



NASA SBIR 2015 Phase I Solicitation

S1.10 Cryogenic Systems for Sensors and Detectors

Lead Center: GSFC

Participating Center(s): ARC, JPL, KSC, MSFC

Cryogenic cooling systems often serve as enabling technologies for detectors and sensors flown on scientific instruments as well as advanced telescopes and observatories. As such, technological improvements to cryogenic systems further advance the mission goals of NASA through enabling performance (and ultimately science gathering) capabilities of flight detectors and sensors. There are six potential investment areas that NASA is seeking to expand state of the art capabilities for possible use on future programs such as WFirst (<http://wfirst.gsfc.nasa.gov/>), the Europa Jupiter System Science missions (<http://www.nasa.gov/multimedia/podcasting/jpl-europa20090218.html>) and PIXIE (Primordial Inflation Explorer). The topic areas are as follows:

- *Miniaturized/Efficient Cryocooler Systems* - Cryocooler systems viable for application on CubeSat space platforms are sought. Present state of the art capabilities demonstrate approximately 0.4W of cooling capacity at 77K provided an input power of 5W. Contemporary system mass is on the order of 400 grams. Desired performance specifications for cryocoolers sought include a cooling capability on the order of 0.2W at temperatures spanning 30K - 80K. Desired masses and input powers will be < 400 grams and < 5W respectively.
- *Magnetic Cooling Systems* - State of the art sub-Kelvin temperature control architectures that use magnetic cooling consist of ADR (Adiabatic Demagnetization Refrigeration) systems. The Astro-H FM (Flight Model) ADR represents the state of the art in ADR system and component level technologies for space application. Future missions requiring cooling to sub-Kelvin levels will look to use new and improved ADR systems. AMRR (Active Magnetic Regenerative Refrigeration) systems are a related magnetic cooling technology that requires system and component level development in order to attain sub-Kelvin cooling levels. Improvements at the component level may lead to better overall system performance and increased hold times at target temperatures. Both of these are highly advantageous and desirable to future science missions. Specific components sought include:
 - Low current superconducting magnets (3-4 Tesla at temperatures > 15K).
 - Heat Switches.
 - High cooling power density magnetocaloric materials, especially single crystals with volume > 20 cm³.
 - Active/Passive magnetic shielding (for use with 3-4 Tesla magnets).
 - Superconducting leads (10K - 90K) capable of 10 A operation with 1 mW conduction.
 - 10 mK- 300 mK high resolution thermometry.
 - *High Capacity/Efficiency Cryocooler Systems* - High Capacity/Efficiency cryocoolers are of interest for use on future science missions. State of the art high capacity cryocooler systems have demonstrated cooling capabilities spanning 0.3W - 1W with a load temperature of 20K and < 0.3 W at 10K. High Capacity cryocoolers are available at low to mid TRL levels for both Pulse Tube (e.g.,

5W cooling capacity at 20K) and Turbo Brayton (e.g., cooling capacity of 20W at 20K) configurations. Desired cryocooler systems will provide cold tip operational temperatures spanning 10K to 20K with a cooling capacity of > 4W at 20K.

- *Low Temperature/Input Power Cooling Systems* - Low temperature/Input Power Cooling systems are sought for application on future Planetary missions that require performance in space environments that have limited access to power. Contemporary cooling systems are incapable of providing cooling loads as high as 0.2W at 30K while rejecting heat to an ambient environment of approximately 150K. Cooling systems providing cooling capacities of approximately 0.3W at 35K with heat rejection capability to temperature sinks at 150 K or lower are of interest.
- *Sub-Kelvin Cooling Technologies* - Contemporary ADR systems provide the highest cooling capacities and the lowest load temperatures of all sub-Kelvin techniques viable for space application. Cultivation of additional technology options are of interest. Candidate technologies for investigation may include closed cycle dilution cooling and/or alternative magnetic refrigeration techniques and cycles.
- *Continuous Flow Distributed Cooling Systems* - Distributed cooling provides increased lifetime of cryogen fluids for application on both the ground and spaceborne platforms. This has impacts on payload mass and volume for flight systems which translate into costs (either on the ground, during launch or in flight). Mission enabling components for use with distributed cooling systems are sought. Examples of such include cryo-valves and integral/non-integral cryocooler components.Â

Proposals considered viable for Phase I award will seek to validate hypotheses through proof of concept testing at relevant temperatures.Â Â