



A Potential Role for smallsats and Cubesats in Lunar Exploration

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The Moon is an important exploration destination for ESA, which is currently engaged in activities to access and exploit the Moon through developments in future human exploration systems and precursor robotic surface missions. However, recent major advancements in Smallsat and Cubesat technologies, and their application to fields such as Earth imaging and atmospheric science, has opened the possibility of utilising these smaller, lower cost platforms beyond LEO and potentially at the Moon.

ESA is interested in understanding how emerging Smallsat & Cubesat instrument and platform technology could be applied to Lunar Exploration, particularly in the fields of technology demonstration and investigations which can be precursors to longer term exploration activities. Lunar Cubesats can offer a means of access to the Moon, which complements larger ESA-led opportunities on international surface missions and via future human exploration systems. In this talk ESA will outline its current objectives in Lunar Exploration and highlight potential future opportunities for Smallsat and Cubesat platforms to play a role.