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Results of the 10th Session of the General Assembly and the 29th Session of the Management Committee of the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity

The 10th Session of the General Assembly (November 30 through December 2, 2005) and the 29th Session of the Management Committee (December 5 through 8, 2005) of the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT) were held consecutively in Islamabad, Pakistan.

At the General Assembly, each country delivered a policy statement and after deliberations upon the APT's strategic plan for the period 2006 - 2008, including such key areas as ICT policy and regulation, capacity building and human resources development, bridging the digital divide, and the limit of annual expenditures for the coming three years (2006 - 2008), relevant documents were adopted.

At the Management Committee, the work programme and the budget for 2006 was approved; and in response to such disasters as the

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Indian Ocean Tsunami and the Pakistan Earthquake, the "holding of a meeting concerning Disaster Management Network Systems" proposed by Japan was approved as the work programme for the next year.

In addition to Mr. ISHIDA Naohiro, Director-General of the International Affairs Department, Telecommunications Bureau, MIC and three other MIC officials, more than 100 people attended these meetings, including heads of ICT administrations, telecommunications carriers and private corporations from 25 countries and two economies. At the General Assembly, Prime Minister Shaukat AZIZ of Pakistan delivered the inaugural address.

Furthermore, it was decided that the next General Assembly is to be held in 2008 in Malaysia and the next Management Committee, in 2006 in Maldive.

Outline of APT Strategy Plan 2006-2008

Strategic Direction

Frameworks

APT assists members to develop sound ICT policy and regulatory frameworks.

Development

APT assists members in bridging the digital divide by fostering and facilitating ICT development.

Cooperation

APT maximizes the benefits of APT programs through internal and external cooperation.

Efficiency

APT improves the efficiency and effectiveness of APT operations.

Key areas

1. ICT policy and regulation
2. Information infrastructure development
3. Promoting development of e-applications for creation of information society
4. Ensuring network security and protection of privacy
5. Capacity building and HRD
6. Technology development and standardization
7. Radio communications
8. Bridging the digital divide
9. Disaster management
10. Operation and business
11. Catalytic role for mobilizing resources
12. Information sharing and Data compilation

Others

1. Enhancing APT's role as a key regional player
   APT works to enhance membership and strengthen cooperative relationships with other international organizations.
2. Implementation mechanism
   APT focuses on program contents and quality of events rather than on the number, and implements activities that take into account the difference in function of events.
3. Efficient and effective management APT works to manage activities efficiently and effectively by revising the budget allocation and rules regarding the implementation of activities.

MIC to Receive Applications for Registration of Wireless Access System Radio Stations Using Frequencies between 4,900 MHz through 5,000 MHz Bands in Kanto, Tokai and Kinki Areas

MIC is to issue an MIC Notice specifying areas where radio stations for wireless access systems using frequencies between 4,900 MHz through 5,000 MHz bands can be established. Upon issuance of the MIC Notice, starting from December 1, 2005, those who obtained registration from the MIC Minister are allowed to establish radio stations within the areas (Kanto, Tokai and Kinki areas) specified by the MIC Notice.

Outline

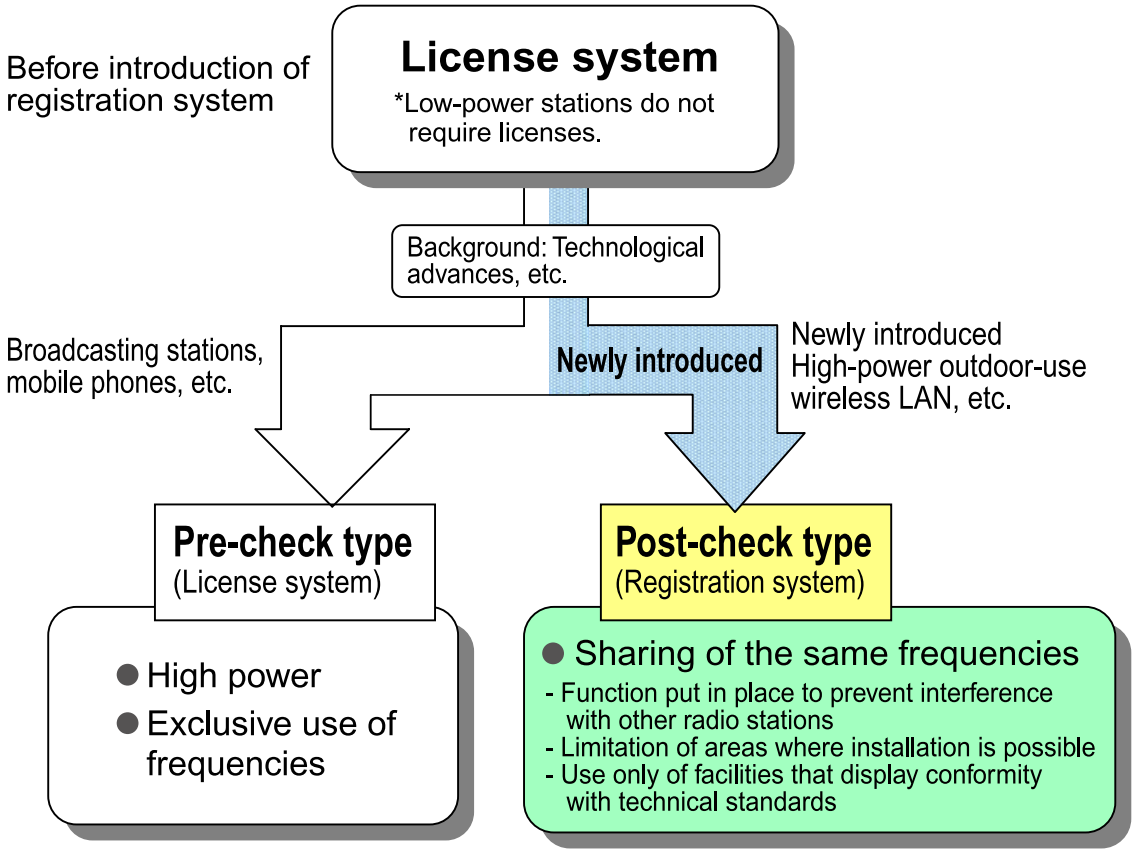
The time limit for the use of frequencies between 4,900 MHz through 5,000 MHz with existing fixed communications systems in the areas under the jurisdiction of the Kanto, Tokai and Kinki Bureaus of Telecommunications is the end of November 2005. Since it will become possible, in conjunction with this time limit, to establish wireless access systems in these areas starting December 1, 2005, each Bureau of telecommunications will start to accept applications for the registration of radio stations using wireless access systems in the 4,900 MHz to 5,000 MHz frequency band from December 1, 2005.

Concerning the notice for the establishment areas

MIC is planning to publish a notice on website (http://www.soumu.go.jp/s-news/2005/051129_1.html#b1), concerning the areas where it will be possible to establish radio stations using wireless access systems in the frequency band between 4,900 MHz through 5,000 MHz in the Kanto, Tokai and Kinki areas.

Fig.1 Outline of Registration System

A system for the registration of radio stations was introduced in May 2005, in accordance with the Law for the Partial Amendment of the Radio Law and the Wire Telecommunications Law (Law No. 47, 2004).



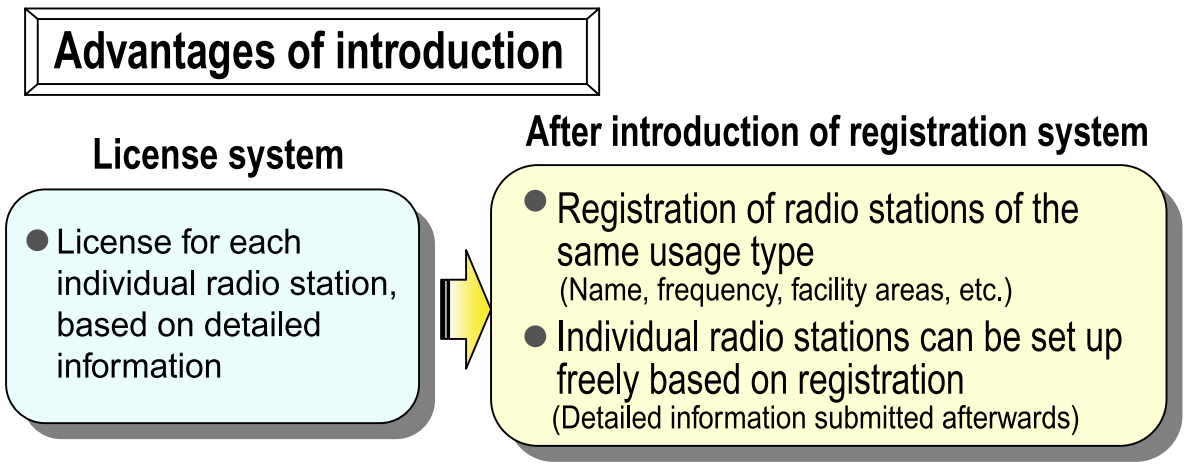


Fig.2 State of use of frequencies in the 5 GHz band

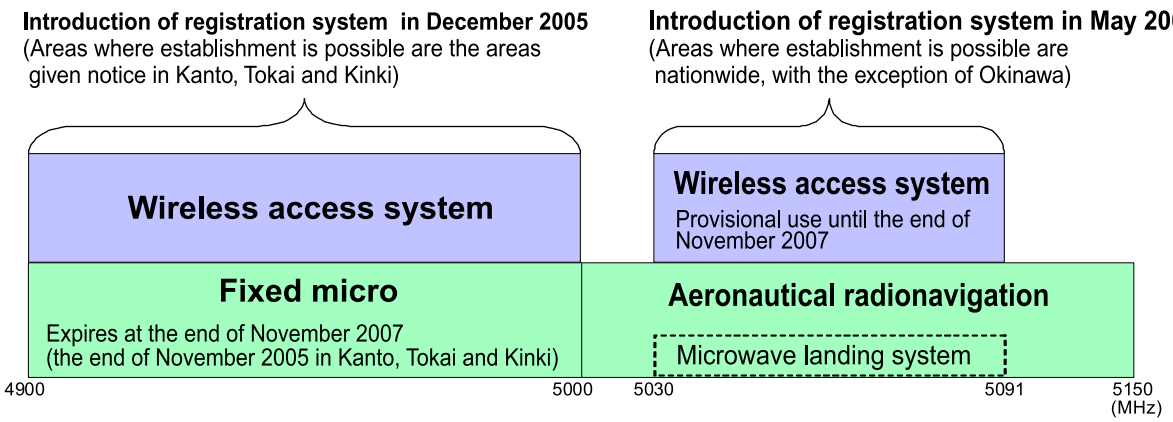
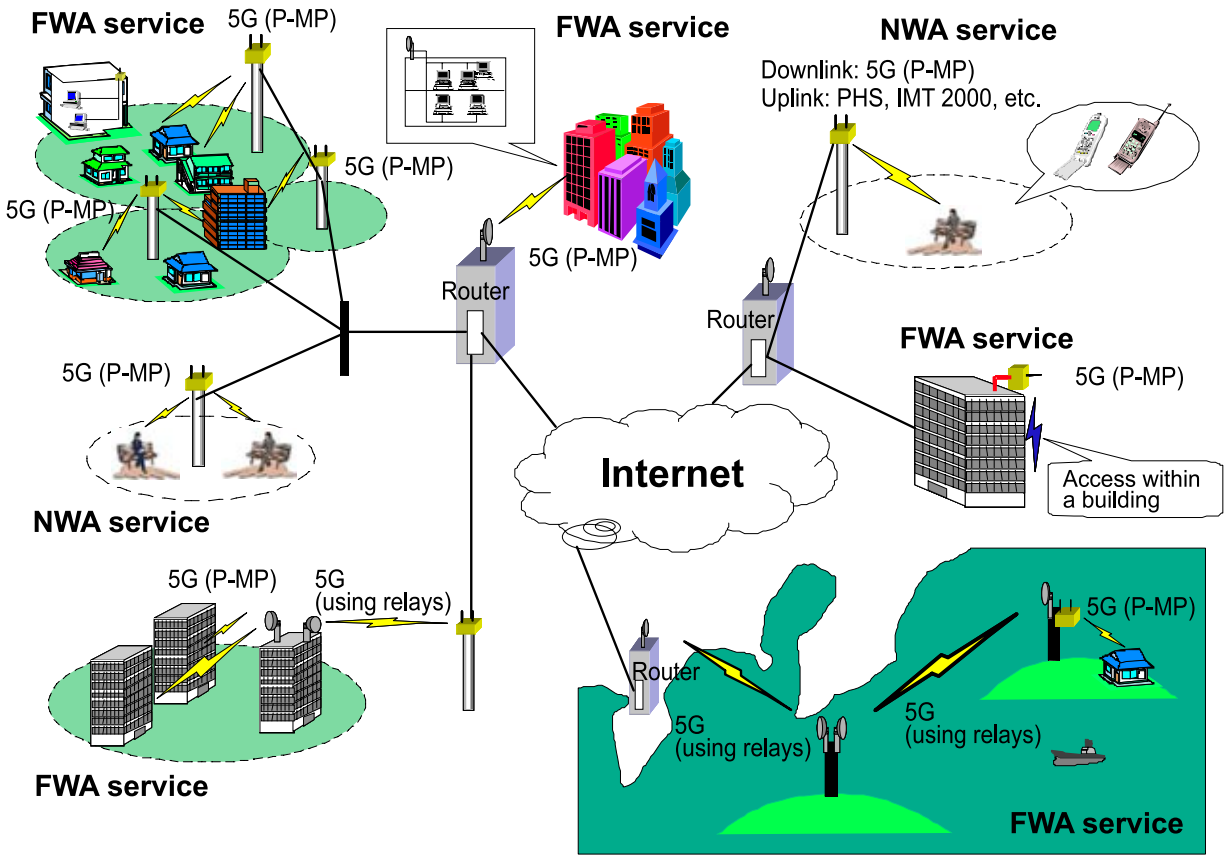


Fig.3 Usage images for 5 GHz wireless access systems



MIC National Council for Promotion of Terrestrial Digital Broadcasting —Roadmap to Construct Relay Stations for Terrestrial Digital TV Broadcasting

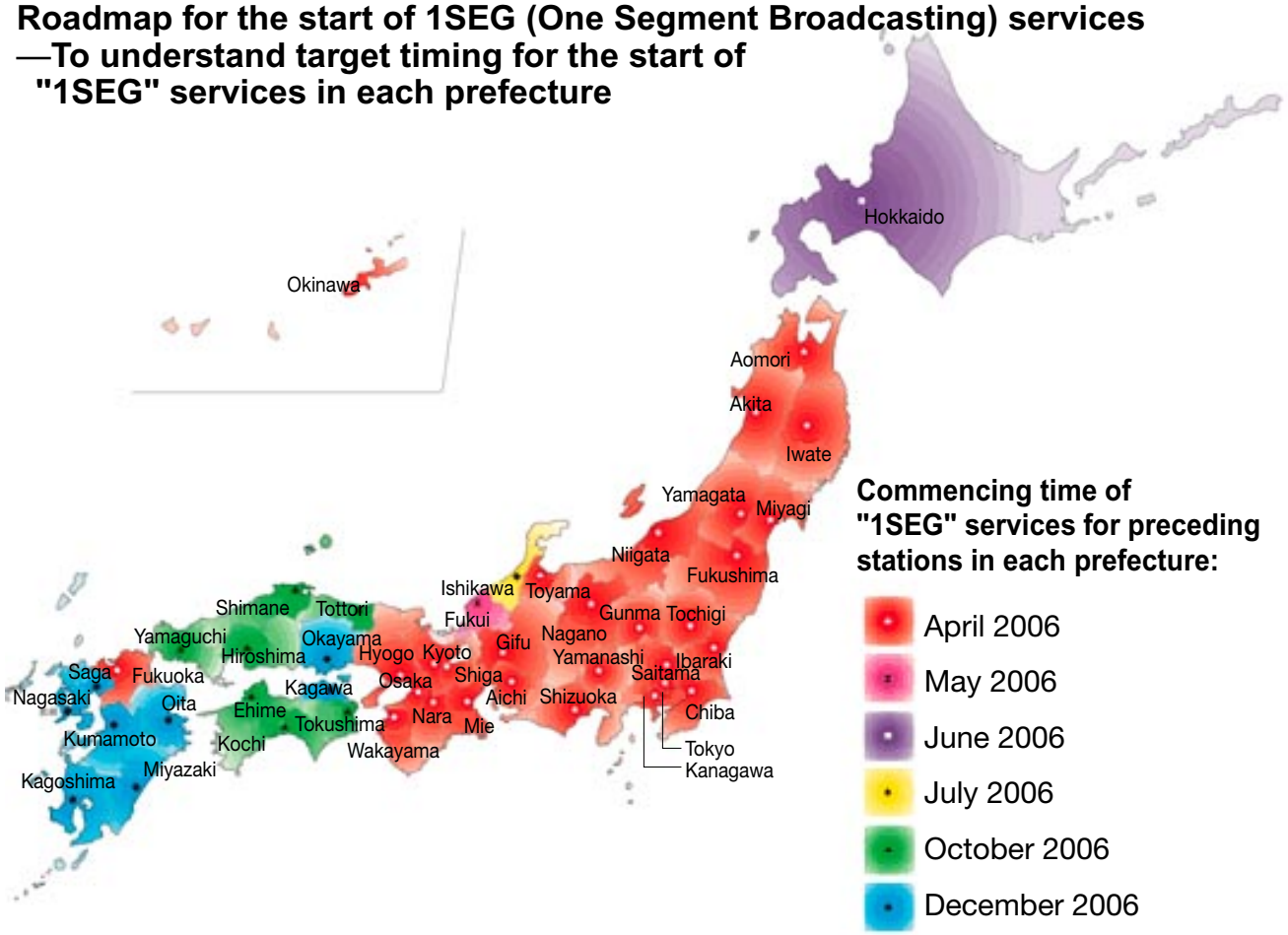
In December 2003, terrestrial digital TV broadcasting services were launched in the three metropolitan areas (Kanto, Chukyo and Kinki areas). As of December 1, 2005, terrestrial digital TV broadcasting services have expanded steadily, now covering prefectural seats of six prefectures in the Tohoku region as well as Tochigi and-Gunma Prefectures. MIC has been receiving requests from citizens and TV viewers concerning detailed schedules for the launch of services by each broadcaster. In response to such requests, from the viewpoint of facilitating the transition from analog broadcasting to digital, a time schedule for launching terrestrial digital TV broadcasting services on a nationwide basis needed clarification.

To this end, in cooperation with National Council for Promotion of

Terrestrial Digital Broadcasting and each Regional Council for Promotion of Terrestrial Digital Broadcasting, MIC decided to release a "roadmap on areas to be covered by terrestrial digital TV broadcasting services," outlining 1) a list of relay stations for each service area and broadcaster (names of relay stations and time schedule for opening the relay stations), and 2) service areas of certain broadcasters that have launched digital broadcasting ahead of the rest of the broadcasters.

However, since these areas will be changed due to complicated factors, MIC will issue revised editions according to such changes. MIC will, toward smooth and full-scale completion of the digital transition in 2011, make efforts to provide TV viewers with the necessary information.

Roadmap for the start of 1SEG (One Segment Broadcasting) services —To understand target timing for the start of "1SEG" services in each prefecture



Note:
The above roadmap shows target timing for the start of "1SEG" services in each prefecture as of November 2005.
Color cording on the map is according to the commencing time of "1SEG" services for preceding stations.

Results of FY2004 Survey on Price Variances of Telecommunications Services between Japan and Foreign Countries

MIC has been conducting a survey each fiscal year on price variances of telecommunications services between Japan and foreign countries in order to grasp adequately the situation regarding pricing of telecommunications services.
MIC has compiled and is now announcing the results of the FY2004 survey.

Cities surveyed

MIC has compared prices for
i) Internet access services,
ii) domestic telephone services,
iii) cellular telephone services,
iv) international telephone services, and
v) leased circuit services in Tokyo, New York, London, Paris, Dusseldorf and Geneva on a basis of the Telegraphic Transfer Selling (TTS) Rate as of March 31, 2005.

Survey period

The survey was basically conducted in January 2005. If prices were revised subsequently, this was reflected to the greatest extent possible.

Main points

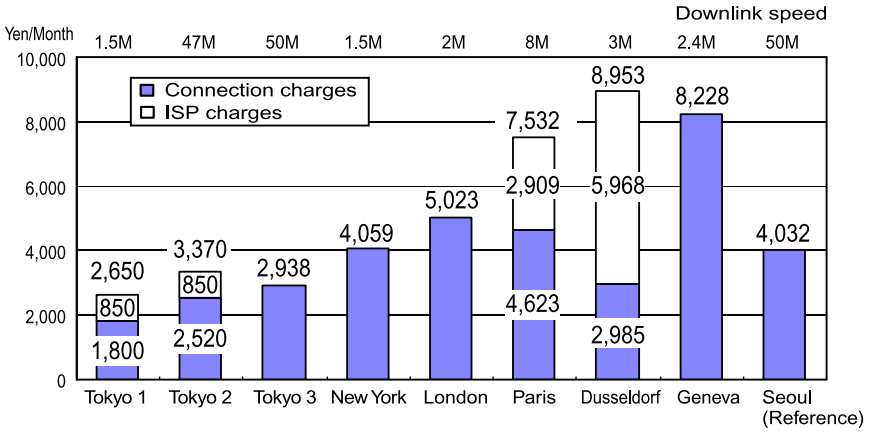
- Flat-rate for always-on broadband access, such as ADSL in Tokyo, have continued to remain at the lowest levels in the world, for the fourth consecutive year since the survey was first conducted in FY2001.
- Even though domestic telephone charges for daytime and evening calls are the lowest, subscription fees (facilities and equipment charges) remain at a higher level despite being reduced by half in March 2005. Long-distance charges are at a lower level due to daytime discount rates.
- Starting this year, cellular telephone charges have been split into three categories, voice only usage, voice and email usage, and voice, email and data (Internet access) usage, and are compared according to usage frequency. Even though Tokyo charges can be higher than in other cities, they are generally at the same levels or slightly lower.

NB: Conditions for telecommunications services differ from country to country, with a variety of pricing systems starting with the differentiation between standard rates and discount rates.
Payment methods (such as prepaid or postpaid) and conditions of use (such as SMS/email) also differ, with variations between regions within the same country. The influence of changes in exchange rates can also have a major effect, so that one cannot necessarily make sweeping statements about whether variations in prices between Japan and foreign countries are small or large. Readers are aware that results of this survey are one of the indices. Points that should be noted with regarding to individual charges are shown below.

Access to the Internet

- Comparing ADSL services at a speed of 1 Mbps or higher with those in other cities, the charges in Tokyo are at the lowest level in the world in conjunction with the growth in competition between service providers. As for speed, whereas other cities offer between 1.5 Mbps and 8 Mbps, Tokyo offers a maximum of 50 Mbps so that when a comparison is made based on telecommunications speed, charges in Tokyo is even lower.
- Cable Internet prices are the second lowest, after Paris. but looking at telecommunications speed, Tokyo offers 30 Mbps as opposed to 2 to 10 Mbps in other cities, so in a speed-based comparison, Tokyo can be said to be the lowest.

Fig.1 ADSL



Domestic telephone services

Comparison based on individual rates

- Monthly basic charges for residential users and corporate users are at nearly equal levels to other cities, but the subscription fees (facilities and equipment charges) in Tokyo remain the highest despite being reduced by half in March 2005.
  Relocation charges, however, are the lowest.
- Local calls in Tokyo are the lowest when compared to other cities, both for daytime and evenings.
- Standard charges for long-distance calls, especially in comparing inter-prefectural telephone services, are lower than those for interstate and intrastate telephone services in New York, but remain at a higher level than in European cities. Discount charges are at a lower level for daytime and are at average levels for evenings.

An OECD model that compares domestic telephone tariffs indicates that:

- For residential use, with the exception of London, Tokyo is at about the same
  pricing level as other cities for ordinary charges. For discount rates, it stands with
  London at a lower level.
- For corporate use, with the exception of Geneva, Tokyo is at about the same
  pricing level as other European cities for ordinary charges. For discount charges,
  it stands with Dusseldorf and Geneva at a lower level.

Fig.2-1 Domestic telephone (Weekday at noon, 3 minutes)

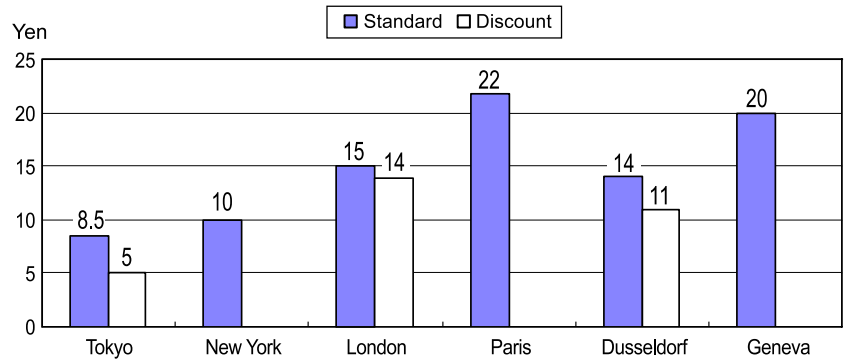


Fig.2-2 Basic charges (Residential : Per month)

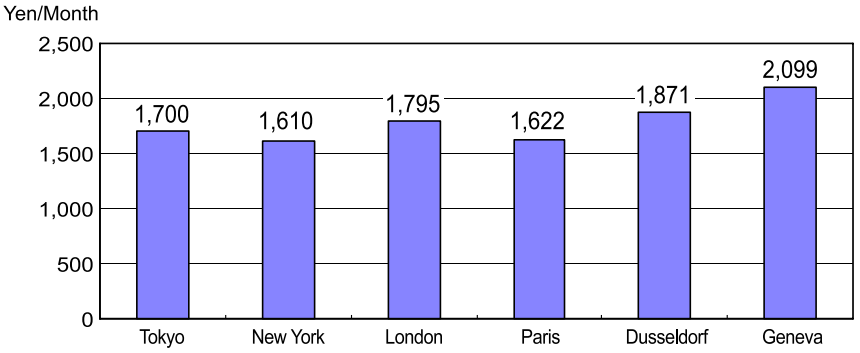
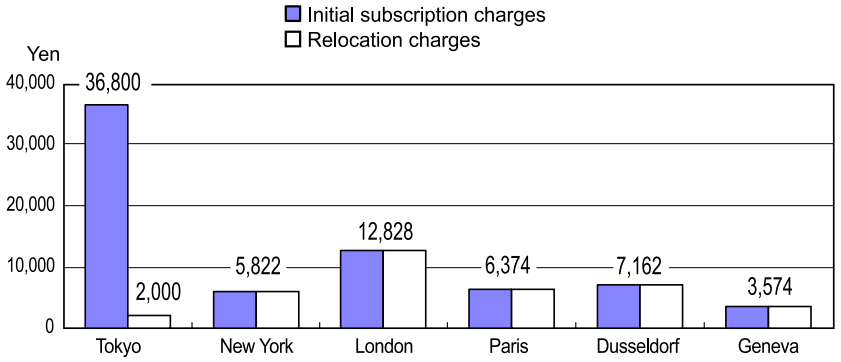


Fig.2-3 Initial subscription charges/ Relocation charges (residential)



Note:
The price comparison was implemented based on both individual rates and the models that reflect the actual status (OECD Model and Tokyo Model).
OECD Model: The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) carries out a price comparison using a model it has formulated which sets a traffic pattern by communications distance range, time zone, etc. in order to compare prices of telecommunications services in its 30 member countries.
Tokyo Model: This model was established for cases where there is no OECD Model or OECD Model does not suit the actual situation in Japan. It calculates average usage conditions for communications distance range, time zone, etc. based on traffic in Japan, and compares prices based on this.

Cellular telephone services

- In terms of charges for cellular telephones, package-type tariff plans that include the basic charges and fixed hours of air-time charges are the mainstream in many cities, and there are many variations to this type of plan. This makes it very difficult to make a simple comparison of charges between cities. There is also widespread use of cellular telephone terminals for email and data communications (Internet access).
- Consequently, the FY2004 survey investigated three possible categories, 1) voice only usage, 2) joint usage by voice and email, and 3) joint usage by voice, email and data (Internet access).
- For users who were closest to actual traffic usage in FY2003 and who had low usage frequency, pricing levels in Tokyo were at about the same level as for other cities in all three categories. For high-frequent users, however, in all three categories, Tokyo was second lowest after New York.

Fig.3-1 Low-frequency users (37 minutes of voice calls, 30 emails, and 7,500 data packets per month)

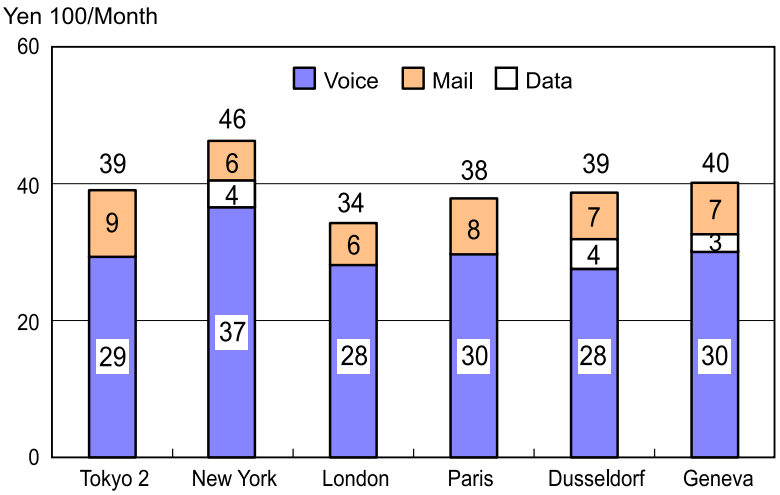


Fig.3-2 Mid-frequency users (106 minutes of voice calls, 100 emails, and 39,000 data packets per month)

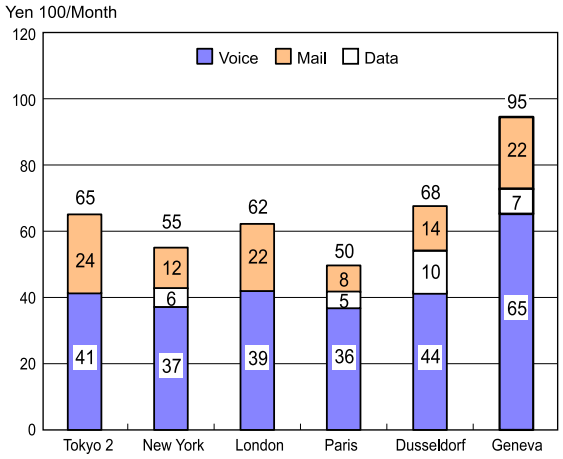
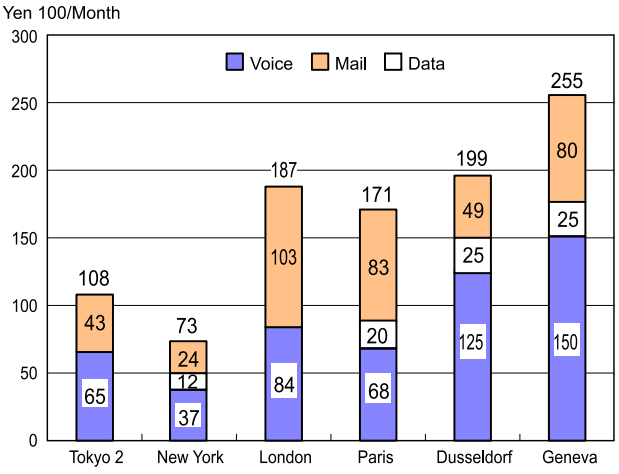


Fig.3-3 High-frequency users (315 minutes of voice calls, 300 emails, and 390,000 data packets per month)



International telephone services

- It is generally lower to make international calls from other overseas cities than to make them from Tokyo.

Domestic leased circuit services

- There are differences in domestic leased circuit charges according to distance and speed.

i) Comparison based on individual charges In Tokyo, charges for leased digital circuit services of 64 kbps are the lowest for distances of 15km and 50km. Charges for leased digital circuit services of 1.5 Mbps for a distance of 15km is the second lowest following New York, and those for 50km are the highest. Charges for leased digital circuit services of 45 Mbps, Tokyo is the second lowest following Dusseldorf for distances of 15km and 50km.

ii) Comparison based on the OECD model In Tokyo, charges for leased digital circuit services of 64 kbps are the lowest, and those for 1.5 Mbps are the highest. Charges for 45 Mbps are the third lowest, following Dusseldorf and New York.

Conclusion

- According to this survey, although communications charges in Japan vary depending on the type of services, but charges for broadband services are lower in comparison with America and European countries, and charges for cellular telephone services are lower for people who frequently use email and data (Internet access) in comparison with European countries.
- In striving to make Japan the most advanced ICT nation in the world, MIC will continue to promote fair competition and work towards creating an environment to encourage reducing charges.