

Russian firm seals \$1 billion deal to supply US rocket engines

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A Russian manufacturer on Friday announced a \$1 billion deal to supply engines for the US Antares rockets making deliveries to the International Space Station.

Russian producer Energia said in a statement that it had signed the bumper deal to build 60 engines with private US firm Orbital Science, which has a \$1.9 billion contract with NASA to supply the [space station](#).

Deliveries of the new RD-181 engines would start in June, the statement said.

The agreement comes after an Orbital Science rocket suffered a catastrophic engine failure in October, forcing an end to its supply missions until further notice.

An unmanned Antares rocket packed with thousands of pounds of gear for astronauts exploded seconds after lift-off in the US, costing the company some \$200 million.

The company said after the accident that a suspected rocket engine failure led a control operator to detonate the rocket in order to prevent damage to people in the area.

The firm pledged a speedy upgrade to its systems after saying that the engines used to power the Antares [rocket](#) were a pair of decades-old Ukrainian-designed AJ-26s, that were refurbished by Aerojet

Rocketdyne.

The International Space Station is a rare area of US-Russian cooperation that has not been hit by the crisis in Ukraine, which has prompted Washington to impose sanctions on Moscow.

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