

Space Agency Considering Repeat of Mars Mission

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Russia should learn from the failure of the Fobos-Grunt spacecraft last year and send another probe to Mars, space agency chief Vladimir Popovkin said, RIA-Novosti reported Monday.

"The 'Fobos-Grunt' project should be repeated because its relevance hasn't disappeared," Popovkin said.

Fobos-Grunt, launched in November, was Russia's first interplanetary probe in 15 years.

An engine malfunction shortly after liftoff prevented the \$161 million spacecraft from reaching the necessary orbit, and the device later crashed into the Pacific Ocean.

A string of similar failures in recent years has raised questions about the capabilities of Russia's space industry. Experts say financing and standards have fallen since Soviet times.

The space agency is ready to consider including a second Fobos-Grunt probe in its plans

for the period from 2016–2025, Popovkin said.

Russia has two robotic missions to the moon in the works, including a lander slated for 2017–2018 that will study the soil of the moon's southern hemisphere, he said.

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