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On September 20, NASA announced the Mars Balance Mass Challenge, a new contest seeking design ideas for spacecraft payloads entering the atmosphere on Mars. Contestants have been asked to design a payload of up to 150 kg that will function as an ejectable balance for the spacecraft, but also serve as a technological or scientific instrument to study the planet's atmosphere or other properties.

The Mars Balance Mass Challenge is hosted by NASA's Center of Excellence for Collaborative Innovation, a creation of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP). According to NASA Chief Technologist David Miller, the challenge is intended to engage the public and citizen scientists and to foster a "maker community." The challenge was announced at the World Maker Faire in New York.

Ideas must be submitted by November 21. The winner will be announced in mid-January and awarded a prize of \$20,000.

Source: NASA
