

IXPE General Observer Program

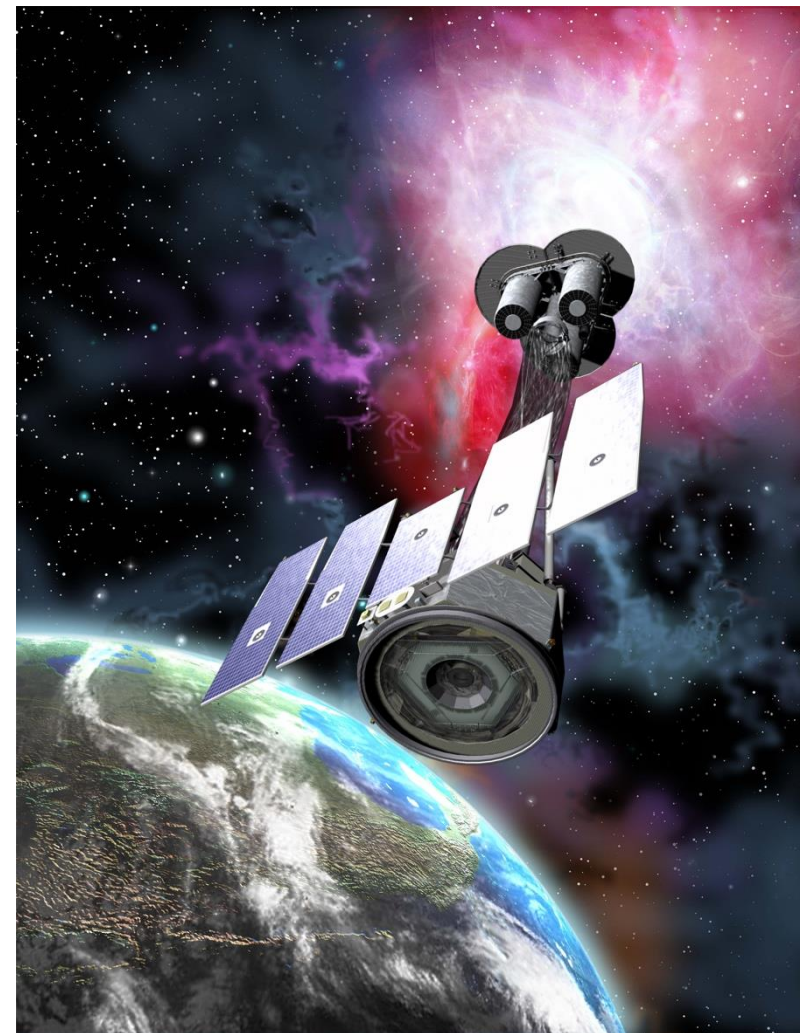


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Event	Date
Proposal submission opens	August 2026
Phase I submission deadline	September 17th, 2026
Proposal review	November 2026
Cycle 4 Targets announced	December 2026
Cycle 4 GO observations start	February 2027

Cycle 4 – What's new?

- No joint program with Swift
- No minimum exposure time requirement with NuSTAR
- New joint program with XMM-Newton (200ks)
- Requirement of 1 paragraph non-anonymized work plan in E&R document
- Page limit for E&R document increased to 2 pages



- Approximately 11 Msec observing time
- ~4 Msec for large proposals
- Joint programs with NuSTAR, Swift, XRISM, NRAO and XMM-Newton*
- Regular, Large and Multi-cycle proposals
- Legacy science program
 - [Previously approved legacy programs](#)
- ToO proposals of known and unknown targets solicited
- Can request up to 6 months exclusive-use

* New this cycle



Constraints and Designations

- Accepted proposals are ranked Category A or C
- Category A guaranteed
- Time constrained and joint proposals need to be designated Category A
 - ToOs will NOT be carried over between cycles
- Category C executed on best effort basis
 - Funding available if C targets observed
 - If Cat C observation is begun in one cycle, will be at least 80% completed, carried over to next cycle if necessary
 - If Cat C observation not begun, will not be carried over.

**Writing a good
IXPE proposal**



- Two phase process
- Phase 1 – scientific justification
 - Dual anonymous
- Phase 2 – budget proposal*

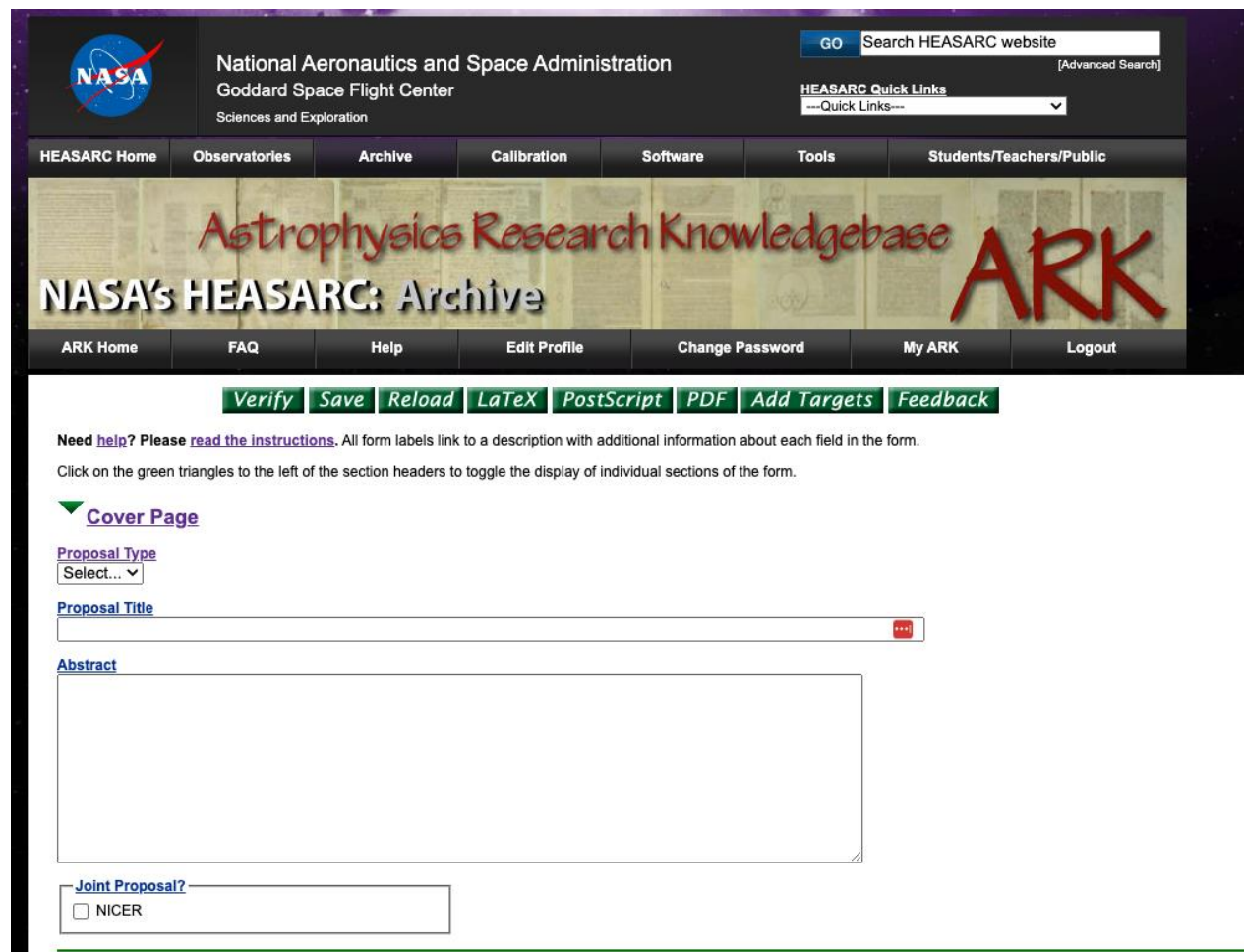
*subject to availability of funding

Phase 1 Proposal Submission

Submission through ARK/RPS

- ☐ RPS form
- ☐ Scientific/Technical Justification
- ☐ Expertise and resources document

Each component must be carefully considered!



The screenshot shows the NASA HEASARC Archive submission interface. At the top, there is a NASA logo and the text "National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Goddard Space Flight Center, Sciences and Exploration". A search bar is present with the text "GO Search HEASARC website" and a link to "[Advanced Search]". Below this is a "HEASARC Quick Links" dropdown menu. A navigation bar contains links: "HEASARC Home", "Observatories", "Archive", "Calibration", "Software", "Tools", and "Students/Teachers/Public". The main header area features the text "Astrophysics Research Knowledgebase" and "NASA's HEASARC: Archive" in a stylized font, with a large "ARK" logo on the right. Below the header is another navigation bar with links: "ARK Home", "FAQ", "Help", "Edit Profile", "Change Password", "My ARK", and "Logout". A row of buttons includes "Verify", "Save", "Reload", "LaTeX", "PostScript", "PDF", "Add Targets", and "Feedback". A message states: "Need help? Please read the instructions. All form labels link to a description with additional information about each field in the form. Click on the green triangles to the left of the section headers to toggle the display of individual sections of the form." The "Cover Page" section is expanded, showing a "Proposal Type" dropdown menu (set to "Select..."), a "Proposal Title" text field, and an "Abstract" text area. At the bottom, there is a "Joint Proposal?" checkbox labeled "NICER".

- Check if your target has been observed before
 - Repeat observations must be strongly justified
- Is it technically feasible?
 - Use WebPIMMS to estimate count rate and MDP
 - Use measured polarization from similar sources from IXPE publications
 - Use a theory that predicts polarization
 - Simulations (e.g using user contributed software such as *ixpeobssim*)
- Any time constraints or visibility constraints?
 - Use the visibility tool to check

- Need lots of counts to measure polarization!
 - Observations ≥ 1 Msec are welcomed and encouraged!
- Telemetry limits
 - Roughly 75 ksec for the Crab
 - Long observations of bright sources must be broken up with observations of dimmer sources
 - Can your observations be segmented while still achieving scientific objective?
- Galactic center is popular!
 - Feb-01 to May-01 observing window – very competitive!!
 - May-01 to Aug-01 observing window - less competition

- Title, abstract, PI and co-I information
 - Simple step but many errors!
 - E.g **Philip Kaaret**, Phillip Kaaret or Phil Kaaret?
 - Which institute is your co-I at? (Especially important for large organizations!) Have they moved recently?
 - Include everyone involved.
- Must estimate MDP!
- Justify any time constraints. Make sure time constraints do not conflict with visibility windows
- Target form for each different target/trigger
 - Observing plan, joint/coordinated observations, estimated count rate

The information in this form is used by the SOC to plan observations. Please fill in the information carefully and accurately!

Phase 1- Science/Technical Justification

- Please respect the page limits!
 - 4-page limit (incl. figures & tables)
 - 5 pages for large, multi-cycle and joint proposals
 - References do not count against page limit, can use one extra page
- Introduction
 - Brief overview of topic
 - Key science questions being answered
- Justification for observations:
 - Why are these observations needed? Why now?
 - **STRONG** justification for ToO trigger request, incl. trigger probability
 - Does it count as a legacy project? Say so!
- Technical feasibility
 - Estimation of count rates, exposure times, and MDP

Phase 1- Science/Technical Justification

Double check that the information in the text matches the information in the RPS form!

Phase 1 - Expertise and Resources

- **The page limit for the document is now 2 pages.** This document should not be anonymized
- Only seen by panel **after** ranking is finalized for highly ranked/ tentatively selected proposals
- This document should include the following information:
 - Team members, including ranks, affiliations and research expertise
 - Access to pre-approved data, institution specific facilities, if relevant
 - Justification for exclusive use period (if requesting)
 - **Non-anonymized one paragraph work plan**
 - Example: “Co-I Mira will extract the spectro-polarimetric data. The PI will mentor Co-I Rumi in developing the model. It is anticipated that this step will take 4 months. Co-I Zoey will lead the collection and analysis of ground-based observations.”

If you have any questions, or run into any issues, please see the RPS help page or contact the help desk as soon as possible!

- IXPE cycle 4 proposal deadline is coming up – **September 17th 2026, 4:30pm Eastern Time**
- IXPE's unique polarization capabilities can help your science.
- Thank you to everyone who has volunteered so far!
- Please contact the IXPE Help Desk if you have any questions!

[IXPE Help Desk](#)



- [IXPE Cycle 4 Call for proposals](#)
- [IXPE Cycle 4 Proposers Guide](#)
- [IXPE RPS – Proposal Submission site](#)
- [HEASARC Viewing Tool](#)
- [HEASARC WebPIMMS](#)

