Space Exploration Technologies Corporation was established in 2002. Since then, SpaceX has been developing the Falcon family of space launch vehicles for light-lift to heavy-lift capabilities. As of 2010 the light-class Falcon 1 was operational and the heavy-lift Falcon 9 was successfully developed and flight tested.

In addition, SpaceX secured funding from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), to demonstrate delivery and return of cargo to the International Space Station (ISS). NASA announced in 2008 the selection of the Falcon 9 launch vehicle and Dragon spacecraft, which is under development by SpaceX, to resupply ISS when Space Shuttle operations are terminated (current plans call for termination in 2011). SpaceX signed a US $1,600m. contract for a minimum of 12 flights, with an option to order additional missions for a cumulative total contract value of more than US $3,000m. with NASA’s Commercial Crew and Cargo Program.

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