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Drone startup ideaForge to make two UAVs for NTPC

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Infosys-backed drone startup [ideaForge](#) Technology has bagged an order from energy conglomerate [NTPC](#) to supply two highly sophisticated [unmanned aerial vehicles](#) (UAVs) along with high-end programmatic sensors, Thermal Imaging Sensor and LiDAR Sensor.

The devices will be deployed at NTPC's research and development facility, NTPC Energy Technology Research Alliance ([NETRA](#)), where they will support inspection and monitoring operations.

NTPC had launched a public tender in October 2016 for this purpose. ideaForge Technology said it has emerged successful through the international competitive bidding route despite tough competition.

NETRA intends to conduct R&D to explore various applications of UAVs in the power sector and related challenges to build the knowledge base and further development of user-friendly applications with data analytics.

It proposes to use UAVs in degradation study of solar photovoltaic plants, LiDAR-based terrain mapping and photo grammetric volumetric analysis of coal stock piles in addition to visual inspection and monitoring activities at NTPC sites.

The company said it counts this development as a major breakthrough in the commercial applications of UAVs such as in the

energy sector or agriculture, which is still constrained by regulatory hurdles.

"These are very interesting times for the industry and the market is heating up in terms of opportunities in exploring commercial applications for UAVs. PSUs are taking the lead in this direction," said ideaForge Technology CEO Ankit Mehta.

Mehta said the company is in talks with other public sector units as well for orders, but declined to disclose the names of the PSUs. IdeaForge is a next generation drone systems maker that builds advanced UAVs for defence sector applications.