



Thailand's Draft Licensing Regime for Foreign Satellite Services Framework

The National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC) is preparing a new licensing framework for services using foreign satellites, aiming to modernize Thailand's satellite regulations and align them with global practices. The draft, already through public consultation, introduces three distinct licence categories: Gateway Licence (for facilities connecting to foreign satellites), Landing Rights Licence (for uplink and downlink signals within Thailand), and Service Licence (for commercial service provision through foreign satellites).

Unlike the current single-licence system, this structure provides clearer regulatory oversight. All licence holders must be Thai companies or joint ventures with at least 51% Thai shareholding, ensuring domestic control over critical infrastructure but limiting direct foreign entry. This balance between sovereignty and foreign investment could raise future questions under trade and investment law.

The regime also reflects the growing role of low-Earth-orbit (LEO) satellites, which provide faster, lower-latency services compared to traditional geostationary systems. Operators such as state-owned National Telecom (NT) and private firm Thaicom are already working with global partners, including Eutelsat OneWeb and Globalstar, to deliver broadband and advanced satellite services.

If implemented effectively, the framework could strengthen Thailand's space economy, foster partnerships, and position the country as a competitive player in the satellite communications sector.

Should you have any question, please do not hesitate to contact us via info@bgloballaw.com

