

# NASA selects launch contractor for Jason-3 mission

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Artist's concept of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Jason-3 spacecraft. Credit: CNES, CLS

(Phys.org) -- NASA has selected Space Exploration Technologies (SpaceX) of Hawthorne, Calif., to launch the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Jason-3 spacecraft in December 2014 aboard a Falcon 9 v1.0 rocket from Complex 4 at Vandenberg Air Force Base in California. NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Pasadena, Calif., is contributing three instruments to the mission: a radiometer, the GPS system and a satellite laser ranging reflector.

The total value of the Jason-3 launch service is approximately \$82 million. This estimated cost includes the task-ordered launch service for the Falcon 9 v1.0, plus additional services under other contracts for payload processing, launch vehicle integration, mission-unique launch site ground support and tracking, data and telemetry services. NASA is the procurement agent for NOAA.

Jason-3 is an operational ocean altimetry mission designed to measure precisely [sea surface height](#) to monitor ocean circulation and sea level. Jason-3 will follow in the tradition of previous NASA-JPL missions such as Topex/Poseidon, Jason-1 and the Ocean Surface Topography Mission/Jason-2. The Jason-3 mission will be developed and operated as part of an international effort led by NOAA and the European Organisation for the Exploitation of Meteorological Satellites in collaboration with NASA and the [French space agency](#), Centre National d'Etudes Spatiales.

Processed data from the satellite will be used in a broad range of applications, including operational ocean and weather forecasting, ocean wave modeling, hurricane intensification prediction, seasonal forecasting, El Nino and La Nina forecasting and climate research. The data will help address questions about [global climate change](#).

The Launch Services Program at NASA's [Kennedy Space Center](#) is responsible for launch vehicle program management of the Jason-3 launch services.

For more information on Jason-3 and all of JPL's satellite ocean altimetry missions, visit: [sealevel.jpl.nasa.gov/missions/jason3/](http://sealevel.jpl.nasa.gov/missions/jason3/).

Provided by NASA

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