



Scientific Objectives and Payloads of Chinese First Mars Exploration

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Abstract

China plans to implement the first Mars exploration mission in 2020. It will conduct global and comprehensive exploration of Mars and high precision and fine resolution detection of key areas on Mars through orbiting, landing and roving. The scientific objectives include studying the Martian morphology and geological structure characteristics, studying the soil characteristics and the water-ice distribution on the Martian surface, studying the material composition on the Martian surface, studying the atmosphere ionosphere and surface climate and environmental characteristics of Mars, studying the physical field and internal structure of Mars and the Martian magnetic field characteristics. The mission equips 12 scientific payloads to achieve these scientific objectives. This article mainly introduces the scientific objectives, exploration task, and scientific payloads.

Key words

First Mars exploration, Scientific objectives, Scientific payloads

1. Overview of the First Mars Exploration

The first Mars exploration mission of China plans to implement orbiting, landing and roving on Mars by a single launch in 2020. It will conduct global and comprehensive exploration of Mars by orbiting detection, and accomplish area survey of Mars surface by roving detection. The mission is composed of five parts: probe system, rocket system, launch system, telemetry, tracking and command system and ground research and application system. The mission officially starts in Jan 2016, the first launch window is around July 2020.

The probe for the first Mars exploration mission is comprised of an orbiter and a lander/rover. The orbiter carries the landing/roving probe to complete the flight process of the Earth-Mars transfer and the Mars capture and orbit maneuver. After releasing the landing/roving probe will enter the Martian atmosphere at a preset attitude, land safely on the Martian surface after multiple deceleration stages and release the Mars rover for subsequent scientific exploration on the Martian surface.

And the orbiter will then enter a higher orbit for relay communications.

After the landing/roving probe land softly on the Martian surface, the Mars rover will then leave the landing platform and begin its scientific exploration. Initially, the primary work of the orbiter is to provide a relay communication link to the Mars rover while performing scientific exploration. After operating for 90 Martian days, the orbiter will maneuver to enter a remote sensing orbit. The primary work of the orbiter then changes to scientific exploration while maintaining a relay communication link to the Mars rover. During the mission, the ground application system will receive scientific exploration data and perform data analysis and scientific research.

2. Scientific Objectives and Scientific Payloads

This mission will perform global and general exploration of Mars using orbiter exploration. By roving ex-

ploration, this mission will conduct detailed investigations of key areas with high accuracy and resolution. Specifically, the scientific objectives include the following.

(1) It will study the morphology and geological structure of Mars. It will detect global topography features of Mars, and obtain the high precision topography data of typical area, study the evolution and the cause of Mars geological structure. Medium resolution camera and high resolution camera are configured to accomplish the scientific exploration of studying morphology and geological structure of Mars. Medium resolution camera can obtain about 100m spatial resolution data of Mars global topography features. High resolution camera can obtain high resolution image for detailed investigation of the key area at landing site, geomorphic feature data with a spatial resolution about meters. The data of the two payloads can be used to conduct a research of the Mars geological features forming process, such as water flow, volcanic landforms and wind erosion, impact crater landform, polar glacier geomorphology, and so on.

(2) It will study Mars surface soil characteristics and water-ice distribution. It will detect Mars soil types, weathering and deposition feature and their global distribution. It will search for water-ice and study Mars soil layered structure profile. Mars Subsurface Exploration Radar on the orbiter and Subsurface Detection Radar on the rover are configured to accomplish the scientific exploration of soil feature and water-ice distribution. It will detect the Martian surface and underground water-ice by the dual-polarization echo characteristics of radar, and solve the problem of multiplicity in water-ice detection. By using fully polarimetric radar, combined with orbiting detection, it will further the scientific understanding of Mars soil structure and ice water detection.

(3) It will study Mars surface material composition. It will recognize rock types on Mars surface, detect secondary mineral on Mars surface and analyze surface mineral composition. Mars Mineralogy Spectrometer, Multispectral Camera and Mars Surface Composition Detection Package are configured to accomplish the scientific exploration of Mars surface material composition. Using the spectrum data of visible spectrum and near-infrared from Mars Mineralogy Spectrometer, the research of Mars surface material composition can be conducted; Using Mars Surface Composition Detection Package and Multispectral Camera, Mars surface ele-

ment, mineral and rock types can be studied. Combined with ancient lakes, ancient channels, alluvial continents and other aqueous landscape, it will search carbonate minerals or weathering mineral such as hematite, layered silicate, hydrate sulfates, perchlorate minerals, and detect the effect of water deterioration on these minerals, and establish a relationship between the aqueous phase environment and secondary mineral species on the surface of Mars

(4) It will study Mars atmospheric ionosphere and surface climate and environmental characteristics. It will detect Mars space environment and air temperature, air pressure, wind field on the surface of Mars, and conduct the research of Mars ionosphere profiles and the seasonal variation of the weather. Mars Weather Station, Mars Ions and Neutral Particle Analyzer and Mars Energetic Particles Analyzer are configured to detect Mars atmosphere, ionosphere and surface weather and environmental characteristics. Mars Weather Station can measure air temperature, pressure, wind speed and wind direction on surface of Mars; Mars Ions and Neutral Particle Analyzer and Mars Energetic Particles Analyzer can detect Mars ionosphere and interplanetary environment. Mars Ions and Neutral Particles Analyzer also can measure ion flux in the Mars space environment, distinguish main ion species, obtain the density, speed, temperature and other physical parameters of the ion species; also, it can measure flux of neutral energetic particles, distinguish H, He, O and other major neutral particle species; Mars Energetic Particles Analyzer can obtain energy spectrum, flux and composition data of energetic electron, proton, alpha particle and other ions.

(5) It will study Mars physical fields and internal structure, detect Mars magnetic field characteristics and research the history of early geological evolution and internal mass distribution and gravity field of Mars. Mars Magnetic Field Observation Station and Subsurface Detection Radar on the rover, Mars Magnetometer and Mars Subsurface Exploration Radar on the orbiter are configured to detect Mars physical field and internal structure. Mars Magnetic Field Observation Station can detect magnetic field on Mars surface and identify magnetic index. Cooperating with Mars Magnetometer on orbiter, it can detect Mars space magnetic field, invert Mars ionosphere currents and determine parameters such as Mars ionosphere conductivity. Using natural magnetic field jump, it can detect internal large scale configuration and local structure, invert the conductivity

in depth, thickness of the spheres and the temperature of Mars.

Scientific objectives and corresponding scientific payloads are shown as Figure1.

3. Observation Tasks and Main Specifications of Scientific Payloads

The probe for the first Mars exploration is comprised of an orbiter and a lander/rover. The scientific payloads installed on the orbiter include Medium-resolution Camera, High-resolution Camera, Mars Subsurface Ex-

ploration Radar, Mars Mineralogy Spectrometer, Mars Magnetometer, Mars Ions and Neutral Particle Analyzer, Mars Energetic Particles Analyzer. The scientific payloads installed on the rover include Multispectral Camera, Subsurface Detection Radar, Mars Surface Composition Detection Package, Mars Magnetic Field Observation Station, Mars Climate Station. There are two payload controllers installed on the orbiter and the rover respectively, the controlling payload power supply, commands, data acquisition and data processing. Observation tasks and main specifications of scientific payloads are shown as table1.

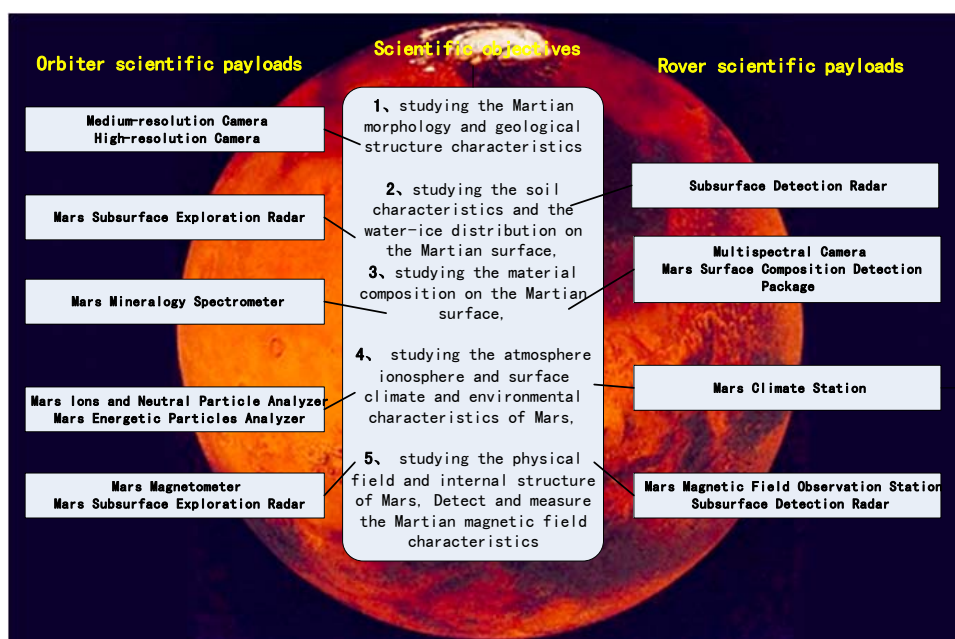


Fig.1 Scientific objectives corresponding scientific payloads

Table 1 Detection tasks and main specifications of scientific payloads

Scientific Payloads	Detection Tasks	Main specifications
1 Medium-resolution Camera	It will image Mars surface and obtain Mars global remote sensing image. It will image Mars topography and landscape, including Mars surface geological structure and topography and landscape.	Spectral range: visible; Color: standard R,G,B Resolution: better than 100m@400km; Imaging width: 400km@400km; Effective pixels: 4096×3072.
2 High-resolution Camera	It will obtain elaborated image on Mars surface key area. It will carry out high resolution imaging and detailed survey on areas which have dynamic change feature such as dunes, glaciers, avalanches, observe Mars surface topography and landscape. It will give high resolution images on dry river bed, sedimentary rock strata districts where may exist water, and typical geomorphic features such as impact crater, volcano, canyon, hillock, rift valley edge, and other geomorphic features with special significance. It will recognize characteristic geomorphic features such as fluvial landscape, volcanic landscape, impact crater and wind-erosion landscape, for researches on Mars surface topography and landscape and geological structure.	Pixel resolution (at 265km orbit altitude): Panchromatic: better than 2.5m, local key area better than 0.5m; Color: better than 10m, local key area better than 2.0m; Coverage width (at 265m orbit altitude): 9km.

Scientific Payloads	Detection Tasks	Main specifications
3 Mars Subsurface Exploration Radar	It will obtain the surface and the subsurface radar echo data, detect Mars subsurface structure and underground water-ice distribution, On earth-Mars transfer orbit, it will detect interplanetary very low frequency radio spectrum.	Frequency: 10-20MHz, 30-50MHz; Receiver sensitivity: ≤ -87 dBm; Detecting depth: Mars subsurface structure 100m(earth, $\epsilon\gamma=3.0\sim 4.0$), Mars polar ice, ~ 100 m(ice, $\epsilon\gamma\sim 3.0$); Thickness resolution: meter level
4 Mars Mineralogy Spectrometer	It will analyze mineral composition and distribution. It will research Mars integral chemical composition and chemical revolution history. It will analyze Mars resources and distribution.	Spectral region: visible-near infrared, 0.45-1.05 μ m; intermediate infrared and near-infrared, 1.00-3.40 μ m Spectral resolution: visible-near infrared, better than 10nm; intermediate infrared and near-infrared, better than 12nm@1.0-2.0 μ m, better than 25nm@2.0-3.4 μ m.
5 Mars Magnetometer	It will detect Mars space magnetic field environment. Cooperating with Mars Magnetic Field Observation Station, invert currents of Martian ionosphere and research characteristics such as conductivity of Martian ionosphere By detection of Mars magnetic field and Solar wind magnetic field, it will research interaction between Martian ionosphere, magnetosheath and the solar wind	Measurement range: ± 2000 nT Noise level: ≤ 0.01 nT/ $\sqrt{\text{Hz}}$ Resolution: better than 0.01nT Precision: 0.1nT
6 Mars Ion and Neutral Particle Analyzer	It will detect particle features of Mars plasma, to understand the escape of Martian atmosphere It will study the interaction mechanism of solar wind and Martian atmosphere, and accelerate mechanism of neutral particles near the Martian bow shock	Low energy ions: Energy range: 5eV~25KeV Energy resolution($\Delta E/E$): 15% Mass: 1~40 amu Field of view: 90 $^{\circ}$ \times 360 $^{\circ}$ Angular resolution: 11.2 $^{\circ}$ \times 22.5 $^{\circ}$ Low energy neutral particles: Energy range: 50eV~3KeV Energy resolution($\Delta E/E$): 100% Mass: 1~32amu Field of view: 15 $^{\circ}$ \times 160 $^{\circ}$ Angular resolution: 10 $^{\circ}$ \times 25 $^{\circ}$
7 Mars Energetic Particle Analyzer	It will research the character and changes of energy spectrum of energy particles, elementary composition and flux in the near-Mars space environment and earth-Mars transfer orbit It will mapping spatial distribution of the energetic particle radiation from different species on Mars global and earth-Mars transfer orbit. Together with Mars Ion and Neutral Particle Analyzer and Mars Magnetometer, it will study the relationship between near the energetic particle radiation and atmosphere, SEP event's influence on Mars atmosphere, particle acceleration, transport and escape process	Energy range: Electron: 0.1~12MeV (≥ 16 channels, logarithmic division) Proton: 2~100MeV (≥ 16 channels, logarithmic division) α -particle, heavy ion: 25~300 MeV (≥ 16 channels, logarithmic division) Energy resolution($\Delta E/E$): 15%; Flux range: 0~10 ⁵ cm ⁻² s ⁻¹ Species: H~Fe(1 $\leq Z \leq 26$) Heavy ion mass resolution($\Delta m/m$): $\leq 25\%$ ($Z \leq 9$, 25~300 MeV) $\leq 25\%$ ($10 \leq Z \leq 26$, 100~300MeV) $\leq 60\%$ ($10 \leq Z \leq 26$, 25~100MeV)
8 Multispectral Camera	It will obtain multispectral image of landing and roving area It will obtain the material type distribution on Mars surface	Spectral range(nm): 9 spectrum, 480(20), 525(20), 650(12), 700(15), 800(25), 900(30), 950(50), 1000(50) Color: multispectral Normal imaging distance: 1.5m- ∞ Pixel: 2048 \times 2048.
9 Subsurface Detection Radar	It will detect roving area of Mars surface soil thickness and ice structure, obtain Mars surface and subsurface ultra-wideband full polarized echo data It will detect roving area subsurface structure, obtain subsurface geologic structure data	First channel Center frequency: 55MHz Operation bandwidth: 40MHz Resolution of ice thickness: meter level Investigation depth ≥ 100 m (ice, $\epsilon\gamma=3.0$) ≥ 10 m (soil, $\epsilon\gamma=3.0\sim 4.0$) Second channel Center frequency: 1300 MHz Bandwidth: 1000 MHz Resolution of thickness:cm level, Detection depth: ≥ 10 m(ice, $\epsilon\gamma=3.0$) ≥ 3 m(soil, $\epsilon\gamma=3.0\sim 4.0$)

Continued 1

Scientific Payloads	Detection Tasks	Main specifications
10 Mars Surface Composition Detection Package	It will analyze chemical elements of Mars surface material It will analyze Mars surface mineral and analyze rocks.	LIBS detection: Number of elements: ≥ 10 (Si/Al/Fe/Mg/Ca/Na/O/C/H/Mn/Ti/S, etc.) Detection distance: 2–5m (best detection distance), up to 10m Micro image Angle resolution: $\leq 100\mu\text{rad}$ (0.20mm@2m, 0.50mm@5m) Short-wavelength infrared spectroscopy: Spectral range: 850–2400nm Spectral resolution: $\leq 12\text{nm}$ Field of view: $\geq 1\text{mrad}$
11 Mars Magnetic Field Observation Station	It will detect Mars magnetic field in landing area, determine Mars magnetic field index Cooperating with orbit Mars space magnetic field measurement, invert Mars ionosphere currents, study Mars ionosphere characteristics such as conductivity It will detect Mars internal local structure by using natural magnetic field jump	Measure range: $\pm 2000\text{nT}$ Resolution: better than 0.01nT Noise level: $0.01\text{nT}/\sqrt{\text{Hz}}$ Magnetometer stability: $\leq 0.01\text{nT}/^\circ\text{C}$
12 Mars Climate Station	It will conduct in-situ detection on Mars surface wind field parameters It will monitor the sound of Mars surface It will measure Mars surface environment temperature and air pressure	Temperature Range: -120°C to $+50^\circ\text{C}$ Resolution: 0.1°C Pressure Range: 1–1500Pa Resolution: 0.1Pa Wind speed Range: 0–70m/s Resolution: 0.1m/s Wind direction Range: 0° – 360° Resolution: 5° Sound Frequency range: 20Hz–2.5kHz; 2.5–20kHz Sensitivity: better than 50mV/Pa Dynamic range: $\geq 90\text{dB}$

4. Summary

The Chinese first Mars exploration mission will implement orbiting, landing and roving on Mars by a single

lunch. Scientific payloads will conduct global and comprehensive orbiting detection and regional roving detection on Mars surface. During the mission, the ground application system will receive science data and perform data analysis and scientific research.