

# UK space company to establish link with the far side of the Moon



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The satellite, named Lunar Pathfinder, will be vital for the planned return missions to the Moon. Built by Surrey Satellite Technology Ltd (SSTL) and supported by £11.6 million in UK Space Agency funding via the European Space Agency (ESA), the satellite will also allow greater freedom for rovers operating on the far side of the Moon, allowing them to manoeuvre out of sight of their lander.

Science Minister Amanda Solloway said:

Surrey Satellite Technology has taken Britain's expertise in navigation and telecommunications to the next level. Having already delivered state-of-the-art communications services to the International Space Station, UK technology will now help sustainable return to the Moon for the first time in nearly 50 years.

By investing in our space sector, including £11.6m today for the Lunar Pathfinder satellite, we are helping UK companies to support major international missions, firmly securing our place as a world-leading space nation.

Due to the proximity of the Lunar Pathfinder spacecraft to Earth, the service will also facilitate missions on the near side of the Moon, providing customers with faster transfers of data while keeping their costs down.

In May 2021, the UK Space Agency announced that SSTL, along with Inmarsat and MDA UK, had been selected to lead a study under ESA's Moonlight initiative. The study set out the infrastructure required for the consortium to deliver a constellation of Lunar communication and navigation satellites.

Front Left: Phil Brownnett, SSTL MD. Front Right: David Parker, ESA  
ESA's Director of Human and Robotic Exploration Back L-R, Sir Martin Sweeting, SSTL's Executive Chairman, Amanda Solloway, ESA DG Josef Aschbacher.

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