

Russia to launch orbital laboratories

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Russian space officials say they will launch two orbital laboratories to conduct experiments involving zero gravity, materials in space and biotechnologies.

The unmanned spacecraft will be docked with the International Space Station, from which they will venture into space for three to four months at a time to carry out experiments, the official Novosti news agency reported.

After re-docking, scientific samples will be sent back to Earth in small-sized landing capsules. New materials will then be loaded and additional experiments conducted.

Russian space officials say the project will eliminate the need for increasingly expensive multiple rocket launches and create a potentially profitable research system.

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