

# Russia to try again for Phobos-Grunt?

February 1 2012, by Jason Major

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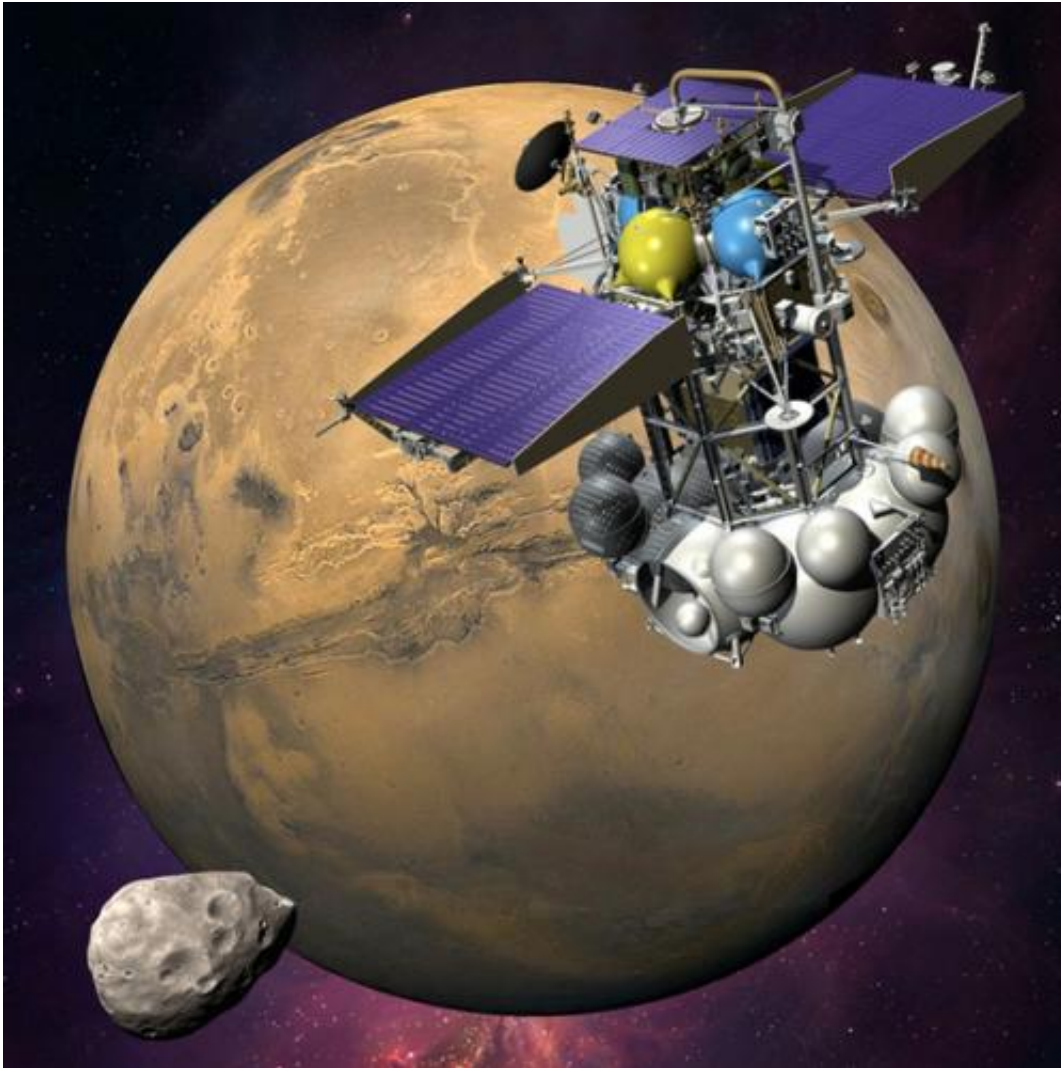


Illustration for the Russian Phobos-Grunt mission. Credit: Russian Federal Space Agency/IKI

Russia says "eisho odin ras"\* for its Mars moon lander mission, according to Roscosmos chief Vladimir Popovkin.

If the European Space Agency does not include [Russia](#) in its [ExoMars](#) program, a two-mission plan to explore Mars via orbiter and lander and then with twin rovers (slated to launch in 2016 and 2018, respectively), Roscosmos will try for a “take-two” on their failed Phobos-Grunt mission.

“We are holding consultations with the ESA about Russia’s participation in the ExoMars project... if no deal is reached, we will repeat the attempt,” said Popovkin on Tuesday.

Phobos-Grunt, an ambitious mission to land on the larger of [Mars](#)’ two moons, collect samples and return them to Earth, launched successfully on November 9, 2011. It became caught in low-Earth orbit shortly afterwards, its upper-stage engines having failed to ignite.

After many attempts to communicate with the stranded spacecraft, [Phobos-Grunt](#) re-entered the atmosphere and impacted on January 15. Best estimates place the impact site in the Pacific Ocean off the coast of southern Chile.

The failed mission also included a Chinese orbiter and a life experiment from The Planetary Society.

Russia is offering ESA the use of a Proton launch vehicle for inclusion into the ExoMars [mission](#), now that the U.S. has canceled its joint participation and Atlas carrier. Roscosmos and ESA are scheduled to discuss the potential partnership in February.

**More information:** [en.rian.ru/science/20120131/171052488.html](http://en.rian.ru/science/20120131/171052488.html)

*\*Phonetic pronunciation for “one more time.” Thanks to my friend Dima for the Russian lesson!*

Source: [Universe Today](#)

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