NASA SBIR 2004 Phase I Solicitation

A2.09 Flight Sensors and Airborne Instruments for Flight Research

Lead Center: AFRC

Real-time measurement techniques are needed to acquire aerodynamic, structural, and propulsion system performance characteristics in flight and to safely expand the flight envelope of aerospace vehicles. The scope of this subtopic is the development of sensors or instrumentation systems for improving the state-of-the-art in aircraft flight testing. This includes the development of sensors to enhance aircraft safety by determining atmospheric conditions. The goals are to improve the effectiveness of flight testing by simplifying and minimizing sensor installation, measuring new parameters, improving the quality of measurements, and minimizing the disturbance to the measured parameter from the sensor presence or deriving new information from conventional techniques. This subtopic solicits proposals for improving airborne sensors and instrumentation systems in all flight regimes. These sensors and systems are required to have fast response, low volume, minimal intrusion and high accuracy and reliability. Innovative concepts are solicited in the areas that follow below.

Vehicle Condition Monitoring

Sensor development in support of vehicle health and performance monitoring includes the monitoring of aerodynamic, structural, propulsion, electrical, pneumatic, hydraulic, navigation, control, and communication subsystems. Proposals that focus solely on health management algorithms and systems integration should be addressed in the Automated Online Health Management and Data Analysis subtopic.

Vehicle Environmental Monitoring

Sensor development in support of vehicle environmental monitoring includes the following:

- Non-intrusive air data parameters (airspeed, air temperature, ambient and stagnation pressures, Mach number, air density, and flow angle);
- Off-surface flow field measurement and/or visualization (laminar, vortical, and separated flow, turbulence) zero to 50 meters from the aircraft;
- Boundary layer flow field, surface pressure distribution, acoustics or skin friction measurements or visualization; and
- Unusually small, light and low-power instrumentation for use on miniature aircraft and high altitude long endurance vehicles.