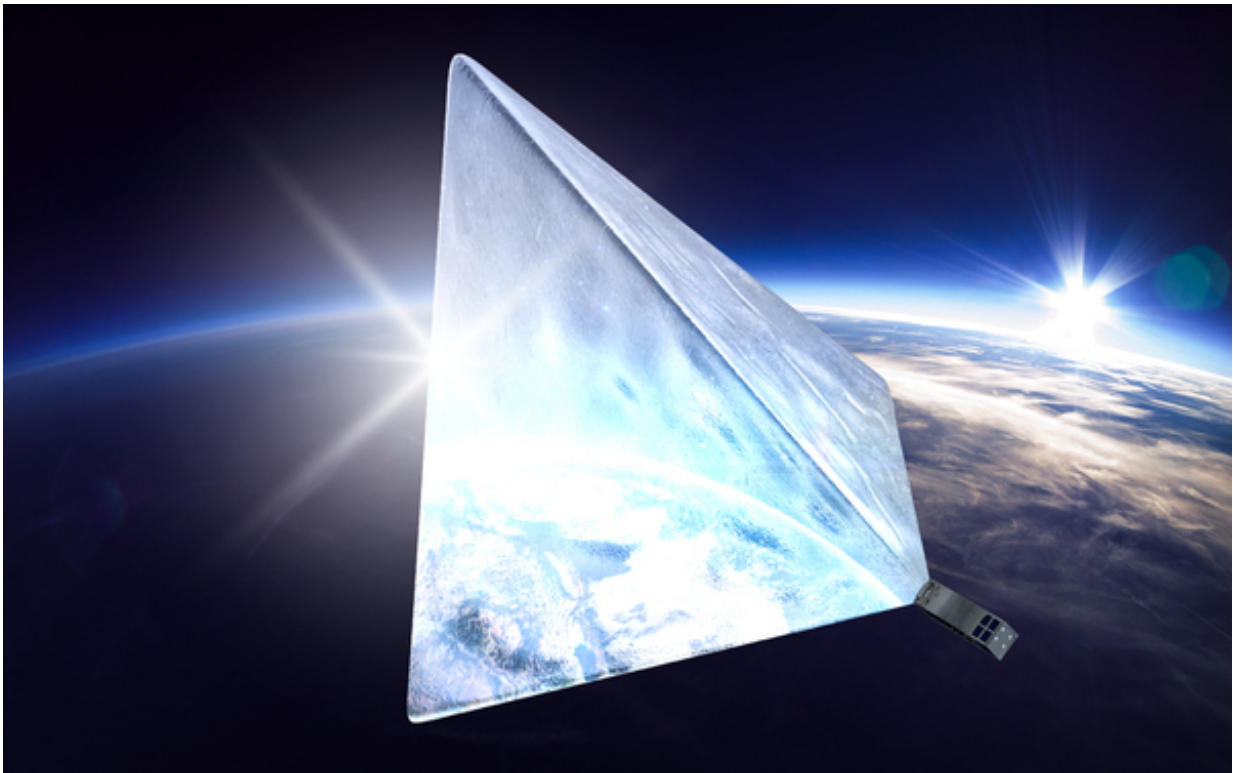


Mayak, the crowd funded Russian satellite nearing launch

March 1 2016, by Bob Yirka



Russian engineers working on the Mayak crowd funded satellite project have announced that the satellite is nearing a launch date—once in space, the team claims that it will be the most visible object in the night sky.

The [project](#) has been instigated by engineers and others with the University of Mechanical Engineering in Moscow. The team reported that they had collected a million and a half rubles (approximately USD 20,000) via the Boomstarter crowd-funding site which has been added to other donations—together, it has been enough to build and test the [satellite](#).

The project has three main goals, the first is to prove that such an effort can work, i.e. that crowd-funding can be used to pay for [space](#) research projects. The team wants to show that [space exploration](#) is no longer confined to just governments or wealthy groups or individuals—and that going forward, most any group or person with a passion for space exploration can start a project and get it funded. The second goal is for the satellite to do its job, which is to unfurl and use its large swath of reflectors to reflect rays from the sun back to Earth—which will make it the brightest object in the night sky. Mayak was designed and built at UME. The third goal, which requires further funding, is to build an aerodynamic braking system for satellites that can be used to bring them back down to Earth, removing the need to add an engine. As a side project, the team also has plans to build a model of the Mayak satellite to be housed in Moscow's Museum of Cosmonautics.

As with other crowd-funding projects, interested donors were given several options, from donating as little as 300 rubles (USD 5) to 2,500, to 300,000 (USD 4,000). Giving more money meant gaining more access to the project and the people working on it, with the top group receiving an invitation to watch the launch on-site.

The team notes that like other satellite projects, users who wish to do so will be able to follow the path of the satellite using a smart phone application. The [team](#) has also announced that its partner, the Russian Space launch company, Roscosmos, has confirmed that Mayak may be aboard a Soyuz-2 rocket as early as the middle of this year.

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