
UTILITY REGULATION AND COMPETITION OFFICE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

URCO Approves New Licensing Framework for Satellite Services

The Utility Regulation and Competition Office (URCO) have today published its Final Determination on the Framework for the Licensing of Satellite-Based Telecommunications Providers.

This landmark decision follows extensive public consultation required by law and reflects the Office's commitment to listening to the people of the Cayman Islands. The new framework creates a clear and proportionate path for licensing satellite service providers, ensuring that Cayman remains at the forefront of connectivity innovation while protecting consumer interests.

This new licensing framework now makes it possible for companies such as Starlink, Amazon, Viasat and others to be licensed to provide services within the Cayman Islands.

Strengthening Resilience

The decision recognises the importance of telecommunications solutions that do not rely solely on terrestrial infrastructure. Recent cable and operator outages and the risk of natural disasters have highlighted the vulnerability of the Islands' international connectivity. Satellite services can provide critical redundancy, strengthening national resilience and ensuring continuity of communication in emergencies.

Supporting this initiative, **Director of Hazard Management Cayman Islands – Danielle Coleman** stated, *"Satellite internet services present a critical solution to this vulnerability by offering a non-terrestrial, infrastructure-independent mode of connectivity. Unlike other communications systems, satellite services can be established and operated without reliance on local ground-based infrastructure, allowing for fast deployment and operational continuity even in the event of widespread local damage."*

Encouraging Innovation and Consumer Choice

The framework encourages the introduction of new satellite-based services technologies in the local market, broadening consumer choice and enhancing competition. It provides flexibility for different service models while ensuring fair and transparent regulation that balances innovation with consumer protection.

"Connectivity is a lifeline for the Cayman Islands," said **URCO ICEO Sonji Myles**. *"This determination ensures that we are not only keeping pace with global technological change but also putting the*

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interests of Caymanians and residents at the heart of our decisions. By strengthening resilience, encouraging innovation, and safeguarding competition, we are building a stronger, more secure digital future for our Islands. Notwithstanding our progress here, there is urgent need for improvements to exsisting legislation that allows the Office to progress these consumer interest matters more expeditiously. The people deserve it!"

A Balanced Approach

URCO has carefully considered the national interest, public sentiment, objections and concerns of existing operators, international best practices, and the unique characteristics of satellite networks. The framework ensures proportionate licence conditions that promote resiliency, competition, and investment, while removing unnecessary barriers to the entry of new services and thus promoting consumer choice.

URCO Spectrum Manager Richard Womersley stated, *"Developing this framework has been about more than just licensing satellite operators, it's about creating a stronger, safer communications future for the Cayman Islands. We have worked hard to balance global best practices with our local needs, so that new satellite technologies can be introduced in a way that improves choice for consumers, sets clear and fair rules for providers, and ensures the country is better protected against connectivity risks."*

The Final Determination is available on URCO's website at <https://www.ofreg.ky/consultations>

For more information, please contact:

Daniel Lee

Manager - Consumer Affairs & Public Education

Daniel.Lee@ofreg.ky