

NASA is looking for a less expensive way to bring Martian rock and soil back to Earth

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On April 15, the US Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) said that the agency is looking for a way to bring soil and rock samples collected by the Perseverance rover on Mars to Earth sooner and at a lower cost. expected.

This effort comes as NASA is facing criticism for going over budget.

NASA and the European Space Agency (ESA) planned to land a spacecraft around Jezero Crater, where the Perseverance probe has spent years searching for signs of ancient microbial life. could have existed billions of years ago when Mars was warmer and wetter than it is today.

Some soil and rock samples collected by the Perseverance spacecraft will be launched into orbit by a rocket, then another spacecraft will receive them and bring them back to Earth.

However, a recent audit by an independent review board found that NASA's Mars mission was built 'with an unrealistic budget and schedule from the start' and its implementation The planned launch to Mars is not feasible.

Experts also found that the total budget for this mission could be up to 11 billion USD, nearly double the number estimated by NASA.

NASA Director Bill Nelson believes that the \$11 billion budget is too high and the deadline set to bring rock and soil samples to Earth before 2040 is too long and unacceptable. Therefore, NASA is planning to call for new ideas from the space industry to speed up the mission and reduce costs.

Mr. Nelson also said that NASA is facing budget barriers from Congress, specifically the debt ceiling agreement reached last year, forcing the agency to reduce its proposed budget for 2025 to less than 2 billion. USD.

NASA expert Nicky Fox said: 'To speed up progress, we may have to reduce the number of rock samples' but did not specify a specific number.

NASA is also facing pressure from China's Thien Van-3 mission, bringing Martian soil and rocks to Earth, expected to deploy around 2030./.

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