

# China to 'plant' potatoes on the moon



Chinese scientists conduct experiments on the cultivation of potato seeds.  
[File photo/163.com]

Scientists in China have unveiled multiple tasks they plan to carry out as part of the lunar exploration program at the just-concluded Global Space Exploration Conference (GLEX 2017) in Beijing.

Among them, the creation of a “mini ecosystem on the moon’s surface” is due to be led by researchers with Chongqing University, reports the Chongqing Morning Post.

The “mini ecosystem” will actually be contained in an 18X16cm cylinder.

It’s due to be put on the moon’s surface as part the Chang’e-4 mission in 2018, according to Professor Xie Gengxin, head designer of the project.

Potato seeds and the larvae of insects, including the silkworm, will be inside the cylinder.

The goal is to determine whether the potatoes can grow on the moon, and

whether the insects can survive.

If they can, this will be major step toward ultimately putting a fully-functioning human colony on Mars.

The project stood out from the 257 experimental ideas put forward to China's lunar exploration program.

Scientists and researchers from 28 different universities in China are now working on designing the hardware needed to carry out the various tests.