

Russia Moves to Expand Its Arctic Icebreaker Fleet, Already the World's Largest

Russian state company Rosmorport aims to strengthen its position in Arctic waters with nine new icebreaking ships.

By [The Barents Observer](#)

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Novorossiysk icebreaker [commons.wikimedia](#)

The enterprise responsible for Russian seaport and maritime infrastructure development today operates a total of 36 icebreaking vessels. This is the largest fleet of its kind in the world, the state-run Rosmorport company [says](#). And more is to come.

According to company deputy general director Vasily Strugov, another nine vessels will be added to the fleet by 2024.

Among them, there is a vessel of the 21900M2 project. A construction contract on the ship will

be signed by the end of this year. The 18MW powerful ship will be a modification of the class of icebreakers that are actively applied by the company today.

Rosmorport has a fleet of five icebreakers of 21900 and 21900M projects. The newest of the vessels, the Novorossiysk, was included in the fleet in November 2016.

According to Rosmorport, the Viktor Chernomyrdin vessel will also be ready for sailing soon. The 25MW vessel will be the most powerful non-nuclear icebreaker in the world. The ship is due to undergo first test sailing in late September and ice testing in the Arctic will take place in spring 2020, Strugov said.

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"This is the most powerful icebreaker that we will have in our fleet and the most powerful in the whole world," he added.

Strugov spoke in a conference on icebreaking vessels earlier this month.

The Viktor Chernomyrdin is more than four years [behind](#) its original time schedule outlined in the construction contract signed in 2011.

The price for the vessel is believed to be more than 50% higher than the original budget. The ship was supposed to cost 7.95 billion rubles (\$123 million), but sources in the shipbuilding industry now maintain that the price ultimately will be more than 12 billion (\$187 million).

The Viktor Chernomyrdin is Russia's first vessel of project 22600 (LK-25).

It is not clear whether more LK-25 icebreakers will be built. But Rosmorport will in any case significantly boost its icebreaking capacities. By 2024, another nine new icebreakers will be built, the company says.

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