

The agreement is similar to the NASA agreement with the European Space Agency (ESA) whereby ESA is to design, develop and build the SPACELAB, a manned space laboratory that fits in and remains with the Orbiter Spacecraft during a SPACELAB mission.

Both Canada and Europe are funding the cost of the research and development for their respective parts of the overall Space Transportation System program. In terms of direct benefits, the NASA/NRCC agreement assures Canada access to both the Space Shuttle for spacecraft launches and service missions and to the SPACELAB for experiments and applications, and in the interim, to conventional launch facilities. Access to space is needed by Canada not only to maintain viable research programs in the space sciences but also to exploit the expanding potential of satellite communications and sensing systems. In addition, the RMS program will improve the Canadian industrial capacity for the design and construction of advanced space systems and provide a technological base from which Canada could participate in the future global market for remote handling systems capable of operating in a variety of environments.