



CRISIS: MARS

**Negotiation and war
in the year 2241**

PLAYER'S GUIDE

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Crisis: Mars is a small Megagame for **12-18 players** that takes around **2 ½ hours** to play.

The year is 2241 and humanity has colonised the inner solar system with space stations and mining in the asteroid belt, and a colony and terraforming project on Mars.

In recent years a growing movement on Mars is pushing for independence from the Unified Government of Earth (Earth Gov) and they have just gained a majority in the Martian Senate.

You will take the role of an actor on the edge of this brewing conflict. You will have limited opportunity to change its course, but the conflict gives you the chance to achieve your own goals.

SETTING OVERVIEW

The year is 2241 and humanity has colonised the inner solar system with space stations and mining in the asteroid belt, and a colony and terraforming project on Mars.

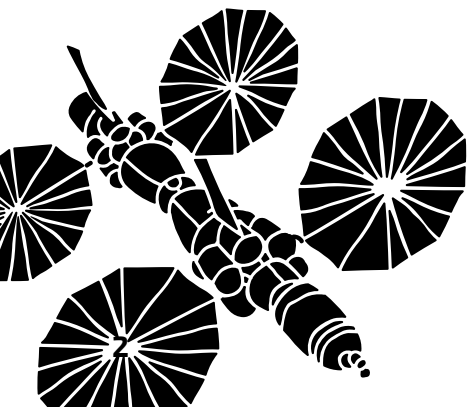
The states of Earth have formed a coalition of the "Unified Nations of Earth" (known as Earth Gov) and a large portion of the surface of Luna (Earth's moon) has been given over to corporate micro-states.

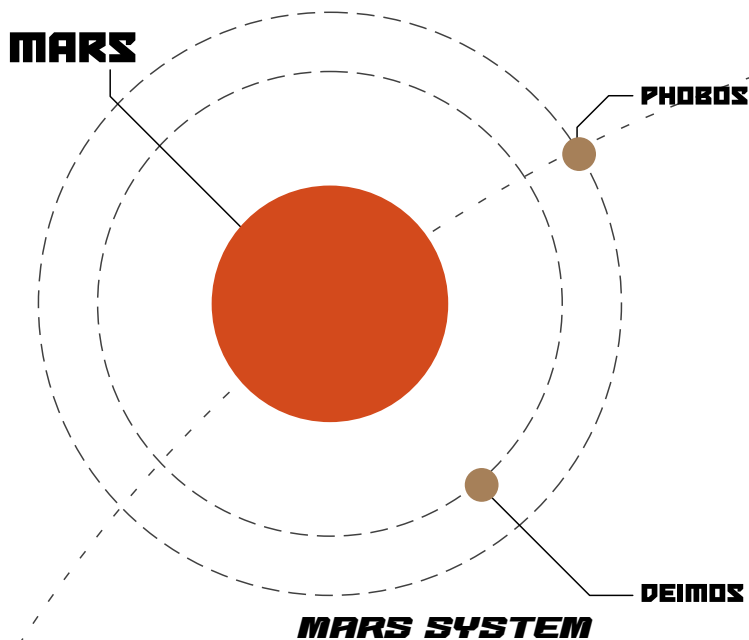
Mars itself is being terraformed, funded by Earth Gov and implemented by Canopy Corp, but this project isn't scheduled to complete for another 120 years. The moons Deimos and Phobos have been converted into space stations.

The Asteroid Belt is barely governed, but it is patrolled by Earth Gov vessels. Private contractors extract minerals from the belt, primarily for Earth corporations. Many of these contractors have banded together to form the Belt Union, which operates stations built into the asteroids Ceres, Pallas and Vesta.

In recent years a growing movement on Mars has been pushing for independence from Earth Gov and they have just gained control of a majority in the Martian Senate...

You will take the role of an actor on the edge of this brewing conflict. You will have limited opportunity to change its course but conflict gives you the chance to achieve your own goals.







Mars has been slowly terraformed over the last 4 decades, with humanity currently having to live underground. Still, there are roughly 20 million colonists, half of which are involved in the terraforming effort.

Deimos and Phobos are Mars's small moons that are used as supply stations for space ships.

Played Factions

 **Viva Mars:** "Viva Mars was there at the start of the independence movement, before it became mainstream and the politicians became involved. It started with a socialist dream, equality for all Martians as well as freedom from Earth, but the Senate wants to keep their power."

As much as their main aim has never been closer to being realised, the new wave of opportunistic politicians and military folk seem hell bent on turning Mars into a copy of Earth, and bending the knee to the same old corporations."

 **Deimos Rising Corp:** "Deimos was the first Martian Senate backed corporation, ratified by Earth Gov, given corporate sovereignty over the moon of Deimos and a charter to facilitate trade to and from Mars."

The Senate has stated that, if independence is won then Deimos Rising will be taken public, which could result in a healthy payday if their shares are high."

A diagram of the Earth system. A large circle representing Earth is divided diagonally into a green upper-left half and a cyan lower-right half. A label 'EARTH' with a pointer line is at the top right. A smaller grey circle representing Luna is in orbit to the left, with a label 'LUNA' and a pointer line. A dashed line represents the orbit. The text 'EARTH SYSTEM' is written in a stylized font below the Luna label.

EARTH

LUNA

EARTH SYSTEM

Earth has a population of 30 billion and is still the production and political centre of human life. The nations of the world have formed a federation known as the Unified Nations of Earth that has much more sovereign power than it's predecessor, the United Nations, and also regulates humanity's expansion into the solar system.

Luna has been heavily developed for almost a hundred years and many corporations based there are given their own sovereign territory.

Played Factions



Canopy Corp: "Canopy P.L.C." was initially founded to develop and deploy habitats during the colonisation of Luna. Until it won the contract to terraform Mars it was a mid-sized mega-corporation, but over the last 40 years it has grown to one of the largest non-state entities in the solar system.

The Martian terraforming project is now vital to the future of Canopy Corp and the political unrest is an unwelcome disruption to normal operations."



UNSS: "The Unified Nations Security Service is a joint intelligence agency working for the Earth Gov to ensure stability on Earth, in the inner system and intercepting threats to the sovereignty of Earth.

Little is known about just how broad their mandate is, but there have been unofficial reports of paramilitary operations and infiltration of other parts of the UN."



CERES

PALLAS
VESTA

ASTEROID BELT

Ceres, Vesta and Pallas are the three biggest stations in the asteroid belt, providing vital resources to both Earth and the Martian terraforming effort.

They are operated by the Belt Union, a coalition of mining contractors who have banded together to better represent themselves to the corporations and governments of the inner solar system.

Trade Routes

The belt provides materials for both Earth and Mars which are essential to the transforming project, as well as any war that may be fought in space.

Played Factions



Belt Union: "Once mining in the asteroid belt had been proved viable a new gold rush for rare ores and materials from the belt began. The early pioneers had to lease spacecraft from the corporations that could afford to build them.

Over time this settled down into a status quo where large mining companies would hire freelancer mining crews to perform the dangerous work.

The Belt Union was formed from these workers in order to counterbalance the power of the corps that employ them and operate several space stations in the asteroid belt."



Free Federation: Space piracy is in its infancy, as only recently has access to small space vessels become easier and trade more common. The federation are a loose federation of those who are looking for wealth or freedom in space. Their founder, Dread Lizzy, was recently killed in a UN raid and now the Federation finds itself leaderless.

GAME RULES

TURNS

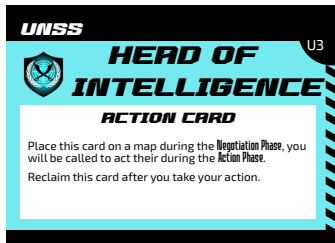
The game consists of four turns of 20 minutes each.

Prologue	00-30 minutes	Turn 3	70-90 minutes
Turn 1	30-50 minutes	Turn 4	90-110 minutes
Turn 2	50-70 minutes	Epilogue	110-120 minutes

Each turn consists of 3 phases:

- Team Phase (5 minutes)
- Negotiation Phase (5 minutes)
- Action Phase (10 minutes)

PLAYER CARDS



▶ Action Cards

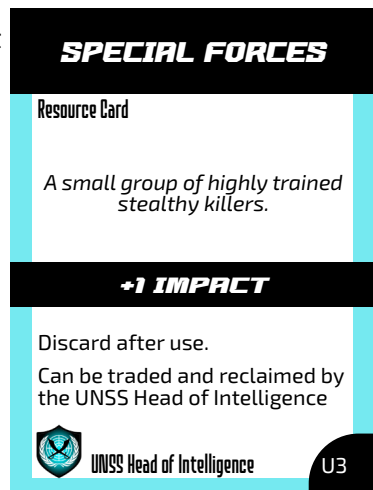
You have an action card which you must place on one of the maps during the Negotiation Phase. Once you have finished your action in the Action Phase take your

▶ action card with you.

⚙️ Resource Cards

You have access to 5 ⚙️ resource cards which can be used to enhance the impact of actions.

- Once a ⚙️ resource card is used it is discarded.
 - During the Negotiation Phase you can reclaim one of your discarded ⚙️ resource cards.
- ⚙️ Resource cards can be loaned to another player at any time.
 - You may reclaim your ⚙️ resource cards from another player at any time, until they are spent.

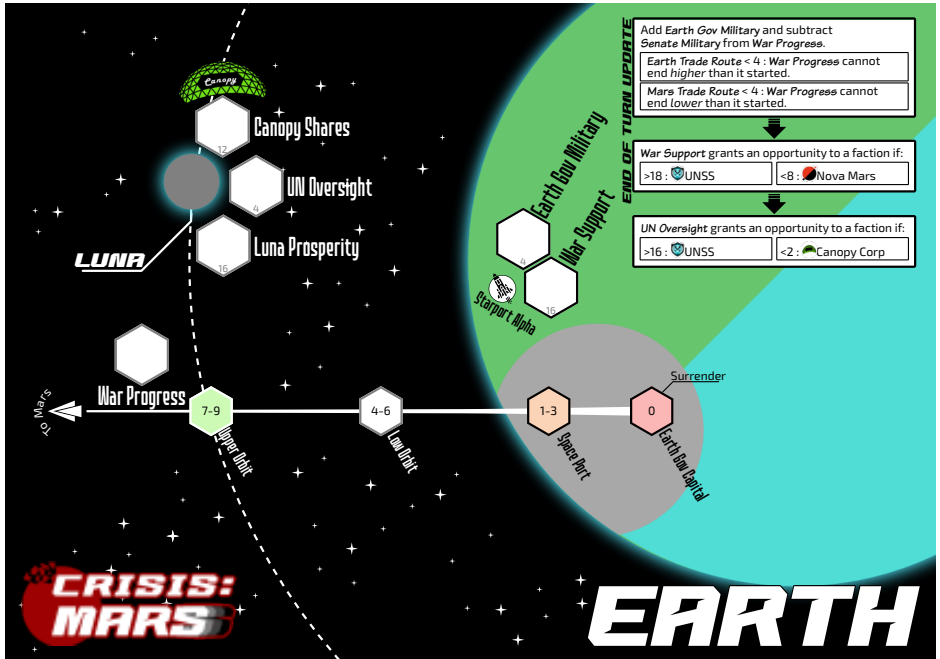


MAPS

There are three maps in the game – Earth, Mars and the Belt.

Scores

Each map tracks a number of *scores* that record the state of the world i.e. stability, prosperity, military strength. These scores will be moved based on actions and news items, as adjudicated by the facilitators.



End of Turn Effects

Each map has an end of turn process that the facilitators will run through, checking some *scores* and modifying others. It may also generate *opportunities*, which are presented to the relevant team during the Team Phase.

War Progress Track

The progress of the inevitable war between Earth and Mars is tracked between the two planetary maps. It is hard to affect directly, instead it moves each turn based on the relative military scores of Earth Gov and the Martian Senate.

Progress can also be stalled by disrupting the trade routes from the Asteroid Belt or lowering Earth's war support.


TEAM PHASE


This phase starts with a short news update from the game's facilitators.


You must stay in your team area and can talk with your team about what has happened and what to do next.

During the Team Phase your team may be presented with *opportunities* by a facilitator, usually because of the end of turn update on each map. You will be given the choice between two options and must decide as a team which to take.

NEGOTIATION PHASE

You should use this time to discuss the state of the game with other players, trade  *resource cards* and decide what action to take.

Once per turn you *may* reclaim one of your discarded  *resource cards* from the maps during this phase.

Before the end of the phase you *must* place your  *action card* on the *map* where you want to act.

Facilitator Factions

Two of the facilitator team will take the role of representatives from Earth and Mars and you can interact with them during the negotiation phase.

While they do have  *resource cards* to trade they will expect favours in return.

Unified Nations Ambassador:

The Unified Nations of Earth is the largest and most powerful organisation in the solar system.

It is the ultimate authority on Earth, although often leaving individual nation states to their own devices.

In space, however, it doesn't hesitate to exert its full authority.


Their ambassador has access to resources, but the bureaucracy of Earth Gov can make them slow to deploy.



Martian Senate Speaker:





The Martian Senate is the governing body of Mars and, while democratically elected, is still under the authority of Earth.

The Speaker is one of the new wave of professional politicians and is empowered to make deals on the Senate's behalf during this time of war.

ACTION PHASE

During this phase you will be called to the map where your  **action card** is, in a random order, and have 60 seconds to:

1. If you have them, bring any allies who will be using their action with yours.
 - You will gain a bonus for more players, and for having more teams represented in your group.
2. Communicate your action to the facilitator, this can be anything that makes sense.
 - Focus on the in-fiction objective of the action, not the affect it will have on the game's mechanisms.
3. You can spend  **resource cards** to increase the action's impact.
 - Each  **resource card** must be from a different faction.
 - The facilitator will adjudicate if a resource is relevant to the action, if not it will be returned to you.
4. The action's impact is calculated as follows:
 - 1 per player involved +1 per team involved +1 per resource accepted -[0-6] based on difficulty, as adjudicated by the facilitator.
5. You then roll the consequence dice and consult the following table:

Consequence		The action succeeds, but has an unexpected consequence.
		The action happens as normal.
		You may spend a  resource card of any type to add +2 impact.

6. The facilitator will then tell you the result of your action based on the final impact and the current turn:


Impact Description		Turn			
		1	2	3	4
None	Any effects will be short lived and soon forgotten.	2	-	-	-
Minor	A subtle effect, minorly influencing events.	3-4	2-3	2-3	2
Moderate	A meaningful effect that can shift the local balance of power.	5-7	4-6	4-5	3
Notable	A significant and eye catching effect that may have multiple effects.	8-11	7-9	6-7	4
Major	Your action has a lasting effect with significant consequences.	12-15	10-13	8-11	6
Radical	Can fundamentally change the political or strategic landscape.	16+	14+	12+	10+

7. Reclaim your  **action card**.

EXAMPLE OF PLAY

Robin is attending a game of Crisis: Mars with their friend Bobby.

Prologue

In the prologue the setting and rules are explained and then the facilitators encourage the players into teams. Robin and Bobby stick together and aren't sure which team to pick, so get assigned to  Canopy Corp with a third player.

The new team reads their faction brief and then decides who should get which role – CEO, CTO and Security Officer. Robin likes the sound of trying to keep the terraforming project running during a war, so selects the CTO role.

Turn 1 - Team Phase


The team then read their individual briefs (keeping them secret from one another) and then start to talk about what their goals should be in the game – Robin will focus on terraforming while the other players worry about share prices and diplomacy.

Turn 1 - Negotiation Phase

Focusing on terraforming Robin knows the project will benefit from some supplies and to gain bonuses to impact these should come from another faction.

» Deimos Rising, as another corporation, should have supplies but they are also a potential rival. The  Belt Union specialise in mining and delivery so Robin approaches one of their team and offers a trade of  *resource cards*.

The Belt Union say they want to develop their mining technology so happily trade a *Raw Materials*  *resource card* for a *Scientific R&D*  *resource card*.



Before the end of the turn Robin quickly places their  *action card* on the Mars map so they can interact with the terraforming track.

Turn 1 - Action Phase

Until their action is called Robin mingles with the other players, trying to get a sense for who wants what until they are called by a facilitator to resolve their action at the Mars map.

Finding the terraforming project in good health already Robin decides their action should be to get some good press and uses their *Raw Materials* and second *Scientific R&D* cards to develop and announce a new phase in the terraforming project – they are using ice from the Asteroid Belt to start creating lakes on the surface.


The facilitator accepts both resources and decides there aren't any difficulty penalties to apply, so the impact is 1 (from the current turn) +2 (from using two different coloured resources) -0 (no difficulty modifiers) = 3 – Minor.


Robin then rolls the consequence dice and scores a  – their action has unforeseen consequences! The facilitator explains how the project is a success, and the news teams present seem impressed (Canopy's share price is going to rise), but the Belt Union ships used to transport the ice have been damaged (they will take a ship  *resource card* from a Belt Union player). No doubt this will sour relations with the Belt Union.



Turn 2 - Team Phase

The news mentions the new terraforming progress and the CEO is pleased with the share price increase. The news also mentions, however, that space piracy in the Asteroid Belt is restricting the flow of goods to Mars which will in turn affect the Terraforming Project.



Turn 2 - Negotiation Phase

The threat to the terraforming project needs to be addressed so Robin decides to seek the assistance of the  UNSS as well as their own Security Chief. It turns out the UNSS were behind the piracy and aren't willing to open up trade to Mars.

If the UNSS are the problem then it seems like the  Free Federation could be induced to help and Robin seeks out their aid, offering to upgrade their ships weaponry this turn if they help keep the trade route open - and one of the captains agrees.

Robin places their  *action card* at the Asteroid Belt map and retrieves a *Scientific R&D*  *resource card* since those were the only cards used.

Turn 2 - Action Phase

This turn's action will upgrade the Free Federation ships. They score a  on their dice roll and are offered to increase their impact if they spend an extra  *resource card*.

This seems like too much assistance for such a tenuous ally, but they ask if they can use the resource to install a fail-safe device on the ships. The facilitator agrees, the Free Federation gain more control over the trade routes but may have a nasty surprise in store if they betray Canopy.

Turn 3 onward

Play continues during the 3rd and 4th turns in a similar fashion, before ending with a debrief with a round up of the state of the solar system at the end of the game.

CREDITS

GAME DESIGN

John Keyworth

PLAYTESTERS

Barbara, Clé Diggins, Cody Semer, Dan White, Diana Marks, Elliot Wilson, Franziska Schulz, Jacob H, James, James Carter, James Whicker, Jessica Holzhausen, Luke Murray, Michiel Cottaar, Pete Warner, Sonia Keerstock, Steven Rogers, Zin Smyth



Prologue	00-30
Turn 1	30-50
Turn 2	50-70
Turn 3	70-90
Turn 4	90-110
Epilogue	110-120

Team Phase

(5 minutes) - stay with your team and plan.

Negotiation Phase

(5 minutes) - negotiate with other players, reclaim a resource card and choose where to put this turn's action card.

Action Phase

(10 minutes) - continue negotiation, but you will be called up by a facilitator to act at the map with your action card.

1. Communicate your action to the facilitator, this can be anything that makes sense. You can bring other players to contribute their actions extra bonuses.
2. You can propose up to 3 resource cards, +1 per ally, from different factions to increase the action's impact.
3. The action's impact will be calculated by the facilitator.
 - Current Turn Number + 1 per Ally + 1 per Resource - Difficulty
4. You then roll the consequence dice and consult the following table:

Consequence		The action succeeds, but has an unexpected consequence.
		The action happens as normal.
		Increase the action's impact by 1.

5. The facilitator will then tell you the result of your action based on the final impact:

1-	Insignificant
2-3	Minor
4-5	Moderate

6-7	Notable
8-9	Major
10+	Radical
6. Reclaim your action card.