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### Dutch technology for NASA's Mars mission testing

Lightweight soil survey technology from Dutch firm A.P. van den Berg has been purchased by both NASA and the German Aerospace Center DLR in their preparations leading up to a 2016 mission to Mars. NASA's 'InSight' mission to the red planet will investigate the Martian surface and sub-surface for approximately two years in order to better understand the planet's evolution. By using sophisticated geophysical instruments, InSight will delve deep beneath the surface of Mars, detecting the fingerprints of the processes of terrestrial planet formation, as well as measuring the planet's "vital signs". DLR, in Bremen, Germany, have developed a special measuring instrument named 'HP3' - a fully-automatic mole - an instrument container that is driven into the Martian subsurface by an electromechanical impact mechanism - that measures the soil's thermo-physical and electrical properties. Scientists will be able to interpret the gathered data to understand the planet's thermal evolution, its interior structure and activity, and the geological stratification. NASA and DLR will conduct extensive testing at their respective locations over the coming years. A test setup at both locations features sand from the Mojave desert in order to approximate the Martian soil conditions. The in-situ soil equipment from A.P. van den Berg, that is based on Cone Penetration Testing (CPT), will be used to correlate the soil test beds at both locations before and after every HP3 test, so that the comparative research and data interpretation can be optimized.

Further information:

- [www.apvandenber.com](http://www.apvandenber.com)
- <http://insight.jpl.nasa.gov>