



NASA SBIR 2017 Phase I Solicitation

S3.03 Power Electronics and Management, and Energy Storage

Lead Center: GRC

Participating Center(s): ARC, GSFC, JPL, JSC

Technology Area: TA3 Space Power and Energy Storage

NASA's science vision (http://science.nasa.gov/media/medialibrary/2014/05/02/2014_Science_Plan-0501_tagged.pdf) is to use the vantage point of space to achieve with the science community and our partners a deep scientific understanding of the Sun and its effects on the solar system, our home planet, other planets and solar system bodies, the interplanetary environment, and the universe beyond. Scientific priorities for future planetary science missions are guided by the recommendations of the decadal surveys published by the National Academies. The goal of the decadal surveys is to articulate the priorities of the scientific community, and the surveys are therefore the starting point for NASA's strategic planning process in science (http://science.nasa.gov/media/medialibrary/2014/04/18/FY2014_NASA_StrategicPlan_508c.pdf). The most recent planetary science decadal survey, Vision and Voyages for Planetary Science in the Decade 2013 - 2022, was released in 2011. This report recommended a balanced suite of missions to enable a steady stream of new discoveries and capabilities to address challenges such as sample return missions and outer planet exploration. Under this subtopic, proposals are solicited to develop energy storage and power electronics to enable or enhance the capabilities of future NASA science missions. The unique requirements for the power systems for these missions can vary greatly, with advancements in components needed above the current State of the Art (SOA) for high energy density, high power density, long life, high reliability, low mass/volume, and wide temperature operation. Other subtopics which could potentially benefit from these technology developments include S4.04 Extreme Environments Technology, and S4.01 Planetary Entry, Descent and Landing Technology. This subtopic is also directly tied to S3.02 Propulsion Systems for Robotic Science Missions for the development of advanced Power Processing Units and associated components.

Power Electronics and Management

NASA's Planetary Science Division is working to implement a balanced portfolio within the available budget and based on the decadal survey that will continue to make exciting scientific discoveries about our solar system. This balanced suite of missions shows the need for low mass/volume power electronics and management systems and components that can operate in extreme environment for future NASA Science Missions. In addition, studying the Sun, the heliosphere, and other planetary environments as an interconnected system is critical for understanding the implications for Earth and humanity as we venture forth through the solar system. To that end, the NASA heliophysics program seeks to perform innovative space research missions to understand:

- The Sun and its variable activity.
- How solar activity impacts Earth and the solar system.
- Fundamental physical processes that are important at Earth and throughout the universe by using space as

a laboratory.

Heliophysics also seeks to enable research based on these missions and other sources to understand the connections among the Sun, Earth, and the solar system for science and to assure human safety and security both on Earth and as we explore beyond it. Advances in electrical power technologies are required for the electrical components and systems of these future spacecrafts/platforms to address program size, mass, efficiency, capacity, durability, and reliability requirements. Radioisotope power systems (RPS), Advanced Modular Power Systems (AMPS) and In-Space Electric Propulsion (ISP) are several programs of interest which would directly benefit from advancements in this technology area. These types of programs, including Mars Sample Return using Hall thrusters and power processing units (PPUs), require advancements in components and systems beyond the state-of-the-art. Of importance are expected improvements in energy density, speed, efficiency, or wide-temperature operation (-125° C to over 450° C) with a number of thermal cycles. Novel approaches to minimizing the weight of advanced PPUs are also of interest. Advancements are sought for power electronic devices, components, packaging and cabling for programs with power ranges of a few watts for minimum missions to up to 20 kilowatts for large missions. In addition to electrical component development, RPS has a need for intelligent, fault-tolerant Power Management and Distribution (PMAD) technologies to efficiently manage the system power for these deep space missions.

Overall technologies of interest include:

- High power density/high efficiency power electronics and associated drivers for switching elements.
- Non-traditional approaches to switching devices, such as addition of graphene and carbon nano-tubes to material.
- Lightweight, highly conductive power cables and/or cables integrated with vehicle structures.
- Intelligent power management and fault-tolerant electrical components and PMAD systems.
- Advanced electronic packaging for thermal control and electromagnetic shielding.
- Integrated packaging technology for modularity.

Note to Proposers - Cubesat power technologies have been moved to a new STMD subtopic: Z8.03 Small Spacecraft Power and Thermal Control

Energy Storage

Future science missions will require advanced primary and secondary battery systems capable of operating at temperature extremes from -100° C for Titan missions to 400 to 500° C for Venus missions, and a span of -230° C to +120° C for Lunar Quest. The Outer Planet Assessment Group and the 2011 PSD Relevant Technologies Document have specifically called out high energy density storage systems as a need for the Titan/Enceladus Flagship and planetary exploration missions. In addition, high energy-density rechargeable electrochemical battery systems that offer greater than 50,000 charge/discharge cycles (10 year operating life) for low-earth-orbiting spacecraft, 20 year life for geosynchronous (GEO) spacecraft, are desired. Advancements to battery energy storage capabilities that address one or more of the above requirements for the stated missions combined with very high specific energy and energy density (>200 Wh/kg for secondary battery systems), along with radiation tolerance are of interest.

In addition to batteries, other advanced energy storage/load leveling technologies designed to the above mission requirements, such as mechanical or magnetic energy storage devices, are of interest. These technologies have the potential to minimize the size and mass of future power systems.

Research should be conducted to demonstrate technical feasibility during Phase I and show a path toward a Phase II, and when possible, deliver a demonstration unit for NASA testing at the completion of the Phase II contract. Phase II emphasis should be placed on developing and demonstrating the technology under relevant test conditions. Additionally, a path should be outlined that shows how the technology could be commercialized or further developed into science-worthy systems.