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ABB chosen by Canadian Space Agency to supply main component for satellite headed to Mars

Spatial interferometer part of MATMOS instrument that will evaluate chemical composition of Mars atmosphere, probe for signs of life

Quebec City, Canada, August 5, 2010 - ABB, the leading power and automation technology group, has been selected by the Canadian Space Agency to develop a main component on a satellite that will be launched in 2016 to the planet Mars

ABB is supporting the Canadian Space Agency (CSA) by supplying a spatial interferometer that will constitute the main part of an instrument in the satellite that will probe the atmosphere of Mars in search of biological sources of methane, and consequently, signs of life. The instrument, known as MATMOS (Mars Atmospheric Trace Molecule Occultation Spectrometer), is a partnership between the California Institute of Technology (Caltech), the CSA and NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL).

MATMOS has been selected by NASA and the European Space Agency for launch on board the ExoMars Trace Gas Orbiter, slated for launch in 2016. Its destination will be to orbit around the red planet.

The first objective of the mission is to characterize the chemical composition of the Mars atmosphere. The spectrometer, which contains the interferometer designed and built by ABB, will detect methane molecules and trace them in the Mars atmosphere. It will be able to measure the distribution of methane and determine the type (biological or geological) and will also measure other trace gases.

The development of the interferometer in MATMOS was inspired by the ABB-built payload supplied to the Canadian Space Agency in their ACE/SciSat-1 satellite. This satellite has been in orbit for more than seven years and its performance has far exceeded the expectations of the scientific community.

About ABB

ABB Measurement Products' analytical group in Quebec City, designs, manufactures and markets high-performance FT Mid-IR/Near-IR analytical system solutions and spectrometers for Petroleum, Chemical, Life Science, and Remote Sensing/Aerospace markets. The company also markets analyzers for hydrogen and inclusion measurement in liquid aluminum. More information is available at www.abb.com/analytical. ABB (www.abb.com) is a leader in power and automation technologies that enable utility and industry customers to improve performance while lowering environmental impact. The ABB Group of companies operates in around 100 countries and employs about 120,000 people.

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