While both the rail and space sectors maintain a transport infrastructure, at first glance they would appear to be very different indeed. In space passenger numbers are tiny, timetabling is trivial, vehicle reuse is patchy and for the space shuttle you have a ~2% chance of not coming home. However, on closer inspection similarities and common challenges can be identified. Both rely on the development and implementation of innovative technologies to enhance their capability. Both demand highly reliable (and safe) systems at an ever more affordable price. Both need to manage the expectation of their customers and users to ensure continued public support. While present manned space activities are considered ‘exploration’, in the future space tourists will expect a level of safety compatible with any other transport system.

However, while lifecycle process models for space and rail are not dissimilar, the implementation can be quite different. The approaches taken by space and rail sectors in the four areas mentioned above will be compared. Synergies will be identified and discussion invited.