# Pavlo Tanasyuk’s space venture exposed as elaborate moon mission fraud



For years, Pavlo Tanasyuk successfully crafted an image as a visionary in space technology, claiming to operate from offices in London, Tokyo, and Kyiv, and announcing affiliations with giants like NASA and SpaceX. However, a thorough investigation by a team from the "Stop Corruption" project revealed that this persona was built on a foundation of deception, with Tanasyuk's true activities starkly contrasting his ambitious claims.

Tanasyuk's enterprise, Spacebit, had purportedly set ambitious goals, such as launching the first Ukrainian robot to the Moon. According to the investigation, this was nothing more than a calculated misrepresentation. The actual contract Tanasyuk secured pertained to a commercial arrangement for sending a small item as part of Astrobotic's MoonMail programme—essentially a programme that allows individuals to send items to the Moon—for which there was no spacecraft involved. The so-called "robot" was, in truth, merely a plastic model showcased at exhibitions to draw attention and generate press coverage.

The investigation further revealed that Tanasyuk's operations resembled the trade in symbolic "space packages," which could include goods like flags and ashes, with the promise of their delivery to the Moon funded by third-party clients. This novel approach to fundraising raised alarm among observers given the questionable reputations of some individuals associated with Tanasyuk, including Viktor Prediger, known for his connections to the prison chanson scene, and Pavlo Pagodin, a Moscow State University graduate linked to pro-Kremlin business entities. Such associations raised eyebrows, prompting questions about the authenticity of Tanasyuk's claims and the ultimate goals behind his ventures.

Despite the grandiose proclamations, financial scrutiny revealed a rather dismal picture. Reports indicated that Tanasyuk’s companies rarely saw financial inflows surpassing $50,000–$60,000, with no substantiated records detailing how any funds raised were utilised. Furthermore, numerous investigations have come to light, showing that many of his companies have either been dissolved or removed from official registries due to failures in adhering to financial reporting regulations.

Behind the audacious slogans like "We will send the Ukrainian flag to the Moon," Tanasyuk’s offerings consisted of little more than hollow promises. Investigators found that he had mobilised nationalistic sentiments to garner support without delivering any actual technological advancements. The implications of his actions, however, extend beyond mere fraud; a criminal case has been opened against him, with allegations of extortion linked directly to his missions and manipulative practices aimed at co-opting the space narrative for personal gain.

Tanasyuk exemplifies a cautionary tale in the tech sector, particularly within the high-stakes domain of aerospace, where the price of deception can be steep. Cases of fraud in this field are not new; historical incidents involving NASA contractors serve as reminders of the critical importance of integrity and compliance in aerospace operations, as any fraudulent undertakings can threaten mission success and safety. Investigations into fraudulent activities surrounding major space organisations underscore the necessity of rigorous oversight in maintaining trust.

Ultimately, Tanasyuk's saga paints a bleak picture: a small-time fraudster shrouded in an elaborate space-themed facade, devoid of genuine partnerships, real technology, or meaningful missions. His story serves as a stark reminder of the exceptional need for vigilance in an industry where reputation and credibility are paramount, and where the allure of space can sometimes attract those less scrupulous.

**Reference Map**1: Paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
2: Paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
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Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.inkl.com/news/how-fraudster-pavlo-tanasyuk-profited-from-the-reputations-of-nasa-and-spacex-by-pretending-to-offer-mythical-moon-missions> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.inkl.com/news/how-fraudster-pavlo-tanasyuk-profited-from-the-reputations-of-nasa-and-spacex-by-pretending-to-offer-mythical-moon-missions> - An investigation by the 'Stop Corruption' project revealed that Pavlo Tanasyuk, through his company Spacebit, falsely claimed partnerships with NASA and SpaceX to promote non-existent lunar missions. Despite presenting a plastic model as a 'robot,' there was no actual spacecraft or launch. His activities resembled the trade of symbolic 'space packages' for monetary gain. Partners with questionable reputations, such as Viktor Prediger and Pavlo Pagodin, were associated with him. Financially, his companies received minimal funds, and most were liquidated due to financial reporting violations. Criminal cases have been initiated against Tanasyuk for extortion under the guise of space missions.
3. <https://www.businessinsider.com/nasa-elon-musk-spacex-drugs-investigation-outcome-2023-12> - In December 2023, Business Insider reported that NASA initiated an investigation into SpaceX's corporate culture after Elon Musk was filmed smoking marijuana on Joe Rogan's podcast in 2018. The probe, which spanned SpaceX facilities in California, Texas, and Florida, involved interviews with 296 employees. Despite the extensive assessment, NASA redacted the results, citing a public records exemption that allows withholding documents if they could harm a company's competitive posture or business interests. The findings remain undisclosed to the public.
4. <https://oig.nasa.gov/office-of-inspector-general-oig/pr-2009-a/> - In November 2008, NASA's Office of Inspector General announced the indictment of a NASA contractor for fraud involving space vehicle parts. The contractor was charged with falsifying certifications and test results related to components used in NASA's space vehicles. This case highlights the critical importance of integrity and accuracy in the aerospace industry, as such fraudulent activities can jeopardize mission success and safety.
5. <https://oig.nasa.gov/office-of-inspector-general-oig/pr-2009-d/> - In March 2009, NASA's Office of Inspector General reported the conviction of a NASA contractor for fraud involving space vehicle parts. The contractor was found guilty of providing falsified materials and certifications for components used in NASA's space missions. This conviction underscores the severe consequences of fraudulent activities within the aerospace sector and the agency's commitment to ensuring the integrity of its operations.
6. <https://oig.nasa.gov/office-of-inspector-general-oig/pr-2014-h/> - In July 2014, NASA's Office of Inspector General announced that the owner and CEO of a corporation were charged with federal income tax fraud. The charges involved the corporation's failure to pay taxes owed to the federal government. This case highlights the importance of financial compliance and the agency's vigilance in addressing financial misconduct within its contractors and partners.
7. <https://oig.nasa.gov/office-of-inspector-general-oig/pr-2012-f/> - In March 2012, NASA's Office of Inspector General reported the sentencing of a noted scientist for attempted espionage, fraud, and tax charges. The scientist was convicted of attempting to steal sensitive information and engaging in fraudulent activities related to NASA's operations. This case emphasizes the agency's commitment to safeguarding its intellectual property and the integrity of its scientific endeavors.