

AirPhoton to Provide Instruments for NASA Air Quality Investigation

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- AirPhoton to provide ground instruments for NASA's MAIA air quality investigation
- MAIA aims to link different types of airborne particles with human health effects
- Ground instruments are vital to determine particulate chemical composition

Baltimore, Maryland –

AirPhoton, a company that is part of the University of Maryland, Baltimore County bwtech incubator, has been awarded the contract to provide ground instruments in support of the NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory's Multi-Angle Imager for Aerosols (MAIA) investigation. The MAIA satellite instrument is scheduled for launch in 2022 (to be confirmed). It will collect high quality data on fine particulate matter air pollution. According to the 2018 State of Global Air Report fine particulate air pollution ranked as the 6th-highest risk factor for early death worldwide in 2016.

MAIA will rely on AirPhoton AeroExplorer sampling stations to collect particulates on filters at the ground for later analysis. This information will be used together with the satellite data, atmospheric models, and health records to provide MAIA with the capability to characterize the types of particulates that are most harmful to human health. The AeroExplorer stations are already deployed globally as part of the SPARTAN (Surface PARTiculate mAtter) Network due to their robust design and flexible sampling protocol. JPL will be working with AirPhoton to develop a module for remote command and communication with the stations.

AirPhoton specializes in the design and manufacture of instrumentation for measuring airborne particulates. The company was founded in 2012 by three scientists who met at the NASA Goddard Space Flight Center in the mid-1990s. In 2016 the company was awarded a Maryland Incubator Company of the Year Award in the category of Best Tech Product or Application.

JPL builds and manages the MAIA mission for NASA's Earth Science Division in the Science Mission Directorate at NASA Headquarters in Washington. MAIA is an Earth Venture Instrument mission; the program is managed by NASA's Earth System Science Pathfinder program at NASA's Langley Research Center in Hampton, Virginia.