

Mars One mission: 1,000 chosen to take part in 'reality TV' selection to make one-way trip to red planet

The project hopes to establish human life on Mars by 2025, with the 'rigorous' selection process set to begin this year, but many hurdles remain in place

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When Mars One, a project that aims to put human life on Mars by 2025, called for people across the world to make the one way trip, a staggering 200,000 applied.

Now that number has been whittled down to just 1058 candidates, who will take part in a planned televised selection process over the course of this year and 2015, to establish the final 40 who it is hoped will initially move to the red planet.

After the selection, described as a "talent show" by Paul Römer, inventor of Big Brother, who is an ambassador of the project, the story will continue on Mars, where the inhabitant's experiences in the living quarters will be captured and beamed to Earth.

The team expect to sell television rights to help fund the project, which is set to cost \$6 billion.

Mars One co-founder Bas Lansdorp said: "We're extremely appreciative and impressed with the sheer number of people who submitted their applications. However, the challenge with 200,000 applicants is separating those who we feel are physically and mentally adept to become human ambassadors on Mars from those who are obviously taking the mission much less seriously. We even had a couple of applicants submit their videos in the nude. We fully anticipate our remaining candidates to become celebrities in their towns, cities, and in many cases, countries. It's about to get very interesting."

The oldest successful applicant is 81, while 40 Brits are among the number from 107 different countries. The US is the biggest nationality represented in the Dutch firm's project, with 297 applicants.

Norbert Kraft, Chief Medical Officer of Mars One added: "The next several selection phases in 2014 and 2015 will include rigorous simulations, many in team settings, with focus on testing the physical and emotional capabilities of our remaining candidates. We expect to begin understanding what is motivating our candidates to take this giant leap for humankind. This is where it really gets exciting for Mars One, our applicants, and the communities they're a part of."

Defence giant Lockheed Martin meanwhile has been selected by the non-profit organisation to build an unmanned Mars lander which it is hoped will take off in 2020, while the UK's Surrey Satellite Technology will build the communications satellite.

The project does however remain a long way from becoming a reality - just \$116,654 of the \$6 billion needed has been raised, while no television rights to the proposed show have yet been agreed.

The technical feasibility of safely establishing permanent human life on Mars - particularly due to the radiation levels - has also been questioned.