



Malaysia

3 providers authorised · 98% internet penetration ·
100% foreign ownership granted to Starlink

CONCERN

MODERATE

PROVIDERS

2 Operational / 3 Authorized

Latest update: 2026



SkyCommons Observatory is a project of Open Knowledge to map power, expose risks, and advance public-interest principles into governance of LEO satellite internet services.

Our scores rating 'level of concern' are based on key public-interest principles defined in the table [here](#). This country profile is one of several on: skycommons.okfn.org

Summary

Three LEO satellite internet providers are authorised in Malaysia—Starlink, OneWeb, and the domestic startup Angkasa-X—but the diversity in licensing has not translated into consumer choice. In practice, Starlink dominates the consumer retail market. OneWeb operates mainly at the wholesale level and Angkasa-X has not yet launched.

In July 2023, some days after [a video call](#) between Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim and Elon Musk, the owner of Starlink, the Malaysian Communications And Multimedia Commission (MCMC) granted Starlink a 10-year license as a fully foreign-owned entity. It was [an exception](#) to the standard 49% foreign entity cap. No public consultation preceded it. This created a single point of foreign control over Malaysia's LEO connectivity infrastructure. At the time, Communications and Digital Minister Fahmi Fadzil said it would be [a temporary measure](#) to quickly connect regions and institutions without reliable internet.

More recently, Malaysia has begun to diversify towards Chinese constellations. In February

2025, Malaysia's national satellite operator MEASAT announced a partnership to advance LEO satellite services with Chinese government-backed company Spacesail. In April 2025, a joint venture called Altel Digital was formed by Malaysia's Altel Group and Chinese firm Zhejiang Geespace Technology to deliver LEO satellite connectivity.

Connectivity gaps in Malaysia's rural areas in Sabah and Sarawak remain significant, which was symbolised by a viral incident in 2020 in which a university student filmed herself climbing a tree to get better internet reception for an online exam.

Timeline



[See [online version](#)]

Research highlights

Competition

CONCERN

MODERATE

OPERATIONAL Starlink OneWeb (enterprise only)	AUTHORISED Angkasa-X
---	-------------------------

Malaysia authorises three LEO providers. In practice, only Starlink currently serves consumers. OneWeb functions mainly as a wholesale carrier. Angkasa-X has positioned itself as a competitor to Starlink, with a goal of offering service at one-tenth of Starlink's price, citing a \$99 per month benchmark. The project has received investment equivalent to RM470 million (~\$115 million USD)—much of it from China. Meanwhile, the company has acknowledged that, "People living in rural areas cannot even afford \$9 a month". Two other China linked entrants are planned, but not yet operational. One is a partnership between Malaysia's national satellite operator MEASAT and Chinese government-backed company, Spacesail. The other is called

Altel Digital, and is a joint venture between Malaysia’s Altel Group and China’s Zhejiang Geespace.

Affordability

CONCERN

MODERATE

SUBSCRIPTION \$33–58	HARDWARE \$392
-------------------------	-------------------

Starlink's standard residential plan is RM235 per month (~\$58 USD), with a Lite option at RM135/month (~\$33 USD). Neither includes the RM1,600 (~\$392 USD) hardware kit, which is an additional upfront cost. Pricing has held stable since Starlink's 2023 launch. By comparison, mainstream urban ISPs in Malaysia like Time and Maxis, start at RM99 per month (~\$24.19) and include free hardware. However, their coverage is limited to urban areas, where satellite internet is less needed. A government Universal Service Provision (USP) Fund and a 2018 Mandatory Standard on Access Pricing help address rural internet deployment and wholesale bandwidth costs, but not household affordability. There is no mechanism regulating consumer LEO pricing. For rural households in Sabah and Sarawak, the RM1,600 (~\$392) hardware cost is the primary barrier for Starlink connectivity.

Accessibility

CONCERN

MODERATE

NUMBER OF STARLINK SUBSCRIBERS Unknown

Malaysia’s urban–rural internet gap is relatively narrow: 98.8% in urban areas versus 90.3% in rural areas. But fixed broadband penetration sits at just 46.7% nationally against 95.7% mobile broadband. Rural areas in Sabah, Sarawak, and interior Orang Asli communities face a genuine internet quality gap symbolised by the viral ‘student in a tree’ video in 2020. The core problem is documented as uneven quality, reliability, and affordability. The Malaysian Communications And Multimedia Commission has several programs targeting these areas, especially through expansion of mobile infrastructure. Regarding accessibility of Starlink, there are no official numbers, only selected news reports about beneficiaries. Given the cost, access is most likely to occur via government or private sector deployments to communities.

Governance

CONCERN

HIGH

No public consultation

Starlink's licenses were granted within days of a July 2023 video conference call between Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim and Elon Musk, with no public consultation preceding the decision. The authorisation terms were not published. Starlink was granted a 100% foreign-ownership exception to the standard 49% cap. That decision was made at speed as a routine regulatory approval rather than as a ministerial decision. The opposition blocs have questioned whether it is unfair to local operators who remain subject to the cap. The Communications and Multimedia Act provides the statutory framework, but a law is only as strong as the process that enforces it. In Malaysia, that process was a phone call.

Accountability

CONCERN

HIGH

Starlink's license was publicly announced, but its technical annexes and specific conditions were not published. Civil society cannot verify whether all operators face equivalent terms. Compliance obligations do exist under the Communications and Multimedia Act, including lawful interception, data retention, and network security. The Malaysian Communications And Multimedia Commission holds sole enforcement authority and can issue directives, but no sanctions against any LEO provider have been documented. Malaysia's Personal Data Protection Act does not apply to the public sector, meaning that government agencies using Starlink infrastructure for health, education, administration operate outside the data protection framework.

Authors: Imran Mohd Rasid, Burcu Kilic

About this research

SkyCommons Observatory was created by the Open Knowledge Foundation, a non-profit organisation working at the intersection of technology, openness, and governance. Our website (prototype) and research community questions the politics and processes of LEO satellite internet connectivity using open data and research methods. Is the public-interest met? We treat what happens in space as something that concerns everyone on Earth.



Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License