

# China plans to approve Nokia's web mapping service

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A sales assistant holds up a Nokia handset at a store in Hong Kong in June 2009. China plans to give mobile phone giant Nokia a licence to offer online mapping services, making it the first foreign firm to be approved since new rules were unveiled in June, an official said Wednesday.

China plans to give mobile phone giant Nokia a licence to offer online mapping services, making it the first foreign firm to be approved since new rules were unveiled in June, an official said Wednesday.

The official at the State Bureau of Surveying and Mapping told AFP that Nokia's application to operate its Ovi Map service would be given the green light, though final approval was still subject to public opinion.

"If there is any objection to the published results, we will organise an investigation. Otherwise we will formally approve the companies'

applications," said the official, who declined to be named.

As many as 26 companies have been given preliminary approval so far, state media reported this week.

The official said Internet titans [Google](#) and Microsoft had not submitted applications to provide mapping services in [China](#) in the world's biggest online market.

Under new regulations introduced in June, all firms providing Internet map and location services in China are required to apply for approval from the State Bureau of Surveying and Mapping, state media said last month.

Authorities will be allowed to shut down the service if providers do not get a licence by the end of this year, the China Daily said.

Foreign firms wanting to provide mapping and surveying services in China are required to set up joint ventures or partnerships with local firms.

A spokeswoman for Google was not immediately available to comment Wednesday, but she said last month that the web giant was examining the regulations to understand their impact on its mapping services.

China last week renewed Google's licence to operate in China following a standoff between the US Internet giant and [Beijing](#) over state censorship.

Google, its Chinese rival search engine [Baidu](#) and another local company DDMAP currently account for more than half of the online mapping market in China, the China Daily said.

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