

## Satellite Internet Access Guide: Sri Lanka

*October 2023*

### Using this Guide

**Question:** This column contains the relevant question to be addressed under (Response).

**Response:** Information addressing the question identified under (Question) is contained in this column.

**Additional Information:** This column contains any clarification or added information necessary to better understand the information under (Response).

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### Abbreviations for Legislation

- Telecommunications Act (No. 25 of 1991), as amended by Act No. 27 of 1996  
(**Telecommunications Act**)
- Telecommunications (Radio Frequency Licence) Regulations (No. 2 of 1996)  
(**Radio Frequency Regulations**)

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S/N	Question	Response	Additional Information
1	Does the member state have law(s) relating to internet service provisioning and access?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Telecommunications Act</a></li> <li><a href="#">Radio Frequency Regulations</a></li> </ol>	
2	Are there restrictions on use or access to internet?	The government has in the past <a href="#">restricted</a> access to the internet with the blackouts extending up to 13 hours. There have also been instances when the government briefly blocked access to social media and communications platforms to repress protests from citizens calling for political and economic reforms, sometimes culminating in the arrest of online activists and journalists.	
3	Is satellite a medium used to provide internet access in the member state?	Yes. While satellites are mainly used for broadcasting and remote sensing activities in Sri Lanka, telecommunications services including internet access are also provided using geostationary orbit satellites as provided under Section 10 of the Telecommunications Act.	

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4	Are there existing legislations for satellite internet access?	<p>Sri Lanka does not current have a standalone legislation relating to satellite internet access. However, since Sri Lanka is party to the <a href="#">Outer Space Treaty 1967 and Liability Convention 1972</a> (2 out of the 5 major space treaties), this could serve as a foundation for it to evolve appropriate legal framework on use of satellites, especially for internet access.</p> <p>Notwithstanding, Section 10(1) of the Telecommunications Act contain provisions relating to management and control of radio frequency spectrum for geostationary orbit satellites.</p>	
5	Which agency is responsible for regulating internet service provisioning including satellite internet provisioning?	<p>The <a href="#">Telecommunications Regulatory Commission of Sri Lanka</a> (TRCSL) regulates telecommunications, and internet services, while the Minister in charge of telecommunications under Section 5(b) and 17 of the Telecommunications Act is responsible for granting licenses to operate telecommunication systems (including internet service provisioning). The TRCSL plays an advisory role to the Minister and may, pursuant to Section 17(2), recommend the grant of a license in this regard. The <a href="#">current title</a> is Minister of Telecommunication, Digital Infrastructure and Foreign Employment.</p>	There is no separate agency responsible for regulating satellite internet services as they are considered part of telecommunications services.

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6	Who can provide internet service using satellites?	Any person that meets the licensing criteria for the particular service intended to be offered. <i>See No. 7 below.</i>	
7	Is a license or permission required to use, operate, or control satellite for internet access?	Yes. To use a satellite for internet access, a <b>license to operate a telecommunications system</b> as well as a <b>radio communication license</b> is required.	
8	What is the procedure for obtaining these licenses/permits?	The procedure for obtaining a <b>license to operate a telecommunications system (including internet services)</b> is contained under Section 17 of the Telecommunications Act. Some of the requirements include:  1. The application must be in writing and addressed to the TRCSL.	

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		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. TRCSL must be satisfied that the applicant can operate the telecommunication system for which the license is required, before recommending the grant of a license to the Minister.</li> <li>3. The license is then issued once payment of the license fee is made by the applicant.</li> <li>4. The license contains all the terms and conditions relevant to the grant.</li> </ol> <p>Under Section 10(1), the TRCSL is responsible for assigning, managing, and controlling use of radiofrequency spectrum, a necessary resource for satellite communications. The <a href="#">procedure</a> for applying for a <b>radio communication license for satellite service</b> is provided by TRCSL. In this regard, it has an <a href="#">application form</a> specific to use of frequency for satellite service. Some of the technical information required to be submitted as part of the application process include site details (address, longitude, and latitude), type of terminal, frequency band, name of connected satellite, antenna diameter, etc. Also relevant is the Radio Frequency Regulations is also relevant.</p>	
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9	What is the validity period for these licenses/permits?	<p>A mobile operator license is valid for 10 years, while an internet service provider license is granted for a 5-year period. There is no provision either in the Telecommunications Act or the license document that has license extension or renewal provisions.</p> <p>The validity period for a radio frequency spectrum is 1 year.</p>	
10	What are the technical requirements for use of satellites for internet access?	<p>According to the <a href="#">national frequency allocation table</a>, mobile satellite services are operated using the following frequency bands: 400MHz, 1.5GHz, 2.1GHz, 14GHz, 15GHz, 17GHz, 18GHz, 29GHz, 30GHz, as well as other extremely high frequencies, while fixed satellite services are carried out on the following frequency band: 3.5GHz, 4.5GHz, 5GHz, 5.9GHz, 7GHz, 8GHz, 20GHz, 24GHz, 27GHz, 29GHz, 30GHz, 40GHz, 43GHz, 50GHz, as well as other extremely high frequencies.</p>	
11	Are there existing (or planned) satellite internet providers operating in this economy?	<p>No database containing the list of satellite internet providers operating in Sri Lanka is published on TRCSL's website.</p> <p>Notwithstanding, based on desk research carried out, the following companies (though</p>	

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		<p>not an exhaustive list) provide internet connectivity using satellites:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <a href="#">LankaCom</a></li> <li>2. <a href="#">Syntelix</a></li> <li>3. <a href="#">BusinessCom Networks</a></li> </ol> <p>Furthermore, according to the official website of TRCSL, there are three (3) <a href="#">licensed internet service providers</a> operating in Sri Lanka namely: Dialog Broadband Networks (Pvt.) Limited, TATA Communications Lanka Limited, and Lanka Education and Research Network. However, there is no information on their use of satellite infrastructure for connectivity.</p>	
12	Does an end user require a license to access satellite for internet connectivity?	No. An end user can approach any service provider that offers satellite internet access and subscribe to the service.	