

Press Release

SPACE SYSTEMS

Airbus built ExoMars rover leaves UK for testing ahead of launch

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Stevenage, 27 August 2019 – The European Space Agency’s ExoMars rover is leaving the UK for Airbus in Toulouse where it will undergo crucial testing ahead of delivery to Thales Alenia Space.

The ExoMars rover “Rosalind Franklin” will be Europe’s first planetary rover and is being assembled at Airbus in Stevenage. It will search for signs of past or present life on Mars and is equipped with a 2m drill to take samples from below the surface where they will have been protected from the harsh radiation environment.

The rover features nine instruments which will help scientists conduct a step-by-step exploration of Mars, from a panoramic scale and progressively converging to smaller (sub-millimetre) studies, concluding with the molecular identification of organic compounds. The rover is equipped with an autonomous navigation system developed by Airbus which will enable it to travel between sites of interest much more quickly than by being driven remotely in real time from Earth.

Rosalind Franklin is being installed in its special protective container in Stevenage for the journey to Toulouse for environmental testing to prepare it for launch. It is due to leave the Airbus site in UK on 28 August. Launch of the rover to the Red Planet is scheduled for July 2020.

About ExoMars

ExoMars is a European Space Agency programme executed in cooperation with Russian Space Agency Roscosmos with contribution of NASA.

On the 2020 mission, Thales Alenia Space in Italy, is the mission Prime in charge of the design, development and verification of the entire system, the development of the Carrier Module navigation and guidance system and perform EDL/GNC development, the Rover System, including the Analytical Laboratory Drawer (ALD) as well as supplying basic parts of the DM, including the Radar Altimeter. In addition, Thales Alenia Space in Italy implements a deep technical partnership with Lavochkin (RUS) with European contributions for the development Descent Module (DM) Kazachok. OHB is in charge of developing the Carrier Module (CM) as well as some ALD subsystems (SPDS Mechanisms, Structure and Harness). The Rover Vehicle itself is provided by Airbus Defence and Space in UK. Leonardo is developing the ExoMars drill, which will dig into the Mars subsoil at a depth of two meters plus the Drill and ALD mechanisms control unit and software. ALTEC – Aerospace Logistics Technology Engineering, a Thales Alenia Space in Italy (63.75%) and ASI (36.25%) company – will

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also be responsible for the design, development and maintenance of the ROCC (Rover Operation Control Center) and for controlling the Rover on the Martian surface.

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About Airbus

Airbus is a global leader in aeronautics, space and related services. In 2018 it generated revenues of € 64 billion and employed a workforce of around 134,000. Airbus offers the most comprehensive range of passenger airliners. Airbus is also a European leader providing tanker, combat, transport and mission aircraft, as well as one of the world's leading space companies. In helicopters, Airbus provides the most efficient civil and military rotorcraft solutions worldwide.

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