General Atomics Selected for Phase 3 of US Space Force Enterprise Space Terminal Program Following Successful Laser Crosslink Verification

SAN DIEGO (April 24, 2026) — General Atomics Electromagnetic Systems (GA-EMS) has been selected to perform Phase 3 of the U.S. Space Force's Enterprise Space Terminal (EST) program following successful government verification of the company's optical communication terminal (OCT) at MIT Lincoln Laboratory's Optical Terminal Verification Testbed (OTVT). Phase 3 will transition the EST effort from prototype development into flight hardware production and demonstration.



The independent verification campaign confirmed the OCT's performance, interoperability, and technical readiness for full system integration and flight terminal development. Successful completion of the OTVT test campaign confirmed the GA-EMS OCT architecture meets the thresholds required to support standardized satellite laser crosslinks. As the prime contractor, GA-EMS is teamed with L3Harris for the modem subsystem and Advanced Space to provide performance modelling.

"Completion of Phase 2 marks a significant milestone for our team underscoring the maturing and successful validation of key subsystems of our OCT through rigorous analysis and testing. This achievement positions us well as we move into Phase 3, where we will integrate and demonstrate a flight laser communications terminal. We are excited to take this next step in delivering robust, mission-ready capability that advances resilient, high-capacity space network connectivity for national security operations," Scott Forney, president of GA-EMS, said.

The EST program will establish standardized OCTs to enable spacecraft from multiple programs and vendors to exchange data directly using a common enterprise waveform. By enabling high-capacity laser crosslinks beyond low Earth orbit, the architecture reduces reliance on ground relay stations and accelerates the delivery of time-critical information for joint forces and national security missions.

"The successful execution of Phases 1 and 2 reflects the strength of our technical approach and our team's ability to translate innovative optical communications concepts into validated, high-performing hardware. As we transition into Phase 3, we are focused on integrating and demonstrating a complete system that is not only mission-capable, but also scalable and producible to meet the evolving needs of resilient space architectures," Klaus Etzel, vice president of GA-EMS Remote Space Sensing Systems, said.

About General Atomics Electromagnetic Systems

General Atomics Electromagnetic Systems (GA-EMS) develops innovative technologies to create breakthrough solutions supporting operational environments from undersea to space. From electromagnetic, power generation and energy storage systems and space systems and satellites, to hypersonic, missile defense, and laser weapon systems, GA-EMS offers an expanding portfolio of capabilities for defense, government, and national security customers. GA-EMS also provides commercial products and services targeting hazardous waste remediation, oil and gas, and nuclear energy industries. For further information, visit ga.com/EMS.

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