



For Immediate Release – June 16, 2020

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Northern Plains UAS Test Site Soliciting Proposals for UAS to Support Site Acceptance Testing of North Dakota’s Statewide BVLOS Network

GRAND FORKS, N.D. – The Northern Plains UAS Test Site (NPUASTS) is soliciting proposals for the purchase of an Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS), or drone, for the North Dakota statewide beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS) network. This aircraft will be used to support Site Acceptance Testing of the network and use-case development. Proposals should also contain a two-year service agreement, including support to maintain aircraft airworthiness and support of the integration of new technology to meet the evolving needs of this project.

Three leading aviation infrastructure companies - Collins Aerospace, a Raytheon Technologies Company; L3Harris Technologies; and Thales USA - were recently selected to work with NPUASTS to develop and employ the physical infrastructure which will enable true BVLOS flights. The aircraft in question will be used to test the network to ensure safety and reliability and will help NPUASTS set the standard requirements for any aircraft seeking to fly on the network.

“North Dakota’s statewide BVLOS network will be a turnkey product – we are working with the FAA to receive the appropriate waivers, and we will have all the technology in place,” said Nicholas Flom, executive director of NPUASTS. “Part of making sure that the network functions in this way is extensive testing and validation of the system during development so that it will be widely accessible and can support a variety of public and commercial use-cases.”

In particular, this Site Acceptance Testing will require a UAS with VTOL Launch and Recovery, a demonstrated endurance of greater than 60 minutes, the ability to integrate multiple C2 links, and the ability to integrate a mapping payload or a gimbaled EO/IR payload, among other factors. Offerors wishing to submit proposals can find the complete Request for Proposals (RFP) under solicitation number 2-2021 at <https://apps.nd.gov/csd/spo/services/bidder/listCurrentSolicitations.do>.

Questions must be received by June 29, 2020. This RFP closes on July 9, 2020.

About the Northern Plains UAS Test Site

The [Northern Plains UAS Test Site](#) (NPUASTS) is one of seven Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) test sites in the nation. Its mission is to collaborate with FAA and industry partners to develop systems, rules, and procedures to safely integrate unmanned aircraft into the National Airspace System without negatively impacting existing general or commercial aviation.