



nssc

NASA Shared Services Center

**Service Level Agreement
Questions and Answers
Fiscal Year 2009**

October 15, 2008

NASA Shared Services Center
Building 1111
Stennis Space Center, MS 39529

Headquarters

Question: The NSSC has been providing a number of services, many for up to three years now, and there are service areas that should utilize historical data when determining anticipated volume and rates as opposed to projected volume based on assumptions. (Section 3.0)

NSSC Response: NSSC uses a very methodical process to derive the utilization that will be used to calculate service rates. We begin the PPBE cycle early to allow Centers to provide projected utilization for our services in the budget-setting year as well as the outyears. In the data call, we provide the Centers with their historical usage. When we receive input from the Centers, our functional managers review the Centers input as well as historical data, consider upcoming Agency events that could have an impact on utilization, such as the Shuttle retirement, and then work with each Center to understand projections and then finally to validate utilization projections. We rely heavily on historical performance but we also take into account events that could impact projections.

Question: The other area of concern we would like to see addressed is the use of W-2 forms in the determination of rates and units of measure, as well as including some missing Service Level Indicators, etc. Any metric used to create rates and project volume should be understandable and defensible to ensure data integrity. For example, and by our analysis, the number of W-2's designated for Headquarters does not pass this assessment since it does not match other FPPS data. Also are included a few suggested editorial modifications.

NASA Headquarters has been consistently declining in position allocation for the past few years. In FY2005 there were 1,619 positions allocated, and in FY2009, there are 1,235 positions allocated. The HQ numbers cannot remain the same, and need to be reduced for estimating, tracking and billing purposes. (Section 3.0)

NSSC Response: The system of record for W-2's is the Department of Interior (DOI) database and we used the DOI count for our initial projections in the first year of the planning process. Each subsequent year is adjusted based on Center input to the PPBE process. The FY2011 PPBE input from HQ reflects no change in the # from year to year. If HQ determines it appropriate to reflect a declining allocation in W-2's, in order to be included in the budgeting process at the NSSC, this data must be included in the HQ response to the NSSC data call. Beginning in FY09, the NSSC will receive a monthly report from our Payroll organization with information pulled from the DOI database and we will adjust the final September FY09 bill to reflect actual Center W-2 usage for FY09. NSSC does not use FTEs (nor headcount) because we have no authoritative single source for FTE planning or reporting on actuals on a monthly basis and because headcount and/or FTE do not reflect the number of employees who come onboard and/leave during a given year.

The OIG W-2's are part of the HQ number. The only items separated from HQ for the OIG are Relocation Assistance and Training. The actuals come from the DOI as they process our payroll. As we understand it, HQ OIM provides institutional support for OIG through an MOU. Also, NSSC is removed from HQ count for billing purposes.

***Question:* The Cost Containment Strategy paragraph is identical to the one in the FY08 SLA. Specific strategies and reductions/improvements that have been undertaken over the past year should be included, and shared with Centers as well as the results achieved. (Section 1.8)**

NSSC Response: During the past year, NSSC returned 14 FTE to the Agency, including 8 Liaison FTE and 6 other FTE no longer required to accomplish NSSC activities. NSSC used our positive operating results in FY07 to buy down rates in 2009 and 2010 (\$2.5M/year) - we plan to do the same during the FY2011 PPBE cycle underway. As positions are vacated, NSSC has downgraded higher positions and moved to entry level positions, where possible. We completed a detailed benchmarking study of Accounts Payable, Travel and Payroll against other shared service organizations in the private sector. We will use this data to drive process improvements in FY09, and potentially reduce the cost of services. We have begun similar benchmarking studies of our Document Imaging processes and will begin public sector benchmarking of NSSC services in FY09. We are performing verification and validation of Office of Naval Research billings to the Agency which should result in a reduction of ~\$400K during FY09 (during FY08, we discovered 934 grants/agreements that should be removed from the invoice). We proposed performing the same verification and validation process for Defense Contract Management Agency and Defense Contract Audit Agency in FY09. We also absorbed significant impacts associated with schedule delays and staffing increases associated with Accounts Payable/Accounts Receivable (\$4M). In FY08, we implemented Electronic Leave and Earnings Statements which reflects an overall Agency savings of ~\$150K/year. We awarded the Agency Forms License renewal contract which resulted in \$132K of savings in FY08. As is demonstrated from the variety of activities above, we are continually looking for ways to reduce our costs of services and have many examples of ways in which we have done this. The most significant activity we can do to lower rates is to bring high-volume services that fit the NSSC portfolio into the NSSC - this allows us to spread our overhead over a higher cost base and thus results in lower service rates.

***Question:* The first paragraph indicates of Section 2.2 NSSC will not be held to service standards during prolonged system outages. Somewhere within this document please address sustainment of vital services during prolonged outages at the NSSC, particularly those supporting the Agencies Mission Essential Functions. For example as recently witnessed during emergency response activities for Hurricane Gustav, we should not have to check to see if pay will be processed on time. Additionally, the NSSC Emergency Preparedness Plan for continuity of services needs to be provided for accounting of essential functions, and so that we can cross reference it from the NASA HQ Emergency Preparedness Plan. (Section 2.2)**

NSSC Response: Response: Based on a recent review by the NASA Office of Security Program and Protection, functions provided at the NSSC are not considered mission essential to the Agency. However, the NSSC's Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) does address business interruption. Approaches for various services provided vary. In the case of the example concerning personnel salary payments, these are continued automatically even in the event of a business interruption. Other functions, including such services as Accounts Payable/FBWT will also be considered for continuation, in consultation with the Agency Functional Owners.

***Question:* There are no SLI for the Financial Management activities, and these should be included. We are looking specifically for Payroll and Time & Attendance Processing, including Agency Leave Transfer and Advance Sick Leave Program PCS Relocation Assistance – Where are the specific measures? (Section 4.1)**

NSSC Response: The Agency Leave Transfer and Advanced Sick Leave Program is not a Financial Management activity as it is aligned with Benefit Processing. OHCM is currently redefining the processes with respect to supervisory approval and the NSSC's role. Upon implementation, we will review this activity with OHCM to determine if a SLI should be defined

***Question:* The measures for the benefits processing area do not account for advisory services. We have heard several anecdotal instances of employees not receiving timely or accurate advice and are not getting their questions answered. There should be a measure for that and a way for the NSSC to follow up to make sure that issues are resolved to the customer's satisfaction. (Section 4.1)**

NSSC Response: We agree with your assessment as the NSSC does conduct a formal survey program to ensure Customer Satisfaction. We have made several adjustments to this program as a result, e.g., more civil service employees have been added to the staff to increase federal experience, and a vigorous proficiency program has been put in place for the Service Provider benefits specialists. We believe these actions will be an effective way to enhance the quality of the benefits programs.

***Question:* The measure for benefits processing states routine retirement packages will be submitted to DOI within 10 business days and complex cases within 20 days from the effective date of retirement. Two issues: 1) there is no definition of routine or complex. How is this determined? HQs raised this issue in the past. 2) There is inconsistency between the SLI and the FAQs on the NSSC Retirement website. The current SLI metric is the packages will be submitted to the Department of the Interior 10 days after the effective retirement date for routine cases and 20 days after the effective retirement date for complex cases. As we stated last year, these dates are**

too long. Also, the NSSC web site FAQ on Retirement tells the customer that received applications will be submitted to OPM via DOI within 30 days of receipt, not from the effective date. (Section 4.1)

NSSC Response: We have revised the SL and no longer differentiate between "routine and complex" packages. The SLI now reflects, "95% of completed retirement packages will be submitted to Department of Interior (DOI) within 10 business days from the effective date of retirement." The FAQ on the NSSC website is correct to where DOI has 30 days to submit the employee's retirement package to OPM; however, the SLI is measuring NSSC's performance.

Question: Personnel Action Processing: While we have no issues with the measures themselves, we need to understand how the measures will be accounted for. The monthly reports do not provide more details, and there was a commitment at the Virginia Beach offsite in July that the NSSC would provide more training on what the metrics involve and the data that supports them. Corrections are an ongoing concern and there has been no data provided on the number of corrections and who is responsible for their remedy, the Center or the NSSC. We would appreciate this information for our internal process improvements as well. Additionally, the measure states "processed by the cutoff date established in Personnel Bulletin 2006-41-Cia". The only cutoff date we can find in the cited Personnel Action (it's attached) was a release for processing date for the Centers. Please clearly spell out the standard as opposed to citing a document. (Section 4.1)

NSSC Response: NSSC's HR Service Delivery staff is working hand in hand with our Strategic Management Office reviewing the current Quality Measures and refining the reports which will capture more detail that will eventually be stored in the Business Intelligence Data Warehouse (BIDW), accessible by the HR community. Also, HR Service Delivery will begin briefing Center HR POC's regarding their data until the BIDW is ready. With regards to your concern related to the measure that states "processed by the cutoff date established in Personnel Bulletin 2006-41-Cia", the excerpt below is taken directly from that Bulletin. The NSSC is to release all actions with the exception of awards by Friday of the first week of that pay period. Although the Bulletin does not directly state "NSSC", since NSSC transitioned Personnel Action Processing and has the responsibility of releasing actions for processing, the timeframe is accurately defined.

Please read the excerpt below:

"Effective March 4, 2007, all actions (except awards) effective during a particular pay period must be finalized, or released for processing (RLUP) by Friday of the first week of that pay period. Centers are encouraged to make every effort to get as many actions as possible RLUP'd by Thursday of the first week in the pay period in order to avoid delays in processing actions."

Question: Customer Contact Center: Need different metrics that include quality measures. This has been an ongoing concern and one that requires addressing, particularly as the employee focused transactions have not transitioned. Also, new ways to measure “non-routine” calls and how these compare to the “routine” customer inquiries addressed in the measure. We have asked before for a definition of “resolved”. Also, we have heard informal complaints (particularly in retirement services) that tickets have been closed prior to the service being performed. The comments in the most recent ViTS suggested ticket monitoring and analysis and dropped calls would be investigated, however they should be addressed in the SLA. (Section 4.1)

NSSC Response Currently, we use Customer Contact Center (CCC) Customer Satisfaction survey data to assess the quality of the customer experience. Customer Satisfaction rating for the CCC is normally around 90% Overall Satisfaction. Non-routine calls--any call that cannot be answered by the CCC--are elevated to Level 2/3 Subject Matter Experts for resolution. The term resolved means that the customer request has been answered, in most cases to the satisfaction of the requestor.

Question: Performance Reports: We would appreciate more useful charts that would show more detailed breakdowns and a better understanding of where the data comes from that appears in the charts. (Section 4.3)

NSSC Response: We strive to make this report as useful as possible for you. Please feel free to review the latest Performance and Utilization Report, located on our Customer Service Website and offer suggestions regarding the type of charts you would find helpful. For reference please view page 2 of the report to view the data source key. Data for this report is extracted from the NSSC Business Intelligence Datamart (NBID); Remedy (Change Request Module); Centergy Manager & Remedy (Help Desk Module)--CCC Measures; and Inquisite Survey Software. Below is the link to the metrics and reporting page. The Performance and Utilization report link is posted under news.

[NSSC Customer Service - Metrics and Reporting](#)

Question: Please clarify that a NOMAD seat equals an ODIN seat. It is our understanding that each Distribution List and Functional E-mail account is a “seat” in NOMAD. Is the NSSC including these numbers in their charge of \$26/seat? This is really a point of clarification for us to ensure we’re budgeting appropriately. (Section 3.3)

NSSC Response: A NOMAD Seat is a seat in the ODIN Services catalog. It is primarily used for customers just wanting an email account or for a functional office needing a

unique email post office box. Distribution list are not seats but functional email accounts are and customers are charges as per their specific delivery order pricing structure. The \$26/seat per year is to pay for the cost of the ODIN Program Office and all the functions that they perform. These include:

- Technical, Administrative, and Contractual support for ODIN follow-on Contract (currently defined as ACES). Estimated effort is 2.5 FTEs for the 16 months starting July 2008.
- Program Management for 2 ODIN contracts supporting 10 NASA Centers
 - COTR and CO Support for contracts totaling \$190M/year
 - Monthly and Semiannual Performance Surveillance and Reporting for over 43,000 desktops (plus LAN, Radio, Video, PDA, etc.)
 - Oversight of Quarterly S/W Loads and H/W Updates
 - Oversight of Desktop Standard Integration w/ ODIN software
 - Consolidation of center input into the ODIN contract award fee process
 - Agency Management of the Desktop Systems Benchmarking process w/ Alterion
 - Management and oversight of IT security issues related to six IT service areas (Desktop, Voice, Secure VTM, Radio, Help-Desk) including C&A coordination
- OCIO and Agency reporting of ODIN activities to OMB as requested
- Handling of all IG AND GAO investigations and reporting requests
- Oversight of ODIN Enterprise functions such as:
 - Agency Desktop Help Desk services
 - Agency Email Services
 - Agency VTM and SVTM Services
 - ODIN Catalog Coordination
- Management of ODIN Corrective Action Planning
- Project Management of Agency Desktop Initiatives and Upgrades
 - NASA Active Directory (NCAD) Implementation and Management
 - NOMAD (NASA email) Exchange 2007 Upgrade
 - Secure VTM Upgrade (SVTM)
 - FDCC Compliance Implementation
 - Data at Rest (DAR) Implementation to comply with OMB requirement
 - PDA Encryption Services for Data in Transit

Question: The Service Level Indicator for Information Technology Services omits Customer Notifications (e.g. Outages, Maintenance, etc.) The service/measure for IT on page 21 includes only availability. The notification piece including metrics for notification is missing and should be added. (Section 4.1)

NSSC Response: We are currently developing an SLA to the Centers for NOMAD services. The SLA is in draft form and being vetted through the OCIO governance process prior to NSSC including it into their processes. We expect the SLA to be approved and in place by December 2008.

Question: Point of clarification and subsequent request, it is our understanding that NOMAD services are being provided by (through) the NSSC, we request a new section to address NOMAD specifics and metrics. It is understood that there are a set of SLAs between the NOMAD Program Office (at the NSSC) and the NSSC's vendor. We would like to take that document, and revise it to be an additional SLA between the Center (HQ) and/or inclusive of HQ requirements and the NOMAD Program Office, and also include it in the SLA.

NSSC Response: We are currently developing an SLA to the Centers for NOMAD services. The SLA is in draft form and being vetted through the OCIO governance process prior to NSSC including it into their processes. We expect the SLA to be approved and in place by December 2008.

Question: Service Rates: There has been a mix of increases and decreases over the FY08 rates. It would be helpful to see a comparison from past years. Perhaps this could be a chart as part of the quarterly VITS or the monthly utilization chart at the beginning of the FY. There is no clear explanation of why these rates are changing or how they are arrived at. We do agree at splitting out the Personnel Action Processing and eOPF record keeping and had suggested it last year. (Section 5.2)

NSSC Response: Response: We provided a trend chart in the FY2010 PPBE VITS presentation during February 2008 and plan to cover the same information in the FY2011 PPBE VITS and again during the Agency Budget Kick-off in March 2008. We also provided a detailed chargeback briefing to HQ and Center representatives on July 30, 2008 (attendees included CFO's/Associated Center Directors/HQ participants included Jim Cassidy and Kevin Buford). We plan to invite this same group back to the NSSC prior to finalizing FY2011 PPBE rates. We would be happy to include a representative of your organization in this briefing. Rates change for a number of reasons including increases and/or decreases in projected utilization, increases/decreases in staffing required to accomplish specific functions, and new business incorporated into the NSSC portfolio, just to name a few. The NSSC Business and Administration organization continually seeks way to provide information about NSSC's chargeback structure to our customers, as evidence by this years' NSSC Day and the Senior Focus Group session, we are prepared to

provide your team with a detailed chargeback briefing-- just let us know and we can set up a session.

Question: There are forecasted utilization rates for every item except seat management, the table reflects only the per seat cost previously provided on page 29. (Appendix A)

NSSC Response: We have updated the utilization rates table to reflect data for seat management.

Point of Contact page needs to be retyped in order to be legible. (Appendix B)

NSSC Response: This Technical glitch has been fixed and the page is now legible.

Johnson

Question: Section 2.2 states that the Centers retain the responsibility for the periodic monitoring of control activities for their associated business area. This has been replaced by the Continuous Monitoring Program (CMP). The NSSC does have the responsibility for sections of the CMP and provides this information back to the Centers. This section should define the current process and sections NSSC is responsible for providing. (Section 2.2)

NSSC Response: A Service Delivery Guide has been prepared which identifies the responsibilities of the NSSC. The SDG is scheduled to be distributed to the Centers no later than next week for comment. All SDGs are available on the web at:

http://internal.nssc.nasa.gov/references_and_resources/index.htm.

Click on Service Delivery Guides half way down on the left hand side of the page.

Question: In Section 2.2 center Overall Responsibilities, the last sentence states that "The Centers will be responsible for complying with the most current approved NSSC documented process." Will there be one central location for the NSSC documented processes? (Section 2.2)

NSSC Response: The Service Delivery Guides are available on the web at:

http://internal.nssc.nasa.gov/references_and_resources/index.htm.

Click on Service Delivery Guides half way down on the left hand side of the page.

Question: The first paragraph in section 3.1 states that Accounts Payable includes FI invoice. The JSC FI invoices have not transitioned yet but are scheduled November 1, 2009. (Section 3.1)

NSSC Response: The processing of FI Invoices for a center will be based on the transition schedule and completing a successful ORR.

Question: Accounts Payable unit of measure includes IPAC Payments. Would like additional information on how MilFed IPACs are counted. Are they based on line item or the summary invoice? (Section 3.1)

NSSC Response: The NSSC uses the "adopted" method of processing these type transactions. If each of the items has cost and funding, it will be counted as one unit of measure. For example, if you have 500 items and 450 have cost and funding, the processing of the 450 items will be counted as one unit of measure. For the remaining 50 items that are processed later, they will be counted as an additional unit of measure if all 50 have cost and funding. If only 45 have cost and funding, then the 45 will be counted as a unit of measure. The remaining 5 will be counted as a unit of measure if all 5 have cost and funding, etc.

Question: Accounts Payable unit of measure includes "reversals". Please define the nature of the reversals involved. The Center should not be responsible for reversals required for NSSC corrections. (Section 3.1)

NSSC Response: The Centers are not responsible for reversals that are required due to an NSSC correction.

Question: Accounts Payable general question - Please confirm that NSSC A/P will be generating and distributing the required 1099's. (Section 3.1)

NSSC Response: The NSSC is responsible for generating and distributing the required 1099s.

Question: Travel Services - The Centrally Billed Account (CBA) for the airline payment will transition to the NSSC with the FI Invoice process on November 1, 2009. We do not anticipate that the NSSC will be processing CBA reversals since the Travel Office will continue to be responsible for the reconciliation of this payment. Please define the nature of the reversals involved. The Center reversals should not be included in the NSSC charges. (Section 3.1)

NSSC Response: Based on the current process for CBAs and the anticipated process under eTravel, the NSSC agrees that Center reversals should not be included in the NSSC charges.

Langley

Question: According to the Service Level Indicator information (SLA Section 4.1) the performance measurement “will be an assessment of timeliness, quality, and efficiency on how the NSSC is performing....” While timeliness and efficiency are important, LaRC is also interested in quality. Most of the Human Resources Service areas reflect attention to quality. For example, 90% of the Agency Honor Awards and processing will be done *accurately* and on time; 97% of personnel transactions are processed *accurately*; SES Case Documentation maintains a 98% OPM *approval rate*, etc. However, there is no provision for quality For Benefits Processing. It is recommended that the measure be revised to incorporate quality. (Section 4.1)

NSSC Response: With regard to quality metrics, it is particularly difficult to come up with a specific and objective measure that could be agreed upon in this area since the counseling aspect is a key element of the service. The NSSC routinely monitors feedback in a variety of forums and surveys customers to ensure that we are capturing issues and concerns related to quality and customer satisfaction. With regards to the benefits programs, the NSSC has taken several steps to bolster the program based on feedback that we've received. For example, more civil service employees have been added to the staff to increase federal experience, and a vigorous proficiency program has been put in place for the Service Provider benefits specialists. We believe these actions will be an effective way to enhance the quality of the benefits programs.

Question: According to the Service Level Indicator information (SLA Section 4.1) the performance measurement “will be an assessment of timeliness, quality, and efficiency on how the NSSC is performing....” While timeliness and efficiency are important, LaRC is also interested in quality. Most of the Human Resources Service areas reflect attention to quality. For example, 90% of the Agency Honor Awards and processing will be done *accurately* and on time; 97% of personnel transactions are processed *accurately*; SES Case Documentation maintains a 98% OPM *approval rate*, etc. However, there is no provision for quality For HR & Training Website Development & Maintenance. It is recommended that the measure be revised to incorporate quality. (Section 4.1)

NSSC Response: The NSSC's role in the area of website development and maintenance is largely a support role. While the NSSC is responsible for ensuring that the information posted is editorially accurate, the actual content of the information posted is typically provided by, and the responsibility of content managers outside of the NSSC who are subject matter experts in their respective functional areas.

Question: The provision that it will take 45 business days to prepare a retirement estimate for a date 5 years in the future seems excessive. (Section 4.1)

NSSC Response: The NSSC developed a tiered approach (10 days for Retirements Within one Year, 20 days for Retirements Within 5 Years, and 45 days For Retirements Beyond 5 Years) for responding to retirement estimate requests because of workload concerns and the need to manage and prioritize work in an efficient way. Those requests that are most urgent are given priority by this method.

Question: The provision that one retirement estimate per employee will be provided per fiscal year seems restrictive. Perhaps the measure could be rewritten to state that one retirement estimate per employee per fiscal year for dates 5+ years out; 2 per fiscal year for retirement dates 1-4 years out; and 3 per fiscal year for retirement dates within the same year. (Section 4.1)

NSSC Response: We stated that we will work one request per customer per year. However, customers can request more than one scenario per request, and NSSC will work additional requests on a non-interference basis.

Marshall

NASA Shared Service Center Overall Responsibilities

Question: This section states, “In the event of a prolonged system outage or other external occurrence (SAP year-end shutdown), both expected and unexpected, the NSSC will not be held to the established service standards outlined in this agreement. The NSSC will reassume accountability to the established service standards beginning in the first full month following recovery or startup.” This length of time seems unreasonable, especially in the case of an SAP year-end shutdown. (Section 2.1)

NSSC Response: Just as we have in the past, the NSSC plans to make every effort to meet established performance parameters when events outside of our control occur. However depending on the duration and type of outage it may not be possible to meet the Service Level Indicator.

Question: The heading on page 26 says 5.0 FUNDING STRATEGY AND PERFORMANCE REPORTING. That is followed by a discussion of funding (5.1) and service rates (5.2) but there is no discussion of performance reporting. (Section 5.0)

NSSC Response: The title of section 5.2 has been changed to “Service Rates and Performance Reporting” and the following text has been added:

The service rates reflected above are the billing rates for FY09. Once the metrics and utilization data have been completed the Monthly Performance and Utilization Report is created and posted to the Service Delivery Website. This report includes the service level indicators as measured against the performance goals but also includes the Center Utilization Report by Center which reflects the current month utilization and the Year to Date utilization by service. This report also reflects the status of funding received and the percentage of funding consumed based on service utilization.

Question: The way HR activities are grouped makes it hard to know whether the amount charged is reasonable. However, even at the rate of \$72 the cost of personnel action processing is too high and \$8,225 for SES case documentation is outrageous. (Section 5.2 Funding Service Rates)

NSSC Response: Although the rates may appear high for Personnel Action Processing and SES Case Documentation as we continue to gain historical knowledge we are able to reduce the cost to the Centers. The rate for Personnel Action Processing reflects a reduction of 26% from the FY08 SLA Rate. The rate for SES Case Documentation reflects a reduction of 24% from the FY08 SLA Rate.