NASA selects 2013 NASA Innovative Advanced Technology Concepts for continued study

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NASA has selected six technology proposals for continued study under the agency's Innovative Advanced Concepts (NIAC) Program.

The proposals selected for Phase 2 of the 2013 NIAC Program address a range of visionary concepts including photonic laser thrusters, extreme sample return, and innovative spherical robots designed for planetary exploration. NASA's Space Technology Mission Directorate based the selections on their potential to transform future aerospace missions, introduce new capabilities, or significantly improve current approaches to building and operating aerospace systems.

"As NASA begins a new chapter in exploration, we're investing in these seed-corn advanced concepts of next-generation technologies that will truly transform how we investigate and learn about our universe," said Michael Gazarik, NASA's associate administrator for space technology in Washington. "Advancing these proposals from universities, private companies and NASA researchers to Phase 2 studies allows new, futuristic ideas to move closer to becoming real tools for exploration."

NIAC Phase 2 awards can be worth as much as $500,000 for two years, and allow proposers to further develop the most successful concepts from previously selected Phase 1 studies. Phase 1 studies must demonstrate the initial feasibility and benefit of a concept. Phase 2 studies go to the next level, refining designs and exploring aspects of

implementing the new technology.

NASA selected these projects through a peer-review process that evaluated innovativeness and technical viability. All projects are still in the early stages of development—most being 10 or more years from use on a NASA mission.

"Early study and continued development are critical to guiding our technology investments," said Jay Falker, NASA's NIAC program executive in Washington. "Some of the Phase 2 studies that started last year are already attracting the attention of other NASA programs, as well as potential external partners."

NASA's Space Technology Mission Directorate is innovating, developing, testing, and flying hardware for use in future missions. Through programs such as NIAC, the directorate is demonstrating that early investment and partnership with creative scientists, engineers, and citizen inventors from across the nation can provide technological dividends and help maintain America's leadership in the new global technology economy.

For a complete list of the selected proposals and more information about NIAC, visit: www.nasa.gov/niac

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