Mars Horizon Alpha Walkthrough

Welcome to Mars Horizon - a journey from the dawn of the space race to the ultimate goal of making humanity a multi-planetary species. This guide is a temporary tutorial, until we complete the real thing! ***Note the game is still in development!***

You're about to play our 'Moon Alpha' released in celebration of the anniversary of the first moon landing by NASA in 1969. You will start in the first era of space exploration, up to the mission to successfully launch the first human into space. In the full game however, you'll be able to explore the entire solar system, racing against the AI which controls other agencies, in the hopes that your space program will be the one to place the first boots on Mars. But we're getting ahead of ourselves. Let's start the alpha!

## Part 1 - New game, basics and your first launch

After loading the game, select '**New Game**' from the title screen. Then you'll come to the agency select screen. Each has their own Agency Traits which change the way the game plays out. For this alpha however, we only have the USA selectable due to their success in the early Moon exploration. After selecting the USA you'll find yourself in our solar system with the familiar view of Earth.

As you begin your Agency's space race, you'll need to set out what research your team will begin with. Research costs Science which is represented by the conical flask on the top right of the HUD on this screen. The first thing to research is the 'Sounding Rocket'. Select 'Set Research' and choose this. Click the **Back** button to return in the solar system, then advance time using '**Next Event**' button so that the researching task is complete.

When the research into the sounding rocket is complete, it's time to test it out on the launch pad with the Test Launch mission! In the solar system screen, click on the 3D Earth and a menu of missions will appear. Choose the only milestone mission available at this time - the **Test Launch** mission.
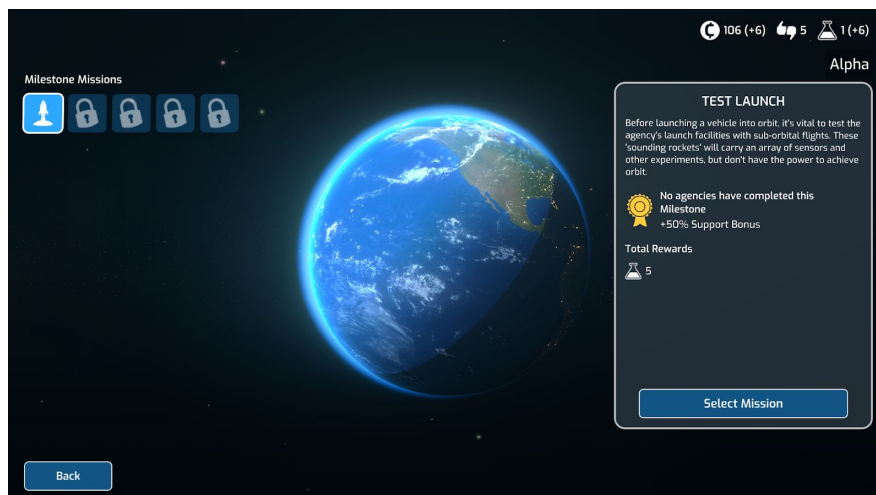
You'll not have to design this first vehicle out of separate parts, as will be the case with vehicles after this first mission - the Sounding Rocket has its own ready-made template. Select '**Build Blueprin**t' from the blueprint screen.
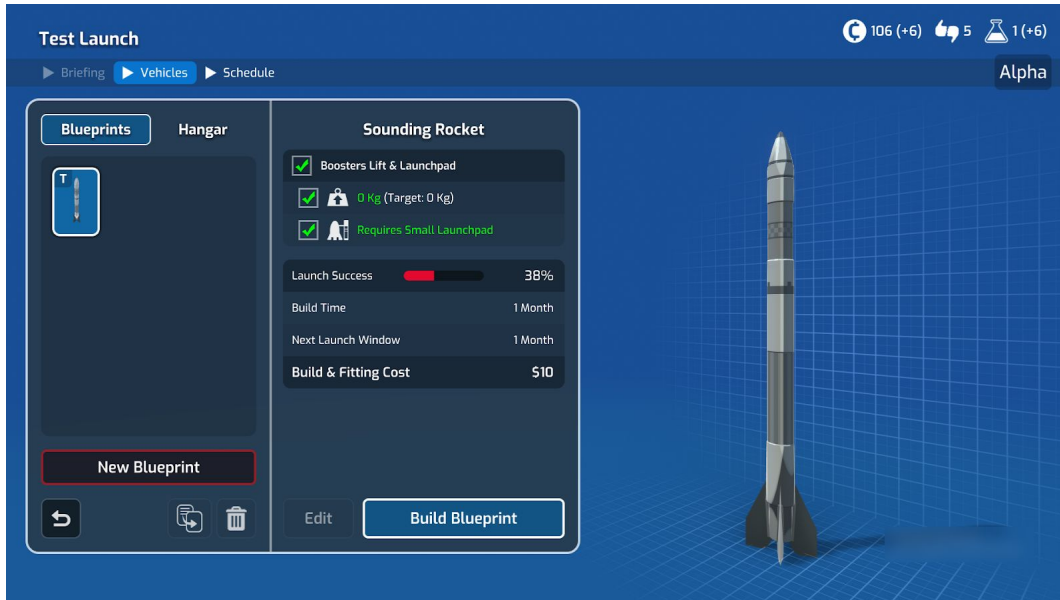
Then you'll be taken straight to the launch calendar screen where you'll be able to select the optimal month for launching the mission. When you're happy with the date, continue by pressing '**Select Date & Pay**'.
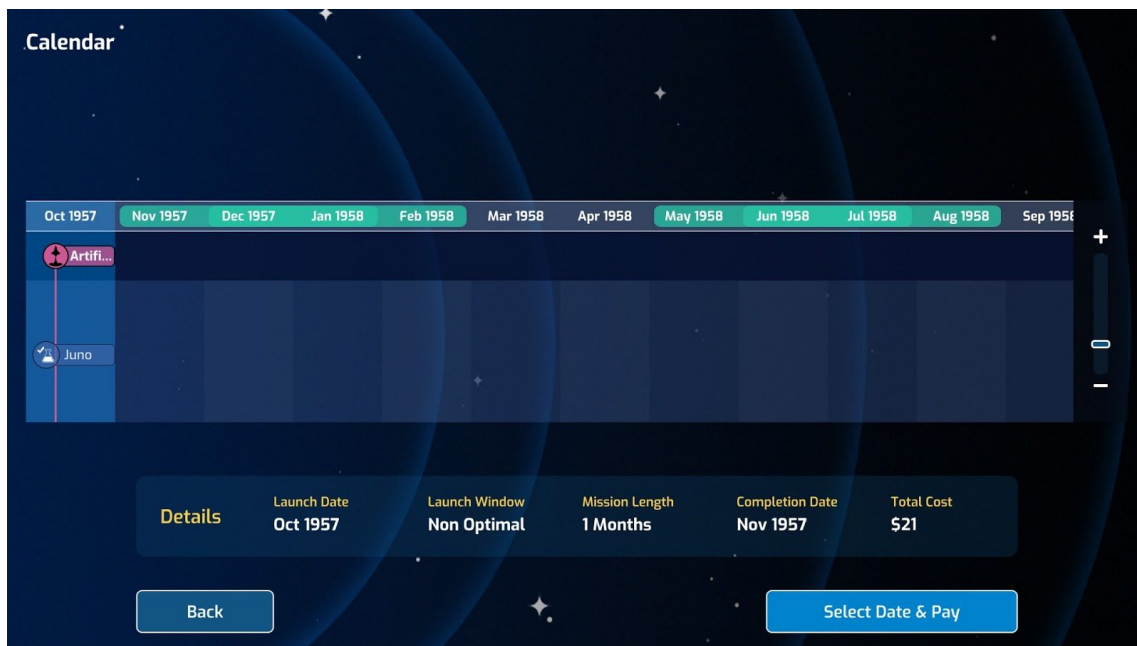
Our mission is now scheduled, but before we get to the launch day, we need to set new research. Back in the solar system screen, click the button 'Set Research' on the bottom right and you'll be taken to the research tree. Here you can queue up technologies to research, so double-click with the left mouse button on both '**Base Upgrades**' and '**Earth Orbit**', then back out into the solar system screen.

Click the Next Event button until it's time to launch the mission. Click either the "**Go To Missions**" button in the bottom right or the "Missions" tab at the top of the screen. Select the "**Test Launch**" mission from the list at the left, then click "**Start Mission**" to proceed to the launch day.

On launch day, your engineers will give you a rundown of the random Launch Events rolled for launch, which is dependant on the Launch Rating of your vehicle (pretty low when it comes to the Sounding Rocket!). Here you can choose to Abort Mission if it appears too risky, or to continue. We shall continue. Now it's time to hope that our rocket makes it up into space.

If it fails, don't worry - sounding rockets are cheap, and prone to exploding. Just schedule the mission again, by going through the process outlined above (clicking on Earth, then the Test Launch mission).

After either a failed or successful launch of the sounding rocket, you'll be back in the solar system screen.

Part 2 - Base and rocket buidling

If you continue to advance time until both new technologies are researched, you'll be able to do a number of things with your new research. Firstly, the base screen will now be available to view. Click on the 'Base' tab at the top of the solar system screen. This takes you to your agency HQ base-building screen…


You'll now have your first glimpse of what will become the hub of your Agency's Space Programme. Let's construct some buildings you have just researched. Using the 'Build' button, place a Rocket Test Pad. This will help improve your chances of successful launches. You'll notice that some buildings built next to each other offer an adjacency bonus, while others may create negatives.
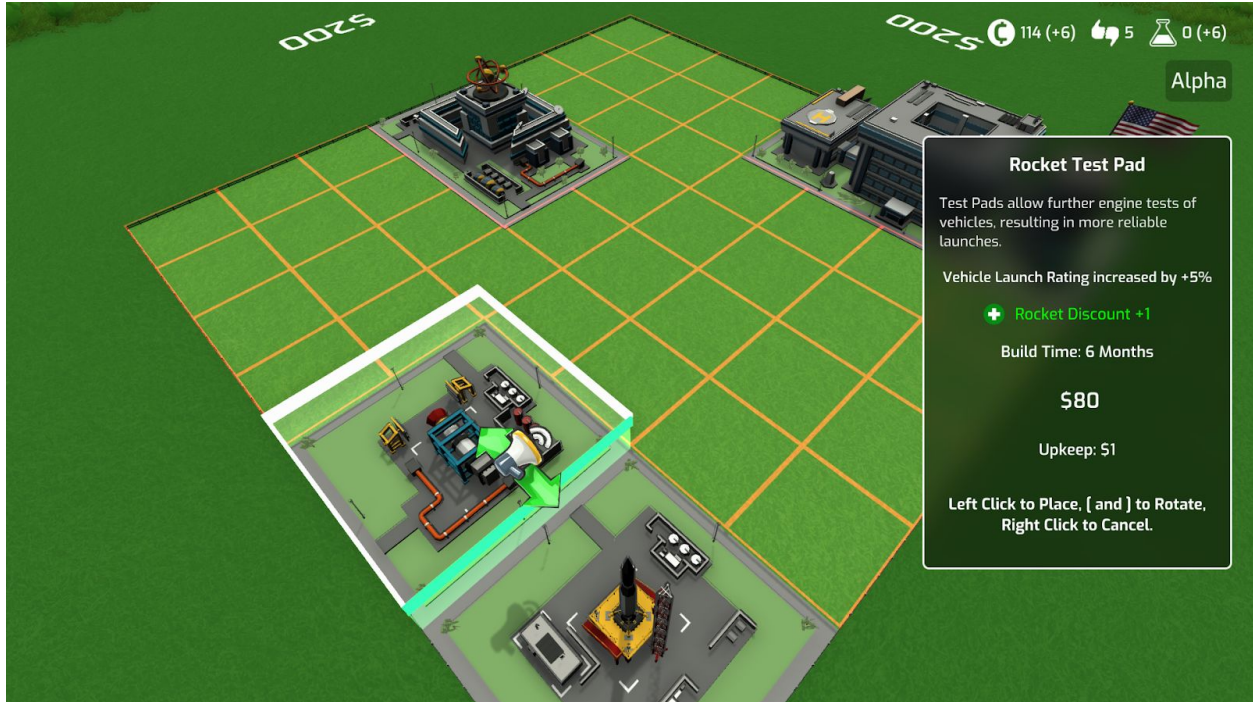
Now back out into the Solar System screen. Remember you've researched Earth Orbit Missions? Well this means you're now able to undertake your second mission into space - the Artificial Satellite Mission. Click on Earth:
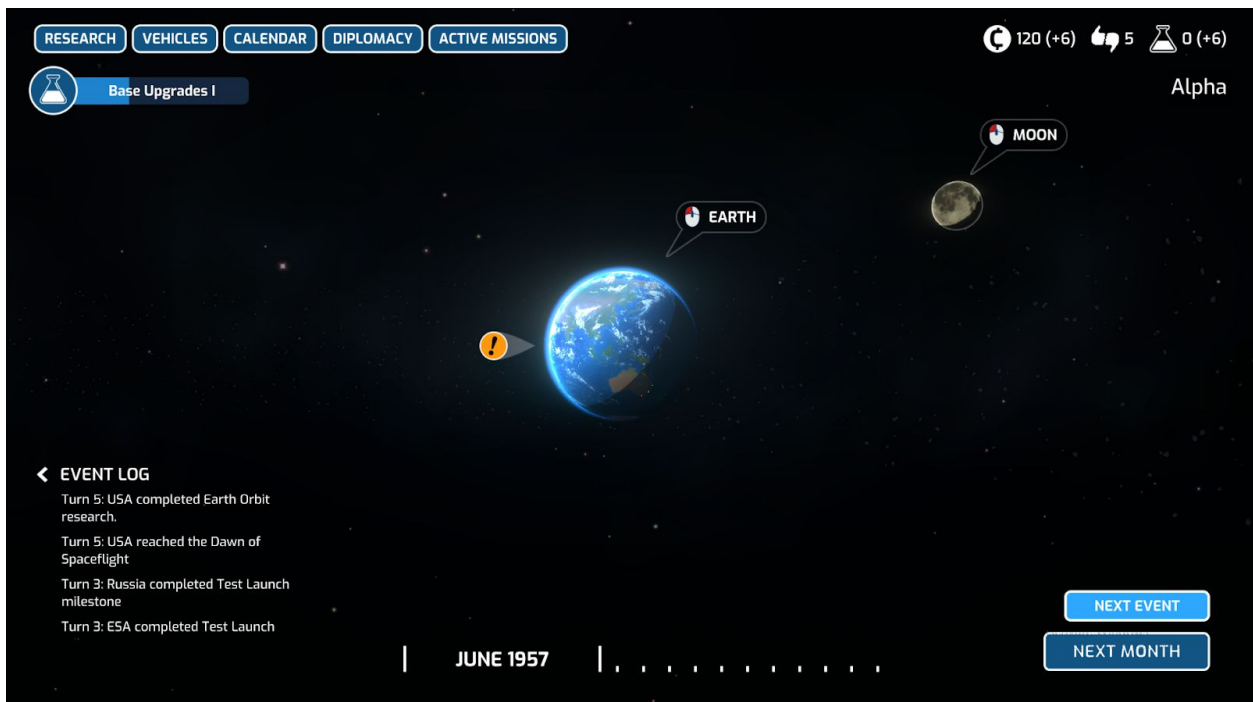
When you do, you'll see a list of the available milestone missions, as before.
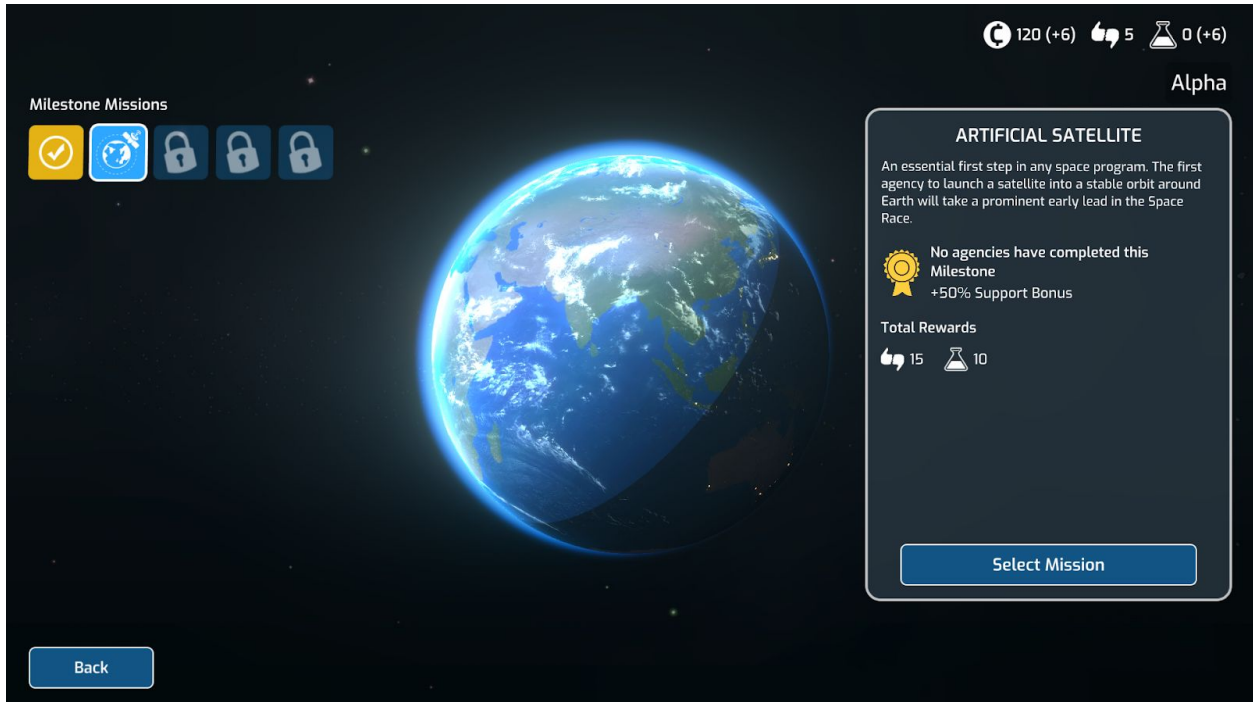
Select the "Artificial Satellite" mission. Once you click, you'll find yourself again in the vehicle hangar of your Space Agency.

This mission set up will be a little more involved than the last. First off, we'll be choosing the Payload that your vehicle will be carrying into space. For this mission, select Explorer. Note that the payloads come from research you do and are key in the activities you can do once on a mission (below).

We're then taken to the vehicle screen, where you will need to construct a vehicle capable of flying the mission using the available researched technology. First, click the 'New Blueprint" button near the bottom left of the screen. This will take you to the Vehicle Designer screen, where you can select Upper and Booster parts to construct your vehicle by clicking the buttons on the left side of the screen.

A good selection for this mission would be the Jupiter Upper along with the Jupiter Booster, but feel free to choose your own combination - and name your rocket if you'd like!
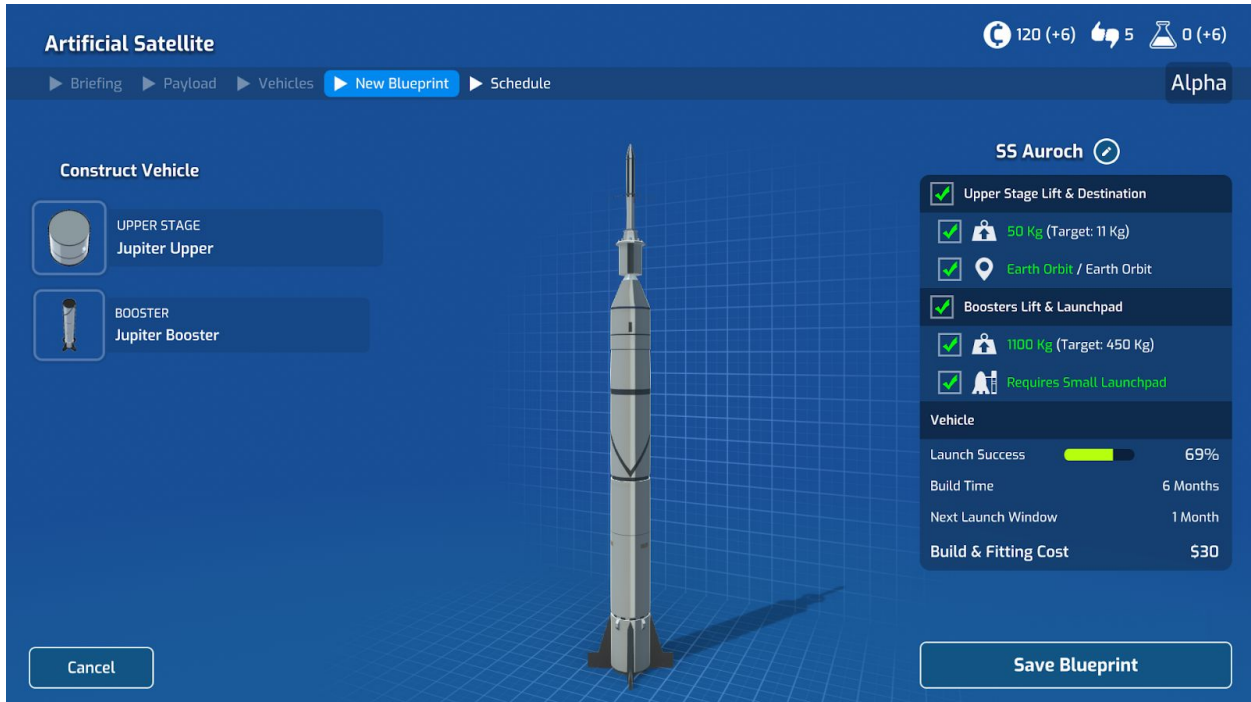
When you're happy with the design, click 'Save Blueprint'. This will take you back to the Vehicle Select screen, where your new blueprint is now selected. Click the "Build Blueprint" button.

Choose a launch month on the Calendar screen as before, and click "Select Date & Pay" to schedule the mission. On the Solar System screen, click on Next Event to advance time until the Artificial Satellite mission is ready to launch. Start the mission via the Missions screen, as before. If the vehicle successfully launches, you'll progress to the Mission Control phase - if not, you'll need to schedule the mission again, via the steps detailed above.

## Part 3 - Mission Control Phase

Upon a successful launch, the game moves to the Mission Control phase, where the player runs the actual mission. In this example, once the payload is in orbit, you'll be in the Mission Gameplay section of the game.

In this part, your task is to accumulate the quantities of objective resources (top left) using the module actions given to you. In the case of this first mission, you'll start with four power resource tokens, and the goal is to generate two Comms resource tokens (Red) and two Data resource tokens (Blue.) There are four turns in this mission and two actions per turn.

The Payload modules you've sent into space (selected during the mission creation phase, above) can turn power into resources, and resources into different resources. Start by using one power token to create one red Comms token, then use your last action on your first turn to turn one power and one Comms into three Data. At this stage in the turn, any or all chosen actions can be undone, without any penalty. Only once you click end turn are your choices fixed.
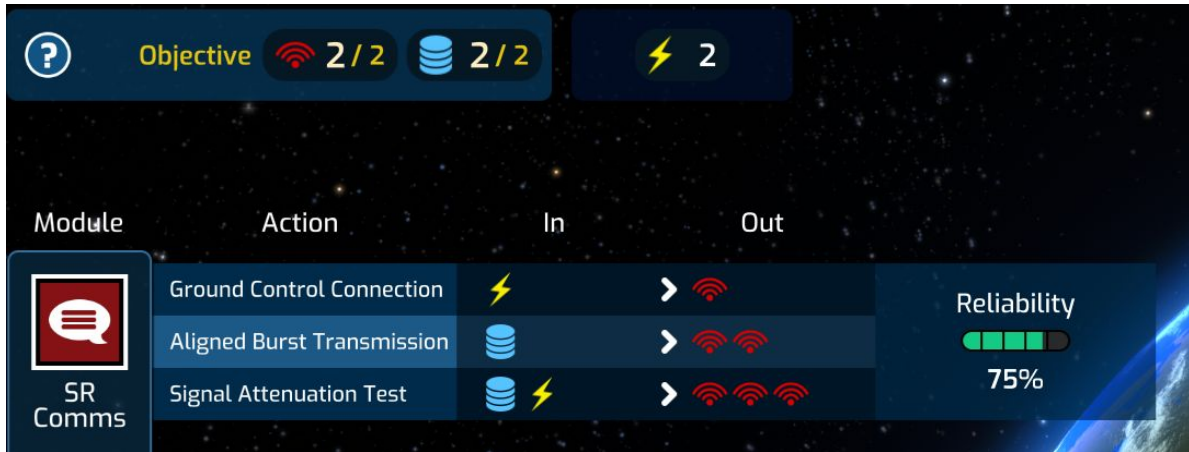
Once you confirm your choices, the turn enters the resolution phase: here each of your chosen actions will be resolved. You may have noticed the Reliability notification whilst selecting your actions. This reflects the chance of things going wrong during the resource transfers. When these error occurs, you can choose to resist their detrimental effects with any power tokens you have available.

Depending on your luck with module reliability and problem solving skills, you should be able to finish the mission. When you've achieved this, you'll be back in the solar system screen with new Science gained, and an increase of Public Support which comes from successful expeditions into space.

Now, continue to research new technology, build up your base, and dive into any new missions which may appear until you slowly expand your reach into the solar system. Missions will become more intricate and detailed, threats to your agency will become more involved, and your exploration of the planets in our solar system will become more and more daring.

The alpha will end when you succeed in launching a human into space, or when you reach 1970. Enjoy the game!