



Headquarters
Washington, DC 20546-0001

Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena Independent Study Team Terms of Reference

Preamble

NASA hereby extends the Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena Independent Study Team (UAPIST) as a subordinate group (subcommittee) of the Earth Science Advisory Committee (ESAC), a standalone advisory committee established under the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA). The UAPIST was established at the discretion of the Director, Earth Science Division, following consultation with the Assistant Deputy Associate Administrator for Research, Science Mission Directorate, as well as the Associate Administrator, Science Mission Directorate. These Terms of Reference amend, extend, and supersede those for the Unidentified Aerial Phenomena Independent Study Team, signed by the Associate Administrator, Science Mission Directorate, on May 24, 2022. The UAPIST name has been changed to Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena Independent Study Team, consistent with the James M. Inhofe National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023, signed into law on December 23, 2022 (Public Law 117-263, Section 1673).

Principles

NASA leads the world in exploration and is committed to rigorous scientific inquiry. Consistent with NASA's principles of openness, transparency, and scientific integrity, NASA is extending the UAPIST in order for it to complete its examination of Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena (UAP) from a scientific perspective, focusing on how NASA can use data and the tools of science to move our understanding forward.

The UAPIST was established as a means to secure the counsel of community experts across diverse areas on matters relevant to potential methods of study of unidentified anomalous phenomena. The UAPIST has served as a community-based, interdisciplinary forum for soliciting and coordinating community analysis and input and providing advice. At the conclusion of its work, it will deliver a final report which provides advice to the ESAC.

Background

On June 25, 2021, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence issued the unclassified report *Preliminary Assessment: Unidentified Aerial Phenomena*. That report concluded that:

- The limited amount of high-quality reporting on UAP hampers our ability to draw firm conclusions about the nature or intent of UAP.

- In a limited number of incidents, UAP reportedly appeared to exhibit unusual flight characteristics. These observations could be the result of sensor errors, spoofing, or observer misperception and require additional rigorous analysis.
- There are probably multiple types of UAP requiring different explanations based on the range of appearances and behaviors described in the available reporting.
- UAP may pose airspace safety issues and may pose a challenge to U.S. national security.
- Consistent consolidation of reports from across the Federal government, standardized reporting, increased collection and analysis, and a streamlined process for screening all such reports against a broad range of relevant U.S. Government data will allow for a more sophisticated analysis of UAP that is likely to deepen our understanding.

Statement of Task

The UAPIST shall report on the following questions:

1. What types of scientific data currently collected and archived by NASA or other civilian government entities should be synthesized and analyzed to potentially shed light on the nature and origins of UAP?
2. What types of scientific data currently collected and held by non-profits and companies should be synthesized and analyzed to potentially shed light on the nature and origins of UAP?
3. What other types of scientific data should be collected by NASA to enhance the potential for developing an understanding of the nature and origins of UAP?
4. Which scientific analysis techniques currently in production could be employed to assess the nature and origins of UAP? Which types of analysis techniques should be developed?
5. In considering the factors above, what basic physical constraints can be placed on the nature and origins of UAP?
6. What civilian airspace data related to UAPs have been collected by government agencies and are available for analysis to a) inform efforts to better understand the nature and origins of UAPs, and b) determine the risk of UAPs to the National Air Space (NAS)?
7. What current reporting protocols and air traffic management (ATM) data acquisition systems can be modified to acquire additional data on past and future UAPs?
8. What potential enhancements to future ATM development efforts can be recommended to acquire data concerning future reported UAPs to assist in the effort to better understand the nature and origin of the UAPs?

Membership

NASA's Science Mission Directorate, in consultation with NASA's Aeronautics Research Mission Directorate, appoints the Chair and members of the UAPIST for terms of up to one year. Diversity of thought is a factor in determining the composition of the UAPIST. The UAPIST has sixteen members chosen with an appropriately broad range of expertise, experience, employer types and sizes, and individual demographics. The membership consists of experts drawn from U.S. academic, independent, and commercial institutions. Members of the UAPIST who are not Regular Government Employees (RGEs) are designated as Special Government Employees (SGEs). A

NASA civil servant is appointed as the Designated Federal Officer (DFO) and Executive Secretary of the UAPIST.

Meetings and Reporting

The UAPIST will hold up to three meetings. The first two meetings are preparatory, while the third meeting is deliberative. Following the deliberative meeting, the UAPIST will prepare a final report containing its findings, recommendations, and work products, and the UAPIST Chair will submit this final report to the ESAC Chair. A copy of this final report will be made publicly available at <https://science.nasa.gov/uap/>. The ESAC will deliberate the final report and formally deliver a set of findings and recommendations to NASA.

Administrative Provisions

Organizational support for the UAPIST will be provided by the Science Mission Directorate. The support will include meeting and logistical support, and any communication requisites, as appropriate.

Duration

The UAPIST and these Terms of Reference will be terminated following the completion of the UAPIST final report and submission to the ESAC.

Dr. Karen St. Germain
Director, Earth Science Division
Science Mission Directorate

Dr. Daniel Evans
Asst. Dep. Associate Administrator for Research
Science Mission Directorate

Dr. Nicola Fox
Associate Administrator
Science Mission Directorate