

NASA Plans to Mine the Moon

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NASA has plans to begin mining for rare earths and iron on the moon in the early 2030s, Reuters has [reported](#), citing a rocket scientist from the agency.

According to Gerald Sanders, NASA will initially explore the development of oxygen and water on the Moon and will later consider exploring iron ore and rare earths mining.

"We are trying to invest in the exploration phase, understand the resources... to (lower) risk such that external investment makes sense that could lead to development and production," Sanders said at a mining industry event in Australia.

The plans are part of the Artemis mission that NASA is organizing, that aims to gather knowledge from the second visit to the Moon that the agency could then use for Mars, Sanders explained.

He added that one of the purposes of the mission is to quantify the resources available on the Moon so NASA can attract investment in its exploration efforts.

"We are literally just scratching the surface," Sanders said, referring to the Moon's potential resources.

NASA will send a test drill to the Moon's surface at the end of this month, Sanders also said, adding that large-scale excavation activities are scheduled for 2032. A processing plant for whatever resources are discovered by that year is also in the plans.

The initial focus of the Moon mission, however, will be oxygen—it would be crucial for making the rest of NASA's plans realistic.

"This ... is a key step towards establishing a sustainable human presence on the moon, as well (as) supporting future missions to Mars," Sanders told the conference.

NASA sees the Artemis mission as a stepping stone on the way to conquering Mars. The lunar project also aims to establish a long-term human presence on the Moon, to exploit its mineral resources.

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