

JAPAN

Providing Satellite Internet Services?

Photo by NASA on Unsplash

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INTERNET FREEDOM

Free

INTERNET PENETRATION

90%

FREQUENCY

C-band, Ku-Band, and Ka-band

This document provides basic information about legal aspects of satellite internet services when provision of these services is being considered. This fact sheet comprises general guidance and cannot be a replacement for legal advice.

OVERVIEW

The contents of this factsheet pertain to the laws, regulations, and guidelines that prescribe the norms and obligations governing the provision and operation of satellite internet services in Japan.

RELEVANT LAWS AND REGULATIONS

The legal framework governing internet access comprises several key statutes in Japan, including the *Telecommunications Business Act (1984)*, *Radio Act (1950)*, *Protection of Personal Information Act (2003)*, *Provider Liability Limitation Act (2001)*, *Basic Space Act (2008)*, *Space Activities Act (2016)*, *Satellite Remote Sensing Act (2016)*, *Space Resources Act (2021)*, *Basic Act on the Formation of a Digital Society (2021)*, *Act on the Establishment of the Digital Agency (2021)*, and *Act on the Arrangement of Related Laws for the Formation of a Digital Society (2021)*.

REGULATORY BODIES

The **Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC)** regulates telecommunications, internet, and broadcasting services. The Prime Minister has the authority to grant permission for the use of satellites.

ARE THERE INTERNET RESTRICTIONS?

Japan has a liberal internet access environment with minimal restrictions, disruptions, or censorship of online content. It encourages self-regulation among telecommunications operators and online users.

END USERS' LICENSES

An end user can approach any service provider that offers satellite internet access and subscribe to the service. This is guided by the contract between the service provider and end user.

TYPES OF LICENSES

To provide internet access using satellites, the following licenses/authorisation need to be obtained:

- a) License to operate a telecommunications business:** to carry on telecommunications business, entities are required to either register or notify the MIC, depending on the scale of the business. The validity is not stipulated under the Telecommunications Business Act.
- b) License to launch, operate or control a satellite within Japan:** permission for this license is usually granted by the Prime Minister. The validity period is not stipulated under the Space Activities Act.
- c) License to use radio frequency for the communications system:** a satellite operator would need to be assigned a frequency spectrum and obtain a radio license from the MIC. This license is valid for 5 years.

LEGAL NATURE OF SATELLITE INTERNET

Internet service provisioning is a part of telecommunications as it involves sending and receiving information through various mediums, such as terrestrial (wired and wireless) and satellite networks. Telecommunication services can be provided through both terrestrial infrastructure and satellite infrastructure.

ELIGIBILITY FOR LICENSING

Generally, any person, who meets the requirements, is To provide internet services in Japan, an internet service provider must meet the licensing requirements for the particular service intended to be offered.