple years and missions, extended gaps between missions drive systems to react, providing a status notification, reconfiguring systems, and shutting down specific systems, and may drive self-maintenance operations. Increasing the number of critical maintenance activities that can be automatically or remotely performed will increase crew time for science and exploration.

As a preventative measure, it is important that designers consider reliability early in the design process to reduce future maintenance needs of a system and target a practical mean time to repair. Designing systems with human factors in mind to achieve easy accessibility, standardized

replacement methods, and limited specialized tool requirements and considering the training required to perform maintenance operations should be key parts of the up-front design process. The combination of the complex lunar environment, with its changes in lighting conditions and terrain variation; the variety of systems being developed; and the need for crew time to perform science, exploration, and technology demonstrations point to a stronger need to reduce mean time to repair.

Moon to Mars architects and designers must also consider uses for decommissioned hardware. Can batteries or other consumables be recycled or reused? Could targeted system components be repurposed or reused beyond their original functions for another vehicle or element? Initially, the reuse of components or system may not be possible, but as we learn more about the lunar environment and ORU designs evolve, a good steward strategy will be developed.

RT Considerations:

The maintainability of the exploration assets remains a major concern especially with the desire to maximize crew time for science and engineering activities. Traditionally, a certain level of crew time was dedicated to the maintenance of systems to extend the lifetime of any asset. However, the advancement of robotics and autonomous systems provides a range of options for the maintenance of systems. Trades must be performed to determine which systems and maintenance tasks should be automated and which should be manually performed. Other areas of maintainability that should be studied include:

- Incorporation of robotic systems to perform maintenance on one or more lunar surface systems.
- An integrated system to track maintenance items/ORUs location and availability across the Moon to Mars Architecture.
- A process to dispose of or reuse systems or selected system components upon completion of their primary mission.
- Should a modular open systems approach be applied, and at what level, to enable a longterm autonomous repair capability supporting the Sustained Lunar Evolution segment?
- Evaluation of in-flight maintenance strategies as a part of the hazard and crew survival analyses.

The maintenance approach should consider the long-term benefits and costs of design features that, if applied at the same level across the Artemis campaign, could enhance maintainability and reuse of systems. Each of these design features has an associated cost that must be considered along with the potential benefits. The Moon to Mars Architecture should consider incorporating such design features, including:

- Maintenance items/ORUs designed to provide notification of a degraded capability or failure to the broader system, allowing timely corrective actions to be taken.
- Maintenance items/ORUs designed to be easily exchanged, both manually and by robotic means.
- Design systems/components to be robotically manipulated so that tasks can be performed without crew present.
- Design major systems to be maintained using robotic capabilities either automated or remotely operated under a variety of environmental conditions.
- Reduce the logistics train as much as possible by using common limited-life items (e.g., filters, lights).
- Standardize or require a set of common battery sizes, including enclosures and contact points.

Additional assessment is needed to bridge the knowledge gap and inform system designs and operational planning. The reuse of elements will also likely require the refurbishment of elements and these activities are not well defined within the current architecture. Finally, system lifetime limitations from both reuse and maintenance perspectives must be evaluated.

4.6 RT-6 RESPONSIBLE USE

RT-6: Conduct all activities for the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes consistent with international obligations and principles for responsible behavior in space.

Architecture Assessments:

Responsible use of space follows guidelines and principles of responsible behavior that are set forth in international agreements, international and national policies, and law. Given the uncertainties about how humanity will explore the broader solar system, questions about the nature of responsible activity will surely arise. The likelihood of creating a future where humanity collectively benefits from Moon to Mars activities will be increased by considering the responsible use of space from several legal, policy, ethical, and societal perspectives. The following context explores relevant history for how to consider the responsible use of space.

The legislation that founded NASA declared that "it is the policy of the United States that activities in space should be devoted to peaceful purposes for the benefit of all mankind."16 The U.S. also ratified the Outer Space Treaty of 1967, which identifies principles of behavior that represent the belief that the exploration and use of outer space should be for peaceful purposes, for the benefit of all peoples, and contribute to broad international cooperation in scientific and legal aspects of exploration. Article VI is of specific interest, as it expands the obligation of nations to ensure responsible behavior, even when activities are carried out by "non-governmental entities," like commercial companies. This extends to private-sector operations not conducted on behalf of a nation. In addition, Article IX addresses the avoidance of harmful (forward) contamination, and of adverse consequences to the terrestrial biosphere from introduction of extra-terrestrial material (backward contamination), typically managed under planetary protection.

The Artemis Accords reinforce and implement key obligations in the 1967 Outer Space Treaty. They also reinforce the commitment by the U.S. and signatory nations to the Registration Convention, the Rescue and Return Agreement, and best practices and guidelines for responsible behavior that NASA and its partners have supported, including the public release of scientific data. The Artemis Accords establish a practical set of principles to guide space exploration cooperation among nations, including those participating in NASA's Artemis Program. Key tenets of the Artemis Accords include:

- Calls for partner nations to utilize open international standards, develop new standards when necessary, and strive to support interoperability to the greatest extent practical.
- Calls to provide public information regarding the general nature of operations, which will inform the sale and scope of safety zones to deconflict activities.

¹⁶ National Aeronautics and Space Act of 1958,<https://history.nasa.gov/spaceact.html>

- Commitments to the protection of sites and artifacts with historic value.
- Reinforcing that space resource extraction and utilization can and will be conducted under the auspices of the Outer Space Treaty, with specific emphasis on Articles II, VI, and XI.

The tenet of "responsible use of space" became enshrined in the 2010 National Space Policy, which sought to encourage responsible use of space and the long-term sustainability of the space environment, with a focus on the minimization of debris. The 2020 U.S. National Space Policy provides additional clarity on the definition of responsible norms of behavior. It defines and advocates for development and promotion of responsible behaviors, including "improved practices for the collection and sharing of information on space objects; protection of critical space systems and supporting infrastructures, with special attention to cybersecurity and supply chains; and measures to mitigate orbital debris."

The 2021 United States Space Priorities Framework adds additional considerations about the responsible use in space. It leads with the concept that activities in space benefit the American people and that the U.S. should "lead the international community in preserving the benefits of space for future generations." The section on maintaining a robust and responsible U.S. space enterprise notes that "such efforts will be informed by economic data and research to better understand the space economy and will reflect the importance of the responsible and sustainable use of space." The section on preserving space for current and future generations acknowledges that as space activities evolve, norms, rules, and principles also must evolve. It goes on to clarify that "the United States will bolster space situational awareness sharing and space traffic coordination." It also identifies responsible behaviors; of interest here are "minimize the impact of space activities on the outer space environment" and "protect the Earth's biosphere by avoiding biological contamination by spacecraft returning to Earth."

In April 2024, NASA defined space sustainability in its release of its Space Sustainability Strategy, Volume 1: Earth Orbit as "the ability to maintain the conduct of space activities indefinitely into the future in a manner that is safe, peaceful, and responsible to meet the needs of the present generations while preserving the outer space environment for future activities and limiting harm to terrestrial life," and indicated that a cislunar volume would be forthcoming.

NASA has provided domestic guidance on the preservation of lunar heritage sites, and the preservation of ongoing science at those sites, in its 2011 report NASA's Recommendations to Space-Faring Entities: How to Protect and Preserve the Historic and Scientific Value of U.S. Government Lunar Artifacts. The report's recommendations were enshrined into law in 2020 under the One Small Step To Protect Human Heritage Space Act (P.L. 116-275), which required that NASA add these recommendations into its contracts, grants, agreements, or other arrangements. The Lunar Exploration Analysis Group, an interdisciplinary group created to "support NASA in providing analysis of scientific, technical, commercial, and operational issues in support of lunar exploration objectives and of their implications for lunar architecture planning and activity prioritization," created a 2016 Lunar Exploration Roadmap that provided goals, objectives, and investigations for lunar science, and detailed preservation priorities to enable future lunar science. However, there is no overarching U.S. guidance on the safe, peaceful, and responsible use of space to ensure the preservation of Moon to Mars sites to meet long-term heritage, technical, scientific, or other conservation objectives.

In establishing the Artemis Accords, NASA is signaling intent for responsible behavior around Moon to Mars efforts and has identified a need for practices, rules, and standards in a number of areas that will be addressed by signatories moving forward. Development of technical and policy guidance on the responsible use of space and sustainable operations in Moon to Mars efforts should seek to build upon existing domestic and international practices. NASA is working to identify gaps in best practices for safe, peaceful, and responsible space operations for Moon to

Mars and intends to engage and work with Artemis Accords signatories and international technical and standards bodies on the issue.

From a technical perspective, payloads manifested on CLPS flights to the Moon are collecting data needed to enable future responsible behavior. For example, the Stereo Cameras for Lunar Plume-Surface Studies (SCALPSS) is an experiment to determine the effects of the lander's plume on the lunar surface during landings. The ability to predict landing effects is essential to responsible use in the future. Ongoing work in multilateral coordination groups such as the International Space Exploration Coordination Group (ISECG), Inter-Agency Space Debris Coordination Committee (IADC), Interagency Operations Advisory Group (IOAG), International Astronomical Union (IAU), International Committee on GNSS (ICG), and the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) may provide venues to develop further approaches to the sustainable use of space to meet Moon to Mars Objectives.

Recent calls from the 2022 planetary science and astrobiology decadal survey and the National Science and Technology Council's cislunar strategy highlight the need to include broader discussion and consideration of ethical and societal questions surrounding Moon to Mars efforts. NASA's 2023 Artemis and Ethics Workshop began a dialog on cultural and societal implications of future human exploration.

RT Considerations:

While NASA and its partners have made the commitment to pursue peaceful exploration and responsible use of space, significant policy questions and framework gaps exist with regard to the protection of future scientific and exploration needs. While there are treaties, law, policy, and guidelines on responsible use, the implementation is still in development. The Artemis Accords signatories are working on some of those issues now. Future success or failure will be driven by processes that embed responsible use in the exploration architecture as it is developed and implemented through programs, projects, procurements, and operations.

Given the global impact and influence of space exploration on the human condition, NASA must think about responsible use broadly, including the impact of Artemis on society. For conversations and considerations of this nature to be effective, NASA must avoid making premature judgements about behaviors or outcomes. There must be discussion of costs in addition to benefits, with a goal of maximizing benefit to society, while minimizing potential harms. Reflection and discussion can be facilitated by deliberate analytical conversations as part of the architecture and systems engineering process. NASA has a mandate to explore and has now published objectives that outline what needs to be done to enable exploration of the inner solar system. Decisions about how those objectives are accomplished must also consider their meaning and impact.

For future ACRs, NASA will continue to reflect on how to best pursue responsible use of space.

4.7 RT-7 INTEROPERABILITY

RT-7: Enable interoperability and commonality (technical, operations, and process standards) among systems, elements, and crews throughout the campaign.

Architecture Assessments:

The Moon to Mars Architecture incorporates a diverse array of NASA programs, with contributions from industry and international partners. Safely and successfully orchestrating the resulting array of systems requires a commitment to interoperability. Artemis programs have applied existing interoperability standards in many areas of system design, including avionics, communication, PNT, docking, power rendezvous, and software. Interoperability requirements may be tailored for each element to balance the performance of the individual element with the integrated mission

architecture. NASA programs are defining initial requirement sets and establishing a baseline level of interoperability across the exploration ecosystem. In addition to the interoperability areas mentioned above, NASA is implementing interoperability standards in the areas: ECLSS, robotics, thermal control, logistics, and utilization. In many cases, the necessary categories of interoperability and the baseline interfaces have been identified, but specific implementations are still being developed. During pre-formulation, the Strategy and Architecture Office will assess the need for new interoperability standards and partner with the Moon to Mars Program to assign responsibility for ensuring needed standards are developed and applied.

The International Deep Space Interoperability Standards¹⁷ serve as the starting point for future interoperability assessments. Currently, nine International Deep Space Interoperability Standards exist and continue to be refined as needed. Two additional standards have identified forward work to be addressed. To the greatest extent possible, interfaces are being developed to enable application of the same or very similar interface to be used during the Humans to Mars segment. Other actions taken to improve interoperability within the Moon to Mars Architecture include the following:

- Since 2020, The Moon to Mars Program has begun releasing interoperability standards as Moon to Mars Program documents to facilitate their application in NASA's cislunar and lunar surface activities.
- ACR process will endorse new and revised interoperability standards to ensure broad awareness and acceptance.
- Architectural studies have mapped functional interoperability between systems assumed to be deployed for a given mission. These assessments have been and are being updated to reflect changes in the mission assumptions. The related results have already driven changes to the communication systems, identified potential gaps, and initiated specific tasks focused on closing assumptions and requirements.
- NASA developed a document that defines physical, data, power, and other interfaces for utilization across the Moon to Mars Architecture. The interfaces are consistent with existing Gateway requirements, the International Space Power System Interoperability Standards (ISPSIS), the International External Robotic Interface Interoperability Standards (IERIIS), and other applicable standards and supports the movement of payloads between systems.
- A standard for the development of graphical user interfaces across Artemis has been developed and approved. This standard helps establish a usable design framework, with consistency for critical components across Artemis, promoting ease of learning, ease of use, a reduction in operator workload, error reduction, an increase in situation awareness, and improved mission safety.
- The Icon and Symbol Library drives commonality in the use of icons and symbols across Artemis flight and lunar surface systems. The document includes icons and symbols approved for Orion consistently used by Gateway and HLS systems. As new symbols and icons are developed for new functions, the document will be updated and shared throughout NASA and with partners in international space agencies, industry, and academia. This should further promote consistency across multiple lunar and Mars systems while also increasing the overall ease of use.

¹⁷ International Deep Space Interoperability Standard, https://www.internationaldeepspacestandards.com

- Evolving lunar power concepts and emerging issues have impacted program/project analysis cycles that are driving trade studies and other specific analysis. One of the results of these discussions is the assignment of a task to determine which systems should be able to share power, and what power quality should be shared for each defined mission.
- A related item is the need for a standardized power connector for use on the lunar surface. Discussions have focused on dust tolerance, what voltages needs to be transmitted, the need to be "bi-directional," and other requirements to allow functionality with and without suited crews.
- The Moon to Mars Program maintains an interoperability working group and has participated in several forums addressing interoperability, including the Lunar Surface Innovation Consortium (LSIC), Lunar Exploration Analysis Group (LEAG), and the Mars Exploration Program Analysis Group (MEPAG). Interoperability is also one of the Artemis Accords principles. These forums enable sharing of concepts, hearing international partner, commercial, and academic perspectives, and facilitate community consensus.
- NASA has developed and traced RPODU requirements to the system-to-system level to ensure that all requirements for planned and contingency docking operations for Artemis III and IV are addressed and have appropriate verification planning. This activity highlighted a gap in testing and verification activities supporting contingency docking.
- The LunaNet Interoperability Specification for lunar communication and PNT standards have been developed by a team from NASA, ESA, and JAXA, with input from the Interagency Operations Advisory Group (IOAG) and other government and commercial entities. The specification has been applied as a requirement in the NASA and ESA service procurements and is gaining widespread acceptance.
- Another aspect of interoperability is the mission operations and crew interactions across all the Artemis elements. To address this, the Artemis Flight Operations Standards were baselined and contain details of NASA expectations for operational products, processes, and facilities. NASA-operated vehicles (e.g., Orion, Gateway) use this consistent approach and NASA coordinates these standards and integrates mission operations with all providers across the Artemis campaign.

RT Considerations:

The RTs guide interface standardization for all elements, but specific designs and requirements for interoperability are still being studied and refined. In many cases, these studies focus on a subset of relevant elements and may fall short of enterprise-wide coordination. Three examples of lunar surface gaps related to the Moon to Mars Architecture are:

- Lunar Surface Docking system that is capable of mating two pressurized systems to provide the transfer of crew and supplies in a shirt-sleeve environment and without the need of pressurization cycles.
- The IERIIS currently only addresses robotic attachments in a microgravity environment. It needs additional work to define requirements for operation on the lunar and Martian surfaces.
- Creating an interoperable network that enables data connectivity, command, and control among a distributed set of local and remote users is an area of open work.

Efforts have been initiated to address the identification, development, approval, and levying of interoperability standards in the Moon to Mars Architecture. These efforts are being developed to govern cross-program and cross-partner element application. Architectural needs will guide the development of interoperability artifacts which, when communicated through NASA to international and commercial partners for feedback, will drive system configuration functions and requirements.

4.8 RT-8 LEVERAGE LOW EARTH ORBIT

RT-8: Leverage infrastructure in low Earth orbit to support Moon to Mars activities.

Architecture Assessments:

The Moon to Mars Architecture builds upon and leverages past and current human and robotic spaceflight experience to inform future system design and operational needs.

Enabled by a robust international partnership of five space agencies from 15 countries, the International Space Station has served as a space laboratory of unprecedented scale and sophistication and hosted a continuous human presence in LEO for more than two decades. During this time, over 3,700 scientific experiments have been conducted and more than 270 astronauts from 21 countries have lived and worked there. The space station has facilitated the development of mature technological and operational concepts that will be leveraged as we embark upon more complex missions much further from home.

Further research, development, and testing will be critical to the successful execution of future deep space and planetary exploration missions. NASA will continue to operate and utilize the space station to support exploration goals through 2030 and is preparing for a successful transition of these capabilities to other destinations in LEO.

NASA's Commercial Low Earth Orbit Development Program (CLDP) is supporting the development of commercially-owned and -operated LEO destinations from which NASA, along with other customers, can purchase services. As commercial LEO destinations (CLDs) become available, NASA intends to implement an orderly transition from current International Space Station operations to these new destinations. Transition of LEO operations to the private sector will yield efficiencies in the long term, enabling NASA to shift resources towards other objectives.

After space station operations have transitioned to commercial LEO destination operations, ESDMD will coordinate with CLDP to leverage available commercial LEO destination utilization facilities and services that may accommodate Moon to Mars Objectives. Research and development opportunities may include studies of human behavioral and physiological exposure to in-space environments, habitability, and operations; development of in-space growth of alternative nutritional sources for human consumption; space-related technology demonstrations, tests, and certifications, and others.

RT Considerations:

Potential opportunities to leverage LEO infrastructure have not been fully explored, and additional studies and refinement are needed to evaluate all available options. LEO will be leveraged to the extent practical to inform human system risks for Mars, despite inherent limitations in the fidelity of certain spaceflight hazards. NASA will continue planning to ensure we take full advantage of the International Space Station before its planned decommission after 2030, and to ensure we enable the development of and transition to other LEO assets. NASA should also create and demonstrate decision support system capabilities in the content of future architectural assumptions.

4.9 RT-9 COMMERCE AND SPACE DEVELOPMENT

RT-9: Foster the expansion of the economic sphere beyond Earth orbit to support U.S. industry and innovation.

Architecture Assessments:

NASA and its partners have a clear intent to stimulate the expansion of the economic sphere. The industrial base has always been an enabler of space exploration activities. Historically its role has included development of technologies and systems for use in NASA missions. Over the last few decades, this role has evolved to even greater public-private partnerships, and even primarily commercial-driven endeavors in space. Using the foundation of policy, the Moon to Mars Architecture further fosters commercial industry and economic opportunities beyond Earth orbit. Indeed, the architecture seeks the expansion of the economic sphere in all architecture segments, explicitly aiming to build a future of economic opportunity, expanded utilization (including science), and greater participation on and around the Moon and in the rest of the solar system.

Existing policy and legislation provide the basis for measuring progress toward RT-9. Such policy includes semi-permanent or permanent human-scale infrastructure that enables growth in human and robotic space activities and commerce in an operationally diverse manner in multiple locations beyond LEO and also directs facilitation of commercial exploration and utilization of space resources to meet national needs. The infrastructure, systems, and capabilities that form the bulk of the exploration segments will help provide the means by which economic activity beyond agency could take root. Examples of such areas in near- and farther-term areas include power, communications/navigation/timing, and autonomy (including artificial intelligence), and resource exploration.

NASA has begun implementing many recent projects and programs through commercial partnerships with industry. For example, HLS, LCRNS, GLE, xEVA, LTV, and CLPS systems all feature commercial contracts and partnerships designed to enable use of the systems by other parties. In these elements, NASA has assumed higher than usual programmatic risk (with a benefit of possible reduced financial risk) and, in many cases, invested in multiple performers with the goal of generating commercial suppliers. These commercial elements will provide the means to travel to the Moon, maneuver on the surface, and communicate back to Earth — lowering the barrier for entry of potential customers and providing the potential basis for a future lunar economy.

The architecture helps to establish the sources of value that can sustain economic activities beyond Earth's orbit. The architecture cultivates the reasons for and a culture of exploration that excite governments, companies, and private citizens to venture away from Earth. It seeks to establish the science discoveries and capabilities that will bring continued expeditions to answer key questions about the Moon and the universe. It pursues resource exploration and the technologies needed to utilize those resources. Finally, the architecture establishes the Moon and cislunar space as a continued training ground and logistics station for exploration beyond the Moon, to Mars, and to the rest of the solar system. Simultaneously, the architecture seeks to find areas where governments can encourage, enable, support, and accelerate commercial endeavors consistent with the overall pillars, objectives, use cases, and functions.

RT Considerations:

While the current architecture makes progress towards this tenet, the undefined Sustained Lunar Evolution segment specifically has areas that point to opportunities for increasing the economic sphere, including the following:

- NASA has an opportunity to clarify the difference between economic development and commercial partnerships (economic development is a goal that can be achieved through commercial partnerships). For the purposes of this tenet, the economic consequences of the architecture are of first order importance: for instance, what services NASA will provide and which it will procure.
- NASA has emphasized competition in its commercial lunar procurements; however, with limited sources of commercial and other government agency revenue, some level of vertical or horizontal integration from commercial entities across multiple subarchitectures might provide new opportunities for innovative models for the future. This is particularly relevant to the Foundational Exploration segment and even more critical for visions of the Sustained Lunar Evolution segment.
- The architecture aims to develop a sustained lunar presence and then for NASA to continue to Mars. NASA should plan to sustain such a presence as it expands architecture and systems beyond the Moon.

The architecture also gives NASA the means to provide industry with forward guidance to improve their ability to support of the Moon to Mars activities. Some opportunities for forward clarity include the following:

- Clarify, as far in advance as practicable, the role of NASA in future missions and elements. This includes defining where NASA is going to build, own, or operate capabilities, and choosing where NASA intends to procure enduring services that could provide opportunities to industry partners.
- Clarify and publish expectations and estimates of future NASA needs such as power levels or communications bandwidth. These estimates from the architecture would help industry partners position themselves to support NASA's needs.
- Clarify NASA's role in resource exploration and utilization. This includes working with other government agencies in the information, technologies, sub-architectures, systems, and elements to enable industry to leverage the resources of the solar system, wherever it may become economically feasible to do so.

Finally, the initial Human Lunar Return and Foundational Exploration segments offer critical opportunities for the agency to gather information and feed forward into future segments to expand the economic sphere. The agency may consider additional opportunities to facilitate economic expansion in the Human Lunar Return and Foundational Exploration segments:

- NASA should consider the elements within the Human Lunar Return and Foundational Exploration segments that the agency might operate and then provide additional available capacity to commercial partners to enable their activities.
- NASA, along with other government agencies, can support resource exploration to gain knowledge of the location and number of resources that might be available for exploitation and to assess their potential economic viability and contributions to the architecture. Resource exploration results can feed back into the architecture to inform future use cases and elements.
- NASA should also consider how it coordinates and guides different industry and foreign partner capabilities to optimize the available funding around the world for lunar capabilities given the likely limited non-NASA sources of recurring revenue for lunar activities in the near to mid term.

APPENDIX A: DECOMPOSITION OF OBJECTIVES

This appendix shows the decomposition for the lunar and Mars objectives into characteristic and needs, use cases, and functions.

A.1 FULL LUNAR OBJECTIVE DECOMPOSITION

Moon to Mars Architecture Definition Document (ESDMD-001 Rev-B) 275

A.2 MARS OBJECTIVE DECOMPOSITION

A.3 LIST OF LUNAR USE CASES

A.4 LIST OF MARS USE CASES

A.5 LIST OF LUNAR FUNCTIONS

A.6 LIST OF MARS FUNCTIONS

APPENDIX B: KEY MOON TO MARS ARCHITECTURE DECISIONS

Key architecture decision – Defined as a decision (i.e., decision definitions and, when available, outcomes) that so profoundly influences the end-to-end architecture that it warrants elevated scrutiny. At one end of the spectrum, deciding how many crew members an architecture must accommodate is obviously a "key" decision because it influences virtually every aspect of the architecture and will involve collaboration between multiple decision authorities. At the other end of the spectrum, deciding handrail color or style — even though it will affect many elements — is best categorized as an engineering decision that does not rise to the same level of management scrutiny. But where to draw the line? For the purpose of sorting through thousands of decisions to determine which have a profound enough impact to be labeled as "key," NASA employs two criteria: high connectivity to other decisions, programs, and projects and high sensitivity of architecture-level and agency values (such as cost, schedule, or risk) to the decision options. This sorting process is subjective but errs on the side of caution: if in doubt, a decision is considered key; it may be reclassified later if further analysis indicates — or a decision authority decides that the decision could be made at a lower level or does not have a significant technical, cost, schedule, or risk impact.

Once a candidate architecture decision has been identified, defined, traced, and pre-coordinated with internal NASA organizations and relevant decision authorities, it is presented at ACR for consensus for agency workload prioritization. This step provides rationale for relevant organizations to allocate resources for their individual contributions to decision package development, research or analysis, integration, decision making, and implementation.

B.1 PRIORITY MARS ARCHITECTURE KEY DECISIONS

MD-01 Initial Human Mars Segment Science Objective Priorities

The agency's Moon to Mars Strategy identifies science as one of three pillars on which the blueprint for sustained human presence and exploration throughout the solar system is built. The needed decision outcome is a formulation of more specific science objectives — traceable to NASA's high-level "blueprint" science objectives — for missions carried out during the initial human Mars segment and prioritization of these objectives. Decision prerequisites will include inputs from and coordination between affected science communities and organizations such as academia, National Academies, affected NASA Science Advisory Committees, and the Human Research Program. Priority science objectives have substantial flow-down impacts to most architecture and operations decisions. Therefore, the Mars Science Priorities key decision must be placed at the starting point of the Mars decision roadmapping process.

MD-02 Initial Human Mars Segment Target State

To "architect from the right" per the agency's new Moon to Mars Strategy, "the right" must first be defined. A decision outcome is needed on the initial human Mars segment "target state." Specifically, the infrastructure and operational capabilities to be available on or at Mars by the end of the campaign segment must be identified. The vision for the initial Humans to Mars campaign segment must balance the highest-priority science objectives with implementation constraints, which will include pacing human Mars campaign segment investments in the context of the agency's other concurrent science and exploration commitments.

MD-03 Initial Human Mars Segment Mission Cadence

For architecture planning purposes, a decision outcome is needed on the mission cadence for the Initial Humans to Mars campaign segment. This decision outcome should be focused on the desired period of time between missions to Mars (i.e., the "cadence") and should be based on the general capability build-up that should be targeted during that cadence to reach the Initial Human Mars Target State. This decision outcome is part of defining the "campaign," which is defined as the combination of the mission cadence, the number of missions, and what operations happen on the way to and at Mars. However, the scope of this decision outcome has been intentionally limited to the cadence — that is, how fast we will achieve the target state. Also, the scope includes only missions to Mars, but it can include both crewed and uncrewed missions in the mission cadence, where the missions' purposes are to perform operations and capabilities necessary to achieve the Humans to Mars target state. Later decision outcomes will address other aspects of the campaign due to the potential difference in stakeholders and/or decision authorities, the need for further study of the options, and the many dependencies to other key decisions.

MD-04 Mars Architecture Loss-of-Crew Risk Posture

Human spaceflight programs typically develop an understanding of the overall loss-of-crew risk. In order to make risk informed architecture decisions, an architecture loss-of-crew risk posture is needed. A risk posture is defined as an expression of the agreed-upon limits of risk an organization's leadership team is willing to accept in order to achieve one or more of its objectives. The Mars architecture loss-of-crew risk posture must be expressed as a range for the probability of loss of crew. The probability values should be determined based on candidate initial human Mars segment concept(s) of operation, and the decision outcome should include a comparison with other industry risks of comparable and non-comparable magnitudes.

MD-05 Number of Crew to Mars Surface

Crew complement is the most common study constraint across all architectures and elements. The number of astronauts to support has direct impacts on the volume of habitable elements and other elements' performance of environmental control and life support systems (ECLSS) and crew support systems (such as for exercise), as well as logistics needs (e.g., for utilization, food, clothing, medical supplies), which drive campaign launches and cadences. Operationally, crew complement selection also sets an upper limit on the crew time and expertise available to carry out planned tasks, such as systems monitoring and maintenance, science, utilization, and public affairs outreach. To feed the initial human Mars segment target state, a decision outcome is needed on the targeted capability for how many crew members will travel to the Martian surface in the initial segment. This needed decision outcome is related to and interdependent with the needed decision outcome on the total number of crew to Mars vicinity per mission.

MD-06 Number of Crew to Mars Vicinity

Crew complement is a key constraint for human exploration architectures, with flow-down impacts to most elements and sub-architectures. The number of astronauts to support has direct impacts on the volume of habitable elements and other elements' performance of ECLSS and crew support systems (such as for exercise), as well as logistics needs (e.g., for utilization, food, clothing, medical supplies), which drives campaign launches and cadences. Operationally, crew complement selection also sets an upper limit on the crew time and expertise available to carry out planned tasks, such as systems monitoring and maintenance, science, utilization, and public affairs outreach. As a companion decision to the Number of Crew to Mars Surface, a decision outcome is needed on the targeted capability for the number of crew in total that will travel to the vicinity of Mars during crewed missions. To consider the possible needs of orbiting spacecraft in

parallel with surface mission objectives, the Crew to the Vicinity decision will also cover whether to split the crew between Mars orbit and surface.

MD-07 Primary Mars Surface Power Generation Technology

The scope of human exploration on Mars will be largely dependent on the amount of energy available to power crew life support systems, provide keep-alive support to surface elements, and to make, move, or environmentally maintain critical ascent vehicle propellants. A decision outcome is needed for the primary Mars surface power generation technology to be used during the missions of the initial human Mars segment. This decision will be a down-select between nonnuclear and nuclear technology types and will determine which type of power generation technology will be carried forward throughout further definition of the initial human segment architecture. Note that the scope of this decision would be limited to the power *generation* technique(s), not power load sizing, distribution, or other implementation technologies or methods. Additionally, the decision scope is limited to *primary* power generation and the outcome will not impact power generation technology for back-up power, mobility systems, or other nonprimary power needs.

MD-08 Mars Architecture Loss-of-Mission Risk Posture

Building on the Mars Architecture Loss-of-Crew Risk Posture decision, a decision outcome is also needed about an architecture loss-of-mission risk posture. This decision will have flow-down impacts from several other priority key decisions, such as the decisions on the number of crew to Mars vicinity and to surface (given the need for crew time and expertise to accomplish primary mission objectives) and the decision about maximum crew surface stay duration. A risk posture is defined as an expression of the agreed-upon limits of risk an organization's leadership team is willing to accept in order to achieve one or more of its objectives. The loss-of-mission risk posture must be expressed as a range for the probability of loss-of-mission. The probability values should be determined based on candidate initial human Mars segment concept(s) of operation, and the decision outcome should include a comparison with other industry risks of comparable and noncomparable magnitudes.

MD-09 Maximum Mars Crew Surface Stay Duration

The Mars science objective priorities decision, initial Mars target state decision, and initial Mars mission cadence decision outcomes will together serve as the primary inputs on what is to be accomplished at Mars during the initial Humans to Mars segment. Building on these initial decisions, a decision outcome will be needed on the maximum Mars crew surface stay duration for the initial human Mars segment. This decision outcome should choose the upper limit target for crewed surface missions for the entire segment, but this does not restrict the program from implementing shorter crew surface stays during the segment. The focus should be on the drivers and pinch points for general surface stay duration options needed to accomplish the "what" on the surface of Mars, while not focusing on the exact number of days (something that is reserved for implementation organizations).

MD-10 Forward Contamination Planetary Protection Risk Posture

Forward contamination is terrestrial-origin harmful contamination present on or in a spacecraft during exploration activities (definition derived from [NASA-STD-8719.27](https://standards.nasa.gov/standard/NASA/NASA-STD-871927?check_logged_in=1) Implementing Planetary Protection Requirements for Space Flight). To support compliance with the United Nations' [Outer](https://www.nasa.gov/history/SP-4225/documentation/cooperation/treaty.htm) [Space Treaty,](https://www.nasa.gov/history/SP-4225/documentation/cooperation/treaty.htm) the Committee on Space Research (COSPAR) maintains a consensus on international [Policy on Planetary Protection.](https://cosparhq.cnes.fr/cospar-policy-on-planetary-protection/) NASA supports and is an active partner with COSPAR's Panel on Planetary Protection for developing an international consensus standard for the discipline. NASA also participates in the COSPAR Panel on Planetary Protection for communicating and reporting mission activities from the agency to the international community. COSPAR Planetary Protection Policy, the international consensus standard and guidelines, is then used as one of multiple sources to inform NASA planetary protection policy and implementation. COSPAR policy designates landed Mars missions as Category IV, which triggers additional forward planetary protection as compared to landed missions on Earth's Moon (designated Category II). This means that the forward planetary protection risks — and NASA's risk posture — for human missions to Mars will be different than that for Artemis missions to the Moon. Additionally, NASA interim guidance for human missions to Mars acknowledges that it will not be possible for all human-associated processes and mission operations to be conducted within entirely closed systems.

Therefore, a decision outcome is needed on the Mars architecture forward contamination planetary protection risk posture. A "risk posture" is an expression of the agreed-upon limits of risk an organization's leadership team is willing to accept in order to achieve one or more of its objectives. Given the unique nature of this risk assessment, the Mars architecture forward contamination planetary protection risk posture may be expressed through a combination of quantitative and qualitative measures, which may include a minimum acceptable probability value determined based on candidate initial human Mars segment concept(s) of operation. The decision outcome should include comparison of robotic performance alongside other industry risks of comparable and non-comparable magnitudes.

MD-11 Backward Contamination Planetary Protection Risk Posture

Backward contamination is extraterrestrial harmful contamination that could pose a threat to the Earth's biosphere (definition from [NASA-STD-8719.27](https://standards.nasa.gov/standard/NASA/NASA-STD-871927?check_logged_in=1) Implementing Planetary Protection Requirements for Space Flight). The United Nations' [Outer Space Treaty](https://www.nasa.gov/history/SP-4225/documentation/cooperation/treaty.htm) specifies that space exploration should avoid "adverse changes in the environment of the Earth resulting from the introduction of extraterrestrial matter." To support compliance with the treaty, COSPAR maintains a consensus on international [Policy on Planetary Protection.](https://cosparhq.cnes.fr/cospar-policy-on-planetary-protection/) NASA's planetary protection policies are informed by the COSPAR policy. This policy designates all Earth return missions as Planetary Protection Category V, and landed missions to Mars are classified as Restricted Earth Return. This means that both the planetary protection risks — and NASA's risk posture — for human exploration of Mars will be different than that for Artemis missions to the Moon.

Although the NASA Interim Directive NID8715.129¹⁸ acknowledges that crewmembers exploring Mars, or their support systems, will inevitably be exposed to Martian materials, NASA principles and guidelines emphasize that safeguarding the Earth from potential back contamination is the highest planetary protection priority in Mars exploration.

Therefore, a decision outcome is needed on the Mars architecture backward contamination planetary protection risk posture. Given the unique nature of this risk assessment, the Mars architecture backward contamination planetary protection risk posture may be addressed through a combination of quantitative and qualitative measures, which may include a minimum acceptable probability, determined based on acceptable metrics applied to candidate initial human Mars segment concept(s) of operation. The decision outcome should include comparison with other industry risks of comparable and non-comparable magnitudes.

MD-12 Maximum Allowable Crew Communication Disruption

¹⁸ NASA Interim Directive NID8715.129, "Biological Planetary Protection for Human Missions to Mars", https://nodis3.gsfc.nasa.gov/OPD_Docs/NID_8715_129_.pdf (2020).

Communication blackouts are a known possibility based on planetary alignment in Mars mission trajectories. Without a means of mitigation (e.g., a communications relay or other communication assets), that blackout period may be unavoidable and of a wide range of durations. A decision outcome is needed on the maximum allowable communication blackout periods (i.e., when there is no communication possible between Earth and the crew) for crewed missions during the initial Humans to Mars segment. This decision outcome must consider the implications of a communications disruption during a crewed mission (future decisions will address contingency scenarios) and consider whether a mitigation might be desired.

B.2 MARS KEY DECISION DEPENDENCIES AND MODELING

According to technical report TP-20240003341¹⁹, decisions might be related to each other via a decision refines dependency in a SysML model. This dependency stereotype is customized to be the «MAT.Flows Down» relationship. In the decision model, these flow-down relationships indicate that one decision is thought to follow another for a variety of reasons: perhaps the previous decision may result in some required data products for the subsequent decision, or perhaps the previous decision will reduce the options available for the subsequent decision. The primary purpose of the SysML representation, example shown in Figure B-1, is to capture this notional sense of dependence between the decisions.

¹⁹ "Decision Space Modeling: Trade Space Ontology" https://ntrs.nasa.gov/citations/20240003341

Figure B-1. Illustration of Flowdowns Centered on Science Decisions, Highlighting the Initial Mars Science Priorities

For the purpose of analyzing the resulting network of decisions, flow-downs can be interpreted in a variety of ways. For some kinds of critical path analysis, flow-downs can be taken as precedence constraints with decisions as tasks. However, the notional approach captured in the flow-downs results in many cycles between decisions that must be "cut" somehow for a critical path analysis. On the other hand, certain schedule optimization approaches can represent concurrence²⁰, and these cycles could be included under some definitions of concurrence. It remains to be formulated exactly how best to support roadmapping through the formulation of appropriate analytical methods. Any analytical method may have additional metadata requirements — information to be tracked alongside the decisions and their flow-downs; this information is being monitored and elicited preliminarily from stakeholders.

Moon to Mars Architecture Definition Document (ESDMD-001 Rev-B) 407

²⁰ "Development and Acquisition Modeling for Space Campaign Architecting" https://hdl.handle.net/1853/75323

B.3 REMAINING MARS KEY DECISIONS

The catalog of Mars architecture key decisions (Table B-2) is still a work in progress, and updates are expected to this document each year as the current decisions continue to be refined (including refinements to title and scope) and as new key decisions are identified.

A maturation process has been implemented to define review "toll gates" for bringing decisions from initial identification to final definition. [Figure B--](#page-419-0)2 depicts this maturation process, consisting of a series of four maturity review gates, A through D. Each gate constitutes a review where criteria related to data completeness, model consistency, and architecture context are checked. If the maturity review gate criteria are satisfied, decisions progress up to the next maturity state. Nominally, the progression flows through the following maturity states: Identified \rightarrow Draft \rightarrow Preliminary \rightarrow Provisional \rightarrow Final. These maturity states are defined per the following:

- **Identified:** A model object (e.g., decision definition or flow-down relationship) that has been initially identified or suggested by the roadmapping team or a stakeholder. This model element has not yet passed any maturity review gates.
- **Draft:** A model object that has passed Maturity Review A. Review B is performed at the level of the decision roadmapping team. This means that the following metadata have been identified, reviewed during Review A, and documented in the model: decision name, decision scope, and decision context.
- **Preliminary:** A model object that has passed Maturity Review B. Review B is performed at the level of the decision roadmapping team.
- **Provisional:** A model object that has passed Maturity Review C. Review C requires approval from Mars Architecture Team leadership. Generally, decision definitions that have an ongoing decision package tasks will be at a "Provisional" maturity state.
- **Final:** A model object that has passed Maturity Review D. Review D requires approval from the model manager and generally means that a decision outcome has been released.

However, when issues or deficiencies are found during a review, decisions are moved to the Flagged state. Another review is then performed on Flagged decisions to determine whether the decision requires additional Refinement, or if the decision should be Retired. Refinement is the maturity state when a resolution for the issue has been achieved, but not yet implemented. Reasons for a decision being Retired include (but are not limited to):

- Proposed decision represents a metric or option rather than an actual decision
- Decision assumes or implies a particular solution
- Decision already exists, or is too correlated with decisions already existing in the model
- Decision belongs to an implementing project/program rather than the top-level architecture
- Decision is defined at a level that is inappropriate for the scope of the model

It is important to note that all decisions enter the maturation process in the Identified state, even those decisions that have been discussed and studied for many decades. Following the maturation process ensures that the model is able to support the various queries and analyses that will be used in supporting architecture decision-making.

Of the approximately 100 key Mars architecture decisions needed, only 12 have thus far been reviewed for inclusion in the Mars architecture decision roadmapping. These 12 (described in Appendix B.1) are considered sufficiently mature for decision roadmapping purposes, meaning that the needed decision outcome is well-defined, the needed decision outcome has been placed into the proper technical context, decision dependencies have been (or are being) mapped, and at least an initial assessment of supporting data needs has been developed.

The catalog of Mars decisions is still very much in work, but a snapshot of current progress is provided in Table B-1 and Table B-2. More than 70 needed decision outcomes are currently in the Identified state. Based on historical programs and analyses, what needs to be decided is welldefined, but the teams have not yet had a chance to fully analyze and map decision dependencies or assess supporting data needs or gaps to satisfy the maturity review gates. Remaining entries in the architecture decision catalog fall into the Flagged state. This set of needed decision outcomes was identified as potential candidates, but the architecture teams are still working through the maturation process. The list of Mars key decisions is included here for completeness and transparency, but note that some of these decisions may very well be removed from the catalog—i.e., marked as Retired—for various reasons. For example, "International Partnerships" was proposed for the Mars decision roadmapping based on historical precedent, but it remains forward work to define what precisely needs to be decided. Simply asking each partner to decide what they want to contribute would force planners to design a mission around the collection of elements actually contributed, which runs counter to the principles of "architecting from the right," where the architecture teams identify functions and then develop elements that can provide those functions. Asking partners to decide whether they want to contribute a particular needed element may very well be an implementation decision, not an architecture decision. Whether "International Partnerships" remains in the architecture decision roadmapping or is an implementation decision best managed by the implementing programs is an example of the forward work remaining for the architecture teams in subsequent analysis cycles.

Table B-1. Number of Mars Key Decisions in Each Decision Category and in Each Maturity State

Figure B-2. Architecture Key Decision Maturity State Diagram

Note: Table B-2 below does not reflect a priority-based order; the table is sorted first for whether or not it is categorized as a priority key decision, and then the remaining rows are sorted based on the decision category.

Decision ID Tag	Decision Title	Decision Category	Maturity State
$MD-04$	Mars Architecture Loss of Crew Risk Posture	03 Overall Risk	Provisional
$MD-05$	Number of Crew to Mars Surface	04 Human Systems & Habitation	Provisional
MD-06	Number of Crew to Mars Vicinity Per Mission	04 Human Systems & Habitation	Provisional
$MD-07$	Primary Mars Surface Power Generation Technology	05 Surface Systems & Infrastructure	Final
MD-08	Mars Architecture Loss of Mission Risk Posture	03 Overall Risk	Identified
MD-09	Initial Segment Crew Surface Stay Duration Capability	07 Surface Operations	Identified
$MD-10$	Mars Forward Contamination Planetary Protection Risk Posture	02 Overall Strategy	Identified
$MD-11$	Mars Backward Contamination Planetary Protection Risk Posture	02 Overall Strategy	Identified
$MD-12$	Maximum Allowable Crewed Communications Disruption	11 C&PNT	Identified
TBD	Mars Sample Storage and Analysis Needs	01 Science	Flagged
TBD	Science Facilities (In-Space)	01 Science	Identified
TBD	Science Facilities (Surface)	01 Science	Identified
TBD	Science Payload Mass Allocation - Earth Orbit to Mars Orbit	01 Science	Identified
TBD	Science Payload Mass Allocation - Mars Orbit to Earth Orbit	01 Science	Identified
TBD	Science Payload Mass Allocation - Mars Orbit to Mars Surface	01 Science	Identified
TBD	Science Payload Mass Allocation - Mars Surface to Mars Orbit	01 Science	Identified
TBD	Science Samples Conditioning Needs	01 Science	Identified
TBD	Mars Crew Quarantine for Planetary Protection	02 Overall Strategy	Flagged
TBD	Comprehensive Planetary Protection Protocol ²¹	02 Overall Strategy	Flagged
TBD	Element Life and/or Re-Use	02 Overall Strategy	Identified
TBD	High Priority Technology Demonstration Objectives	02 Overall Strategy	Identified
TBD	International Partnerships	02 Overall Strategy	Flagged
TBD	Loss of Crew/Mission Contingency Procedure (Interplanetary)	02 Overall Strategy	Identified
TBD	Loss of Crew/Mission Contingency Procedure (Mars orbit)	02 Overall Strategy	Identified
TBD	Loss of Crew/Mission Contingency Procedure (Mars surface)	02 Overall Strategy	Identified

²¹ Comprehensive Planetary Protection Protocol is not actually a unique key decision, but rather a "parent" decision of three separate key decisions: Mars Forward Contamination Planetary Protection Risk Posture, Mars Backward Contamination Planetary Protection Risk Posture, and Mars Crew Quarantine for Planetary Protection.

B.4 LUNAR ARCHITECTURE KEY DECISIONS

This section is reserved. More information to be provided in a future revision.

APPENDIX C: ARCHITECTURE-DRIVEN TECHNOLOGY GAPS

C.1 TECHNOLOGY GAPS SUMMARIES

This appendix contains a set of gap detail summary tables for each of the architecture-driven technology gaps, which are described in Section 2.5. These summaries describe the gap, identify the target capability or performance expected based upon the current architecture documentation, and track how the gap traces to the architecture and objective decomposition. The specific gap detail fields are defined as follows:

C.2 TECHNOLOGY GAPS PRIORITIZED LIST

This appendix section contains the prioritized list of architecture-driven technology gaps described in Section 2.5. The technology gaps are binned by similar levels of preference according to the Moon to Mars Architecture perspective.

APPENDIX D: ACRONYMS, ABBREVIATIONS, AND GLOSSARY OF TERMS

D.1 ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

D.2 GLOSSARY OF TERMS

D.3 QUANTITY DESCRIPTORS USED IN OBJECTIVE DECOMPOSITION

