



NASA SBIR 2012 Phase I Solicitation

H6.02 Radiation Hardened/Tolerant and Low Temperature Electronics and Processors

Lead Center: MSFC

Participating Center(s): GSFC, JPL

Exploration flight projects, robotic precursors, and technology demonstrators that are designed to operate beyond low-Earth orbit require avionic systems, components, and controllers that are capable of enduring the extreme temperature and radiation environments of deep space, the lunar surface, and eventually the Martian surface. Spacecraft vehicle electronics will be required to operate across a wide temperature range and must be capable of enduring frequent (and often rapid) thermal-cycling. Packaging for these electronics must be able to accommodate the mechanical stress and fatigue associated with the thermal cycling.

Spacecraft vehicle electronics must be radiation hardened for the target environment. They must be capable of operating through a minimum total ionizing dose (TID) of 300 krads (Si), provide fewer Single Event Upsets (SEUs) than 10⁻¹⁰ to 10⁻¹¹ errors/bit-day, and provide single event latchup (SEL) immunity at linear energy transfer (LET) levels of 100 MeV cm²/mg (Si) or more. All three characteristics for radiation hardened electronics of TID, SEU and SEL are needed.

Electronics hardened for thermal cycling and extreme temperature ranges should perform beyond the standard military specification range of -55 °C to 125 °C, running as low as -230 °C or as high as 350 °C.

Using the target environment performance parameters for thermal and radiation extremes, proposals are sought in the following specific areas:

- Low power, high efficiency, radiation-hardened processor technologies.
- Technologies and techniques for environmentally hardened Field Programmable Gate Array (FPGA).
- Innovative radiation-hardened volatile and nonvolatile memory technologies.
- Tightly-integrated electronic sensor and actuator modules that include power, command and control, and processing.
- Radiation-hardened analog application specific integrated circuits (ASICs) for spacecraft power

management and other applications.

- Radiation-hardened DC-to-DC converters and point-of-load power distribution circuits.
- Computer Aided Design (CAD) tools for predicting the electrical performance, reliability, and life cycle for low-temperature and wide-temperature electronic systems and components.
- Physics-based device models valid at temperature ranging from -230 °C to +130 °C to enable design, verification and fabrication of custom mixed-signal and analog circuits.
- Circuit design and layout methodologies/techniques that facilitate radiation hardness and low-temperature (-230 °C) analog and mixed-signal circuit performance.
- Packaging capable of surviving numerous thermal cycles, tolerant of the extreme temperatures, and the ionizing radiation environment on the Moon and Mars. This includes the use of appropriate materials including substrates, die-attach, encapsulants, thermal compounds, etc.

Technology Readiness Levels (TRL) of 3 to 5 or higher are sought.

Potential NASA Customers include:

- Autonomous Landing Systems.
- Mars Science Lab Instrumentation.
- Tele-robotics.
- Surface Mobility.
- Nuclear Systems.
- Robotic Satellite Servicing.
- In-Space propulsion.
- Deep Space X-Ray Navigation and Communication.
- Deep Space Optical Communications.
- Mars Sample Return.
- Europa Orbiter.
- Near Earth Objects and Primitive Body Missions.
- Space Launch System.
- Extra-Vehicular Activity Suits

