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<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/after-mars-isro-decides-its-time-to-probe-venus/article18168753.ece>

After Mars, ISRO decides it's time to probe Venus

Space agency invites study ideas for new mission



It's official. The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has invited scientists to suggest studies for a potential orbiter mission to Venus - somewhat similar to the one that landed in Mars in 2013.

ISRO plans to send a spacecraft that will initially go around Venus in an elliptical orbit before getting closer to the 'Yellow Planet'. It will carry instruments weighing 175 kg and using 500W of power. The scientific community has been told to suggest space-based studies by May 19.

"The Announcement of Opportunity [AO] is just the beginning. The studies must be finalised, a project report would have to be presented and approved. A formal mission may not happen before 2020," a senior ISRO official told *The Hindu*.

A mission must be approved by ISRO's Advisory Committee on Space Sciences, then the Space Commission and later by the government.

Venus, the second planet from the Sun, comes closest to Earth roughly every 583 days, or about 19 months.

Venus, our closest planetary neighbour, is similar to Earth in many aspects. However, it takes only 225 days to revolve around the Sun. Secondly, the surface is very hot due to nearness to the Sun.

India's previous and second planetary outing, the record-setting Rs. 450-crore Mars Orbiter Mission (MOM) of 2013, continues to impress. The orbiter is going round the Red Planet even as you read this — well beyond its planned life of six months.

An orbiter sent to the Moon in 2008 was delivering data until about three months before its estimated life span. A second Moon landing mission is planned in early 2018.