

Mission to Mars given 'Big Brother' TV treatment – minus the evictions

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The amateur astronauts competing for a one-way ticket to Mars must demonstrate the supreme physical and psychological skills that will enable them to survive in the harshest conditions ever encountered by humans.

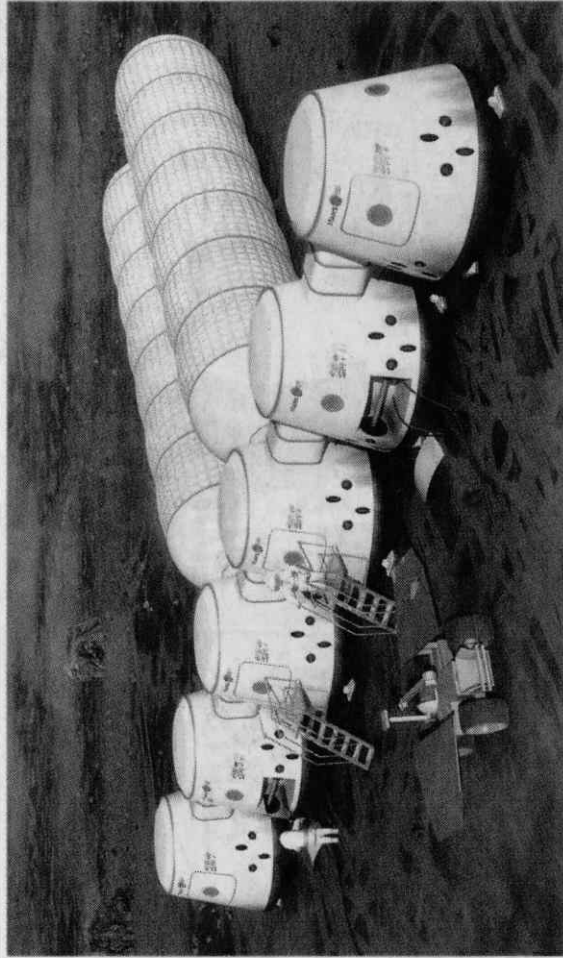
Endemol, the creator of *Big Brother*, is to turn the "world's toughest job interview" – the selection of the first humans to establish a permanent settlement on Mars – into the ultimate reality show.

The privately funded Mars One mission aims to land 20 people on Mars by 2025. More than 200,000 people worldwide applied to join the first human colony on the Red Planet, where they will set up home in inflatable pods. The

ticket to Mars, where the temperature is minus 60C and the atmosphere has so little oxygen it cannot be breathed, is strictly one way. However, Mars One, led by a Dutch businessman, Bas Lansdorp, will send additional crews every two years to further build the pioneering colony.

The cost of the first mission is expected to be around £3.6bn and funds will be raised by selling exclusive broadcasting rights to the mission, built around a global "Big Brother-style event", following the selection and training of the hopefuls.

The applicants have been whittled down to 705 candidates – 418 men and 287 women – who will be invited for a personal interview. The prospective Mars settlers will then be required to dedicate



An artist's impression of the Mars One colony on the Red Planet where 20 people are expected to live. About 200,000 people applied for the planned one-way trip to Mars in 2025 **EYEPRESS/MARS**

eight years of their lives to preparing full-time for the 300-million-mile mission.

Darlow Smithson Productions (DSP), an Endemol company, will film the trainee space-travellers as they are "tested to the extreme as part of an elite training programme run by a panel comprising pre-eminent scientists, adventurers and astronauts".

There are 22 people from Britain who made it through to Phase Two, including Sarah Johnson, 30, an accountant

from Inverness. She said in her video application: "The reason I want to go on the mission to Mars is I find myself waking up every morning thinking there must be more to life. I want to dispel the myth that accountants are dull."

Candidates need not have any scientific qualifications and a *Big Brother*-style audience vote will be used to make the final choice from applicants who have successfully completed their training. Mr Lansdorp said: "Our

team felt all along we needed a partner whose strength lies in factual storytelling to an international audience. DSP will provide that to Mars One, while allowing our selection committee to maintain control of the applicant selection process. This really is a perfect fit for both of us."

Iain Riddick, head of special projects at Bafta-winning DSP, said: "This has to be the world's toughest job interview for what is without question a world-first opportunity and

LIFE ON MARS THE BASICS

Settlers will have "relatively spacious living units" – around 50sq m per person. The first inhabitants of

Mars will decide how to organise themselves politically, after studying different social structures on Earth.

Settlers are advised not to have children, because medical facilities will be limited and little is known about the impact reduced gravity will have on an unborn child. Religious activity will be a matter of personal choice.

When pioneers die they will receive a "memorial service and cremation ceremony, like customs on Earth dictate".

the human stories that emerge will captivate and inspire generations across the globe."

However, scientists believe Mars One's projected arrival date of 2025, after an eight-month flight, is optimistic. Nasa has stated it intends to land humans on the Red Planet in 2035. The technologies required for sustainable human settlement on Mars are still being developed, says Nasa, which has made getting humans to the planet as its "primary mission".