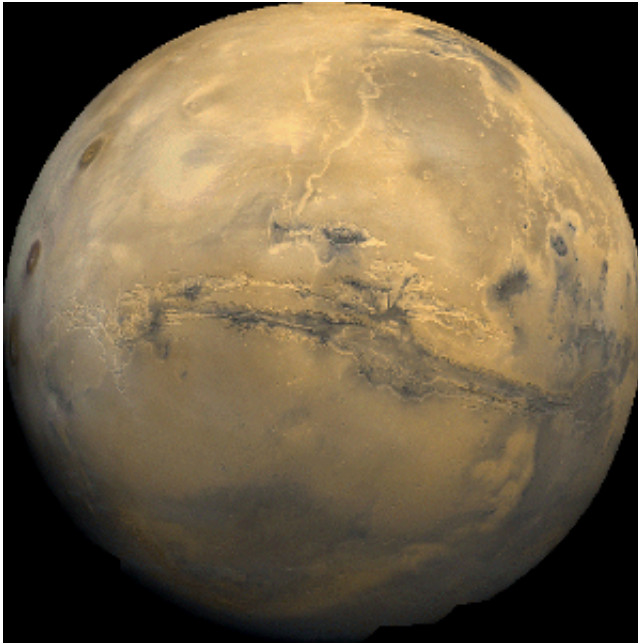


# NASA: Leak in French instrument may stall next Mars mission

December 4 2015, by Sam Hananel

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Valles Marineris, Mars. Credit: NASA

A NASA spacecraft that's supposed to fly to Mars and land on the red planet next year has a leak that could delay the mission.

NASA said Thursday that the leak is in one of two prime science instruments. The [seismic experiment](#) belongs to the French Space Agency.

French engineers are scrambling to fix the leak, located in the vacuum

container for the main sensors. The instrument is still in France. It's supposed to ship to the Southern California launch site for installation next month in the InSight lander.

For now, mission managers remain committed to a March launch. The window runs from March 4th through the 30th. After that, NASA would have to wait until 2018. Launch opportunities for Mars only occur every two years.

**More information:** NASA: [insight.jpl.nasa.gov/home.cfm](https://insight.jpl.nasa.gov/home.cfm)

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