SpaceX aims for 2018 Mars

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (April 13, 2016) -- At a news conference Wednesday via live stream that was watched by 15,000 people online, Elon Musk, the company’s bill-
sionaire founder and chief executive officer, announced plans to send a Dragon capsule to land on the red planet by 2018. It would represent a big step toward Mars.

The founder and chief executive officer of SpaceX, a privately owned aerospace manufacturer and space transportation company, said he was not sure whether it would take place on the first attempt. "It’s not necessarily guaranteed to work," he said.

Musk said the Dragon capsule would be sent to Mars and stay there for about a year, before returning to Earth.

Musk revealed that SpaceX has received a fixed-price award from NASA to build the new rocket, called the SLS (Space Launch System), which will be used to carry astronauts to the moon.

The announcement comes as SpaceX is preparing to launch the Dragon capsule to the International Space Station (ISS) later this year.

Musk also said that SpaceX has received a new contract from NASA to deliver cargo to the ISS in the future.

"This is a very exciting time for us at SpaceX," said Musk. "We are making progress on our goal of sending humans to Mars."