

No Plans to Open New Antarctic Research Stations

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Russia has no current plans to open new research stations in the Antarctic or to modernize existing ones, a minister has said.

"We continue earmarking money for the Antarctic, but only for day-to-day operations. There is no money for development," Natural Resources and Environment Minister Sergei Donskoi said Thursday.

Russia had planned to overhaul its Antarctic infrastructure, including stations, transportation, fleet and logistics infrastructure, by 2014, but the plan fell victim to budget cuts.

The current budget of Russia's Antarctic research program stands at about 1.2 billion to 1.3 billion rubles (\$35 million to \$38 million), said Donskoi.

But at least 8 billion rubles (\$234 million) are needed for the modernization program, the minister, who is fresh back from an Antarctica tour, told a press conference on Moscow.

Donskoi's ministry said earlier that the upgrade may now begin in 2015.

The U.S.' Antarctic Program had a budget of \$350 million in 2012, the latest year for which statistics are available.

Russia has five permanent and five seasonal bases in the Antarctic, the first of which was established in 1956. They include the famous Vostok Station, the only inland station in the Antarctic.

Vostok station is situated not far from the South Pole above a eponymous subglacial lake, believed to have been sealed from the outside world for millions of years. Russian researchers collected the first water samples from the lake last year.

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