



# POCKET MARS

## RULES

### Contents:

- 35 Project cards (5 types of 7 projects)
- 5 Building cards
- 4 Spaceship cards
- 28 Colonist markers  
(7 in each player's color)
- 4 Energy markers
- 4 Reference cards
- 1 Starting player card

## Game objective:

The main objective in **Pocket Mars** is the preparation of an infrastructure that will allow more colonists to move to Mars. Players will undertake projects to send their colonists to Mars, where they will work in pre-established buildings to improve and upgrade the colony, as well as build new constructions that will allow the colony to prosper.

The player who most effectively allocates their colonists will score the most points and be victorious.

## Game setup [Pic. 1]:

1. Each player chooses a color, and takes the Spaceship card **1** and the 7 colonists in that color. Everyone places their Spaceship in their personal tableau.
2. Each player places 1 of their colonists on their Spaceship **2** and then places their remaining 6 colonists in a common pool, called Earth **3**, together with the other players' remaining colonists.

3. Each player places 1 energy marker on the starting level space of the energy track on their Spaceship **4**.
4. Place the 5 Building cards face-up in a row, next to each other, in any order. (Leave enough table space beneath them **5** for project cards to be placed later in the game.)
5. Shuffle the 35 project cards together to form a single deck, and deal 4 project cards face-down to each player. Place the remaining deck face-down somewhere near Earth **6**, in easy reach of the players, leaving space beside it for a discard pile.  
Variant: Experienced players may wish to use the Drafting rules described at the end of these rules.
6. Each player secretly picks 2 of their 4 project cards and places their chosen cards face-down (side by side) in front of them in their personal tableau. This is called the player's prep module **7**. The remaining 2 project cards remain in the player's hand **8**. (Note: A player may inspect the cards in their prep module at any time during the game.)
7. Choose the starting player at random. The starting player receives the starting player card **9** and begins the first round.

Pic. 1



## Important terms you will see in the game:

**SPACESHIP [Pic.2]:** The card on which a player will place their colonists when instructed to take colonists from Earth **1**. From there, colonists will go to Buildings on Mars. Additionally, each player must keep track of the energy level **2** of their Spaceship **2**.

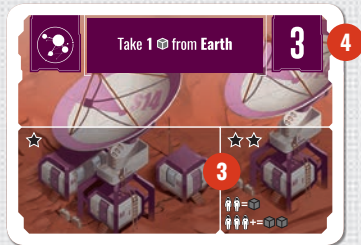
Pic. 2



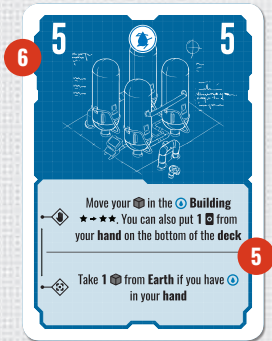
**BUILDINGS [Pic. 3]:** There are 5 cards in play called Buildings, and 4 of these Buildings can hold colonists. On these **3**, a space marked ★★ has a limitation on how many colonists that space can hold. In a 2 player

game, it can hold a maximum of 1 colonist. In a 3 or 4 player game, it can hold a maximum of 2 colonists. Each colonist on such a space at the end of the game will earn 4 victory points. A space marked ★ has no limit to the number of colonists it can hold, and each colonist there will earn 2 victory points at the end of the game. The fifth Building (colored black) is the construction Building, and does not hold colonists. Each Building has a special ability which may be triggered when a player connects a project card to it. Additionally, 4 of the Buildings have a value of 3 **4**, which is referenced when connecting project cards.

Pic. 3



**Pic. 4**



**PREP MODULE:** The 2 project cards in front of each player, placed next to each other face down [Pic. 1 7]. These cards are kept secret from the other players, but each player is allowed to inspect the cards in their own prep module at any time.

## The 4 Card rule:

As the last step in each player's turn, starting with that player and moving clockwise around the table, each player ensures that they have exactly 4 project cards, consisting of 2 cards in their hand and 2 cards in their prep module. To do so, a player undertakes the following steps in order:

- If a player has more than 4 cards in total, they must choose and discard cards from their hand until they have 4.
- If a player has fewer than 4 cards in total, they draw cards from the project deck until they have 4 total cards.



(If at any time the project deck is empty, create a new deck following the procedure described on page 10.)

- If a player has fewer than 2 cards in their prep module, they must choose cards from their hand and place them in their prep module until they have 2 cards in their prep module once more.

At the end of this step, each player must have 2 cards in their hand and 2 in their prep module. Always remember that cards from your hand go to the prep module, but not the other way around. Once you place a card in your prep module, you can't swap it with another one from your hand. Choose wisely!

### Golden rule:

If the text of a card contradicts the text of these rules in any way, the text of the card takes precedence.

### Playing the game:

The game consists of a series of rounds divided into players' turns. Within each round, each player takes **one** turn, commencing with the starting player and moving clockwise around the table. In a turn, the active player

must perform one of the five available actions. As the last step in each turn, players complete the 4 Card rule described earlier.


Once a round has completed, players check if the end-game condition is met, in which case the game is finished and the winner is determined. Otherwise, proceed to the next round which again commences with the starting player.

### In your turn, you must perform one of the five following actions:


- Play a project card from your hand.
- Play a project card from your prep module.
- Play a project card from any other player's prep module.
- Take 1 colonist from Earth.
- Gain 1 energy by discarding a project card from your hand or prep module.

#### Play a project card from your hand

Play a project card of your choice from your hand and trigger its top action 🖐 Discard that project card.


**Example:** Filip plays a  project card with a value of 6, which tells him to 'Draw 2 cards'. He draws 2 project cards from the project deck and now has 3 in his hand and 2 in his prep module. As the last step in his turn, Filip must ensure he has exactly 2 project cards in his hand and 2 in his prep module. As such, he chooses 1 of the project cards in his hand and discards it, placing it face-up on the project discard pile.

### Play a project card from your prep module [Pic. 5]:

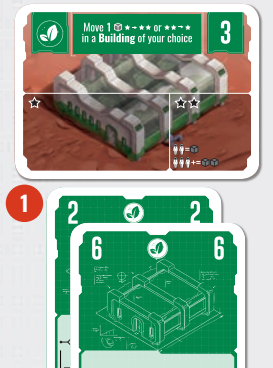
Play a project card of your choice from your prep module, connecting it to a Building of the same color by placing the project card face-up beneath that Building. If there's already a project card there, place your card on top of it, leaving just the value of the previously played card visible . Then, perform the following steps in order:

1. Compare your card's value with the value of the card directly underneath it. If your card is the first one connected to a Building, compare its value to the Building value instead. If your card's value is higher, you may move 1 of your colonists from your Spaceship onto the Building, placing it on the space marked ★.

**Important:** The Construction Building does not have spaces designated for colonists. Ignore this step when you connect a project card to that Building.







2. You may trigger the project card's bottom action . If you can't fulfil the requirements of an action however, you can't trigger it (for example, if you don't have enough energy to pay for the action).
3. You may trigger the Building's special ability.

Pic. 5




These steps are independent of each other, and are resolved separately, but if any or all are resolved, they must be resolved in the order given.

Remember: If your project card's value is not higher than the underlying card's value, you may still use the two remaining options.

**Example:** Matt plays an  card from his prep module and places it below the Building of the same color and on top of a previously connected  card so that only the previous card's value of 7 is visible. Since his card's value is only 1, he cannot beat the value of the card directly underneath his, which means he will not be able to move 1 of his colonists from his Spaceship to the  Building. However, the action on the card allows him to take 2 colonists from Earth and place them on his Spaceship if he does not have any colonists in the  Building. He triggers it, as the only colonist in the  Building belongs to Filip. Finally, Matt uses the Building's special ability to gain 1 energy. Next, he draws 1 card from the project deck (following the 4 Card rule) and decides to place an  card from his hand into his prep module.

## Play a project card from any other player's prep module

Play a project card of your choice from another player's prep module. Turn the chosen card face-up and connect it to a Building of the same color, in the same manner as you would if it were from your own prep module. Then perform the following steps in order:

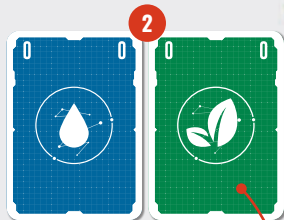
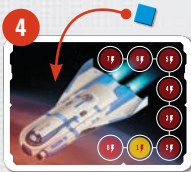
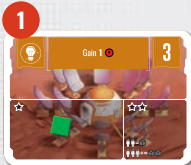
1. The player who owns the project card may trigger its bottom action  as if they played it from their own prep module. The player needs to meet the conditions required for triggering the action as usual and/or be able to pay any energy cost required by the text on the project card.
2. You may use the Building's special ability.

**Example [Pic. 6]:** Filip wants to move his colonist in the  Building  from the space marked ★ to the space marked ★★ as it is worth more points at the end of the game. He can see that Matt placed an  card in his prep module by the symbol on its back . Filip decides to play that card so he turns it face up and connects it to an  Building which does not have any cards connected to it yet . This project card's value is 5 and it beats the Building's value of 3,



although in this case it does not matter. The card's bottom action says that if the player has an ☘ card in his hand, he may move 1 colonist from Earth to his Spaceship. Luckily, Matt does have a card with that symbol in his hand, and he picks up a colonist from Earth 4. Filip then uses the ☘ Building's special ability to move his colonist marker in the ☘ Building from ★ to ★★ just as he planned 5. After this action, Matt is missing one card in his prep module so he draws a project card from the project deck. Now, he must choose which of the 3 cards in his hand he will place in his prep module (following the 4 Cards rule) before the next player can start their turn.

Pic. 6



### Take 1 colonist from Earth

Take 1 colonist from Earth and place it on your Spaceship. This action cannot be performed if you have no colonists left on Earth.

### Gain 1 energy by discarding a project card from your hand or prep module

Choose and discard 1 of your 4 project cards. Then, increase your energy level by 1, indicated by moving the energy marker on your Spaceship up 1 space. This action can be performed if your energy marker is already at the top space of the energy track, but in this case you would just discard a project card without gaining energy.

**If the project deck is empty at any time during the game, immediately create a new project deck. From the Building sites, take all project cards that currently lie underneath another project card, and place them in the discard pile. Then, shuffle the discard pile to form a new project deck.**

### Finishing the game

At the end of a round, if at least 1 player has their 7 colonists placed on Buildings on Mars, the game ends immediately.

**Each player then earns victory points as follows:**


- 1 victory point for each colonist on their Spaceship.
- 2 victory points for each colonist on a Building space marked ★.
- 4 victory points for each colonist on a Building space marked ★★.
- 2 victory points for having at least 1 colonist on each of the 4 Buildings that can hold colonists.
- 3 victory points for having at least 4 colonists in 1 Building.


The player with the highest energy level earns 1 victory point. In the case of a tie, all tied players earn 1 victory point.


Colonists remaining on Earth earn no victory points. The winner is the player with the most victory points.


In the case of a tie, the tied player with the most colonists on Buildings wins the game. If still tied, the tied players share the win.


## Description of Building Abilities:

**Ecosystem Building**  - you may move any colonist belonging to any player in a Building of your choosing from a space marked with ★ to a space marked with ★★, or the other way around.

**Energy Building**  - you may increase your energy level by 1, as indicated by moving your energy marker up 1 space on the energy track on your Spaceship.

**Science Building**  - you may take 1 of your colonists from Earth and place it on your Spaceship.

**Water Building**  - you may choose 1 of your project cards from your hand or your prep module and place it face-down at the bottom of the project deck.

**Construction Building**  - you may move 1 of your colonists from your Spaceship to a Building of your choice, placing it on the space marked ★ within that Building.

## Variant: Drafting project cards

During setup, each player is dealt 5 cards face-down. Each player chooses 1 of those cards to keep, and passes the remaining cards to the player on their left. Repeat this process (choosing 1 and passing the remainder) until all players have chosen 4 cards to keep. The remaining cards are shuffled back into the project deck. Each player then secretly chooses and places 2 of their 4 kept cards face-down in their prep module, and the other 2 cards form their hand.



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**10+**



**2-4**



**15-30**