

Image: Mars terrain recreation at ESA

May 24 2023



Credit: ESA-Remedia

A downward view of ESA's rock-strewn recreation of the Red Planet, is designed to put prototype planetary rovers through their paces.

Officially part of the Planetary Robotics Laboratory at the Agency's ESTEC technical center in Noordwijk, the Netherlands, the nickname of

this test site is the "Mars Yard."

An 9 x 9 m square filled with [sand](#) and different types of gravel and rocks, it is used to assess rover locomotion and [navigation](#) as well as the traction of wheels and other mechanisms. Then researchers can check how these elements work together in [practice](#), with tests observed using precision cameras and sensors.

The Planetary Robotics Lab is part of a suite of more than 35 ESA laboratories focused on all aspects of space engineering, available to wider European Member States companies as well as ESA projects.

Provided by European Space Agency

Citation: Image: Mars terrain recreation at ESA (2023, May 24) retrieved 29 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2023-05-image-mars-terrain-recreation-esa.html>

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