

Richard French, Panelist



Richard French leads business development and strategy for Rocket Lab's space systems division, providing end-to-end mission services and on-orbit operations with the company's Photon family of small spacecraft and high-end satellite components including propulsion, reaction wheels, star trackers, avionics, solar arrays, and more. Richard spent over a decade at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, where he led development of the Techstars Starburst Space Accelerator program and managed technology partnerships with industry in the Office of Space Technology. He also spent two years in detail at NASA Headquarters in Washington, D.C. as a Staff Technologist in the Space Technology Mission Directorate, leading the development of Tipping Point and Announcement of Collaborative

Opportunity solicitations. Richard's earlier career includes service as an engineer on various NASA missions, including being awarded the NASA Honors Early Career Public Achievement Medal for his work as a lead mechanical systems engineer on the Soil Moisture Active Passive mission, and helping to land the Curiosity Rover on Mars as a member of the Mars Science Laboratory entry, descent, and landing systems engineering team. Richard holds a Master's degree in Space Systems Engineering and a bachelor's degree in aerospace engineering, both from the University of Michigan.