

Lunar Volatiles Science Partnership – Question and Answer (Q&A) responses

The following contains responses to questions as received by 2.17.2025. Further questions can be sent to HQ-volatilespartnership@mail.nasa.gov.

2.10.2025 - AFPP Kickoff notes

Q: Is there interest or intention in hiring any of the existing VIPER staff?

- It is possible for a partner to request the use of NASA staff on a reimbursable basis

Q: Given that NASA is requiring written approval to modify the VIPER software, how will on-mission/emergency software updates be handled?

- Proposer may outline a strategy for dealing with on-mission/emergency software efforts. The evaluation criteria involve assessing overall technical feasibility and management approaches.

2.13.2025 - VIPER Technical Briefing notes

In the presentation, Tony Colaprete referenced a 2021 overview of VIPER science capabilities. That is found at this link: <https://science.nasa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/viper-pip-final.pdf>

Q: Will the full list of partner proposals be made public, and if so, where will we be able to access it?

- No, but proposers may be identified in a final source selection statement after partner selection.

Q: What are plans for access and distribution to the collected instrument data and rover telemetry? Is that open for release to the public right away, or after a time embargo, or never released to the public? Does lander partner have any special access rights to this data that the public does not have?

- The following parts of the AFPP are relevant:
<https://assets.science.nasa.gov/content/dam/science/psd/lunar-science/documents/LVSP%20AFPP.pdf>
- NASA's evaluation criteria (AFPP Section 4) make it more likely for a partner to be selected if they make the NASA VIPER generated data public.
Article 9 of the Model Agreement in the AFPP has terms on Data Rights, including scientific data generated by VIPER. It says "1. Scientific Data shall be provided to NASA as soon as practicable (and not to exceed six months) without use and disclosure restrictions unless required by national security regulations (e.g., classified information)." Partners can propose to modify that language, but it may count negatively against them in the evaluation.

Q: Will the partner have input into route replanning to explore areas of interest that may be relevant to that partner?

- Per the AFPP document, the Partner shall propose how to accomplish a mission using the VIPER rover, seeking to achieve at least some or all of VIPER's science goals, along with the partner's own goals as desired. The scope of the proposed mission and how to develop a traverse is part of what a potential partner would propose.
- The technical and scientific feasibility of the partner's approach will be assessed as part of the evaluation.
- If the proposer desires to obtain NASA assistance in planning traverses, Section 2.6 of the AFPP does discuss reimbursable approaches for requesting NASA assistance.

Q: Do we have to utilize the Mission Operations Center as NASA is describing?

- Per the AFPP document, the Partner shall propose how to accomplish a mission using the VIPER rover, which will include operating the rover on the surface of the Moon. The scope of the proposed mission and how to operate VIPER and conduct its science is part of what a potential partner would propose. Partner is not required to use NASA staff or current Mission Operations facilities
- The technical and scientific feasibility of the partner's approach will be assessed as part of the evaluation.
- If the proposer desires to use NASA staff or the current Mission Operations facility, Section 2.6 of the AFPP does discuss reimbursable approaches for requesting NASA assistance.
- Section 2.6 of the AFPP also discusses the process for asking for access to Software Usage Agreements. NASA is open to receiving more questions on this topic.

Involvement of NASA staff in planning for and executing launch site processing (or any mission activity) is something the partner should request, if desired, per AFPP's section 2.6 on reimbursable request of NASA services