

US-Japan satellite to study global rain, snow

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A new satellite built by NASA and its Japanese counterpart is poised to launch next month on a mission to study rain and snow around the world, the US space agency said Monday.

The Global Precipitation Measurement (GPM) Core Observatory aims to help scientists peer inside clouds and improve weather and [climate forecasts](#).

The mission is "the first coordinated international satellite network to provide near real-time observations of rain and snow every three hours anywhere on the globe," NASA said.

"The data will be used by scientists to study [climate change](#), freshwater resources, floods and droughts, and hurricane formation and tracking," it added.

The satellite has been flown from the United States to Japan, and is scheduled for launch from JAXA's Tanegashima Space Center on February 27 between 1807 GMT and 2007 GMT, or in the early hours of February 28 Japan time, NASA said.

The GPM Core Observatory will orbit the Earth at a height of 253 miles (407 kilometers).

It is carrying a Japanese-designed dual-frequency precipitation radar and a US-built microwave imager (GMI).

Beginning about two months after launch, its data will be conveyed to NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center in Maryland and distributed online.

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