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Russia's Space Agency Announces a Casting Call for Tomorrow's Cosmonauts

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Joel Kowsky / NASA via AP

Russia's state corporation for space activities, Roscosmos, has announced a recruitment drive for cosmonauts. The winners will be the first to pilot Russia's new "Federation" spaceship, which is currently in development, and possibly the first Russians to go to the Moon.

According to Roscosmos' latest projections, Russia hopes to launch a manned lunar mission before 2040.

The recruitment drive is open to all Russian citizens younger than 35, with priority given to experts in aviation, rocket science, and the space industry. Candidates must also be fluent in English and "have a knowledge of computer technology."

Roscosmos says it will study applicants' education, professional skills, psychological profile, and physical health.

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According to Yuri Malenchenko, the deputy head of Roscosmos' cosmonaut training center, the space agency will accept applications for the next four months, after which time the selection process will begin.

Russia currently has 30 trained cosmonauts, 14 of whom have never traveled to space.

Five years ago, in 2012, Roscosmos last announced an open call for cosmonaut applications. It was the first time Russia's space agency recruited cosmonauts outside military pilots and engineers in Russia's rocket and space industry.

In late 2015, NASA launched a similar recruitment drive, accepting applications "for future explorers," looking for potential astronauts willing to help the space agency reach Mars.

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