

Space Launch System Issues NASA Research Announcement for Advanced Booster Risk Reduction Solutions

By Amie Cotton

On Feb. 9, the Marshall Space Flight Center issued a NASA Research Announcement for the Space Launch System advanced booster risk-reduction effort. Proposals will provide an advanced booster concept with the goal of reducing risk in the areas of affordability, reliability and performance. Proposals will identify and mitigate liquid or solid booster technical risks and provide related hardware demonstrations as well as identify high-risk areas associated with adaptation of advanced booster technology to SLS.

Marshall is leading the design and development of the SLS on behalf of the agency. The new heavy-lift launch vehicle will expand human presence beyond low-Earth orbit and enable new missions of exploration across the solar system.

The 130-metric-ton, evolved SLS vehicle will require an advanced booster with a significant increase in thrust over existing U.S. liquid or solid boosters.

"These risk-reduction efforts will set the course for the full-scale design and development of this new advanced booster," said Chris Crumbly, SLS Advanced Booster NASA Research Announcement evaluation team chair. "We're excited to see what innovative solutions industry will provide as we embark on this new capability -- enabling unprecedented missions beyond low-Earth orbit."

NASA anticipates making multiple awards in response to this solicitation, and anticipates \$200 million total funding. Final awards will be made based on the strength of proposals and availability of funds. The deadline for submitting proposals is April 9. The anticipated period of performance for any contracts awarded as a result of this NRA is not expected to exceed 30 months and will have an effective date of Oct. 1, 2012.

This NRA is the second part of a three-part plan that includes risk-reduction planning prior to Design, Development, Testing and Evaluation (DDT&E) of the advanced boosters.

To view the announcement and instructions for submissions, visit:

<http://prod.nais.nasa.gov/cgi-bin/eps/synopsis.cgi?acqid=149821>

For information about NASA's Space Launch System, visit:

<http://www.nasa.gov/sls>

Cotton, an AI Signal Research Inc. employee, supports the Office of Strategic Analysis & Communications.

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Caption: Artist rendering of the Space Launch System (NASA/MSFC)