

# China says completes 3D moon map

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China has completed a high-resolution, three-dimensional map of the entire surface of the moon, in an important step towards a future lunar landing, an expert involved in the project said Tuesday.

After putting its first man into space in 2003 -- only the third nation to do so -- China is aiming to launch an unmanned rover on the moon's surface by 2012 and a manned mission to the [moon](#) by around 2020.

The map was made using image data obtained by a camera on Chang'e 1, China's first [lunar probe](#), Liu Xianlin of the Chinese Academy of Surveying and Mapping, who headed the project review panel, told AFP.

Liu called the achievement an important step for China along the path

towards a future [lunar landing](#).

"This map finishes the primary prospecting of the moon and lays the foundation for further surveys such as choosing the landing point or the path of a satellite," he told AFP.

Liu said China's map of the moon was the world's highest-resolution lunar chart. Japan had also launched a lunar probe, but either had not completed its own map or had not yet publicised it, he said.

The United States, meanwhile, sent a probe in the 1990s but the accuracy of their map was not as good, according to Liu.

Chen Yongqi, a professor in the department of land surveying and geoinformatics at Hong Kong Polytechnic University, said the map would help China understand the structure of the moon.

"Another objective is to understand the soil of the [lunar surface](#) and mineral distribution," he said.

China plans to launch a second lunar probe in October 2010, which will generate a [map](#) of an even higher resolution, according to Liu.

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