

# SRI LANKA

## Providing Satellite Internet Services?

Photo by NASA on Unsplash

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### INTERNET FREEDOM

Partly Free

### INTERNET PENETRATION

35%

### 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 Sri Lanka.

### RELEVANT LAWS AND REGULATIONS

The legal framework governing internet access comprises several key statutes in Sri Lanka, including the *Telecommunications Act and Radio Frequency Regulations*.

### REGULATORY BODIES

The **Telecommunications Regulatory Commission of Sri Lanka (TRCSL)** is in charge of regulating telecommunications and internet services. The **Minister of Telecommunication, Digital Infrastructure, and Foreign Employment** is responsible for granting licenses to operate telecommunication systems, which includes internet service provisioning.

There is no separate agency assigned to regulate satellite internet services, as they are considered to fall under the category of telecommunications services.

### ARE THERE INTERNET RESTRICTIONS?

In the past, the government has imposed internet blackouts lasting up to 13 hours as a means of restricting access to the internet. There have also been cases where the government temporarily blocked access to social media and communication platforms in order to suppress protests from citizens demanding political and economic reforms.

### ELIGIBILITY FOR LICENSING

As long as an entity is considered a corporation, they can apply for licenses. Also, foreign corporations are allowed to establish subsidiaries in Sri Lanka with no ownership restrictions and obtain the necessary licenses.

### TYPES OF LICENSES

The following licenses are required to provide internet access using satellite:

- License to operate a Telecommunications System:** the two forms of this license that are relevant to satellite internet access are mobile operator license which is valid for 10 years, and an Internet service provider license which is valid for 5 years.
- Radio Communication License:** using frequency for satellite services requires this license with one year validity.

### LEGAL NATURE OF SATELLITE INTERNET

Sri Lanka does not have legislation specifically for regulating satellite internet access. However, the Telecommunications Act does address the radio frequency spectrum, which is crucial for geostationary orbit satellites.

Up until now, satellites have mainly been used for broadcasting and remote sensing purposes. Telecommunications services, such as internet access, are also provided through the use of geostationary orbit satellites.

### END USERS' LICENSES

An end user can subscribe to satellite internet access by approaching any service provider that offers this service. According to the official website of TRCSL, there are three (3) licensed internet service providers operating in Sri Lanka: Dialog Broadband Networks (Pvt.) Limited, TATA Communications Lanka Limited, and Lanka Education and Research Network. However, there is no available information on whether these providers use satellite infrastructure for connectivity.