

Chapter 5

Outlook for Information and Communications Policies

Section 1

New Economic Growth through ICT

1. Promotion of a national strategy

In January 2001, the government enacted the the Basic Act on the Formation of an Advanced Information and Telecommunications Network Society and established the Strategic Headquarters for the Promotion of an Advanced Information and Telecommunications Network Society (hereinafter referred to as the IT Strategy Headquarters), with the goal of swiftly and thoroughly introducing measures for the formation of an advanced information and telecommunications network society.

Since then, the government has formulated strategies and priority policy programs as needed, including the January 2001 “e-Japan Strategy” aimed at “making Japan the world's most advanced IT nation within five years,” and the July 2003 “e-Japan Strategy II” with the aim of “realize an energetic, worry-free, exciting and more convenient society through the utilization of IT.”

In May 2010, the IT Strategy Headquarters formulated a New Strategy in Information and Communications Technology with the goal of establishing a society of popular sovereignty, comprising the three main points of 1)“realisation of e-Government ”, 2) “re-bonding local communities” and 3)“creation of new markets and international expansion.”

2. Promotion of a new economic growth strategy vision (the Haraguchi Vision)

In December 2009, Minister of Internal Affairs and Communications Kazuhiro Haraguchi unveiled the Haraguchi Vision composed of two elements, “promotion of “Midori no Bunken Kaikaku” policy-Growth Strategy from the region” (which aims to promote local sovereignty throughout society) and “the ICT Restoration Vision-Investment in Human Value-” (with the goal of realizing sustainable economic growth through the utilization of ICT.)

In addition, the following initiatives are being implemented.

- (1) In order to contribute to finding solutions to the various economic and social issues being faced by Japan and many other countries through the effective use of ICT. October 2009, the MIC inaugurated an ICT Policy Task Force for a Global Era in order to investigate new ICT policies. In May 2010, a meeting of the Task Force summarized the basic policies aimed at establishing a New Broadband Super Highway (Hikari-no-michi).
- (2) In December 2012, the MIC opened the Forum to Consider the State of the Protection of Citizen’s Rights in the Future ICT Field in order to study the state of the protection of citizens rights, including the Right of Free Speech, in the ICT field which is a fundamental infrastructure of democracy.
- (3) In order to clarify the direction of next-generation cloud technology, while comprehensively investigating the various issues concerning the development of cloud network technology, the MIC held the Smart Cloud Study Group starting in June 2009, and in May 2010 completed and presented a final report.
- (4) Starting in April 2010, the MIC is opening a "Council on the Brain and ICT" in order to examine the crossover field of brain research and ICT, which is expected to be implemented in the form of an information and communication network offering support for disabled persons and the elderly, flexible response to unforeseen circumstances and low energy consumption requirements.

3. Promotion of reform in communications and broadcasting fields

So as to clarify and streamline the communications and broadcasting fields to better adapt to the progress of digitalization, the legal systems governing communications and broadcasting were overhauled for the first time in 60 years, with the systems governing various types of broadcast formats integrated into a comprehensive system and the system governing radio station licensing and other broadcasting accreditation given increased flexibility, and the Act Concerning Partial Revision of the Broadcast Act was submitted to the 174th Diet session.

Main particulars of the reform

(1) Revisions of the Broadcast Act	(2) Revisions of the Radio Act
1. Clarification, streamlining and greater flexibility of the systems governing broadcasting activities	1. Development of a system for radio stations conducting both transmissions and broadcasts
2. Legal enshrinement of the principle of mass media decentralization	2. Expansion of radio stations not requiring licenses
3. Securing the safety and reliability of broadcasting	3. More comprehensive licensing of cellular phone base stations
4. Public announcement of the classification of programs broadcast	(3) Revisions of the Telecommunications Act
5. Explanation of the conditions for providing paid broadcasts	1. Expansion of conflict mediation functions
6. Development of a system for arbitration and mediation in cases of conflicts over re-broadcasting agreements	2. Establishment of a interconnection accounting related to Type II specified operators

4. Bolstering competitiveness and support for international expansion

The ICT industry accounts for about 10% of Japan's nominal GDP and, as such, is the largest industry. Its contribution ratio to real GDP growth is high as well, and it is seen as a vital strategic industry for our nation's future economic growth.

In the ICT Policy Task Force / Working Group on Bolstering Competitiveness, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications considered measures to promote global deployment through an "All-Japan" system bringing together content businesses, manufacturers and other ICT-related enterprises, and interim results were compiled in May 2010.

Also, the MIC has been implementing the Advanced ICT Project for International Expansion since 2009 to speed up the international expansion of ICT in three vital areas while promoting comprehensive policies to strategically move forward with internationally expanding into new fields using the high-level of ICT infrastructure in Japan. The Project is composed of three parts, (1) the Ubiquitous Alliance Project (a project to construct model systems in vital ICT areas in developing countries), (2) an advanced ICT validation testing project, and (3) a project to promote consolidation of ICT utilization rules (Cyber Special District project).

5. ICT productivity acceleration program

In order to realize the improvement of productivity through the use of ICT, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications is cooperating and collaborating with related organizations to promote the penetration of ASP / SaaS and provide support for the rapid implementation of new ICT systems by venture businesses, along with other efforts.

6. Support for creation and fostering of ICT venture businesses

ICT ventures create new businesses with innovative and indigenous technology and business models are expected to serve as the front-runners of innovation that enables the ICT industry of Japan to achieve further development in an era of increasingly fierce global competition.

The MIC takes measures to promote the creation and growth of ICT ventures in cooperation with related ministries and agencies, covering various aspects from fund supply, securing and development of human resources, and information provision, etc. For ICT venture businesses that have just recently been launched, measures include debt guarantees provided through NICT (the National Institute of Information and Communications Technology) and financial support in the form of tax incentives (the Angel Tax, etc.)