



EU-Japan Centre for Industrial Cooperation

一般財団法人
日欧産業協力センター

Japanese policy and regulatory developments

October 2025

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Digital-Related Matters

Results of APEC Digital AI Ministerial Meeting (TELMIN11)¹²

(Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, August 7)

- On Monday, August 4, 2025, the APEC Digital AI Ministerial Meeting (TELMIN11) was held in Incheon, Republic of Korea. The Vice Minister for International Affairs, Mr. Imagawa, from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC), and the Deputy Director-General for IT Strategy, Mr. Shibuya, from the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI), attended the meeting.
- At the meeting, discussions focused on three topics set by the Republic of Korea:
 - (1) Facilitating Digital and AI Innovation to Address Challenges
 - (2) Enhancing Universal and Meaningful Digital Connectivity
 - (3) Creating a Safe and Trustworthy Digital and AI Ecosystem
- In the APEC discussions on topic (1), Vice Minister Mr. Imagawa stressed the need for rules to ensure safe, responsible, and trustworthy AI, highlighting the “Hiroshima AI Process” and its reporting framework, which enable AI developers to self-assess and report their compliance with the International Code of Conduct. He called for a broader adoption of these principles beyond the G7 and OECD member countries. For topic (2), he emphasized balancing competition policy with financial support to achieve digital connectivity and promote resilient, safe, and high-quality infrastructure using emerging technologies like AI and quantum computing.
- Deputy Director-General Mr. Shibuya explained Japan’s plan to develop the AI Basic Plan by winter 2025, based on the Act on Promotion of Research and Development, and Utilization of AI-related Technology (Act No. 53 of 2025), along with Japan’s intention to make government-wide efforts to promote AI-related policies under the leadership of the AI strategic headquarters chaired by the Prime Minister. He also presented METI’s initiatives to foster the creation of AI data centers, support startups, develop personnel skilled in AI, and create AI services and implementation in fields like robotics, mobility, and pop culture, with the goal of encouraging industrial competitiveness and sustainable growth.
- As a result of the discussions, the Ministerial Statement was adopted.

¹ https://www.soumu.go.jp/main_sosiki/joho_tsusin/eng/pressrelease/2025/8/7_1.html

² https://www.meti.go.jp/english/press/2025/0807_001.html

Opening Ceremony of the New Facility of the ASEAN-Japan Cybersecurity Capacity Building Centre (AJCCBC)³

(Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, August 12)

- On August 12, 2025, the MIC announced that the inauguration of the new facility of the ASEAN-Japan Cybersecurity Capacity Building Centre (AJCCBC) would take place in Bangkok on August 18, and that representatives from the MIC would be in attendance.
- In order to reduce cybersecurity risks both globally and in Japan, Japan formulated the “Cybersecurity Strategy” (approved by the Cabinet on September 28, 2021) and the “Basic Policy on Cybersecurity Capacity Building Support for Developing Countries” (decided by the Cybersecurity Strategic Headquarters in December 2021) to strengthen cybersecurity and ensure capacity-building support for developing countries, and to develop human resources, as international cooperation is essential for cyberspace security.
- Starting on the day of the ceremony, the 38th AJCCBC Cybersecurity Technical Training was conducted from August 18 to 22 as part of a technical cooperation project between Thailand’s National Cyber Security Agency (NCSA) and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). The exercise featured a new scenario from the MIC, which was based on a simulated ransomware attack that reflected the latest threat landscape and technological trends.

The First Study Group on the Civil Liability Framework for the Utilization of AI⁴

(Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, August 19)

- On August 19, 2025, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) launched an expert panel to discuss the framework of civil liability in anticipation of accidents occurred in accordance with the involvement of artificial intelligence (AI) as well as the relationship between AI Guidelines for Business and the civil liability, and held its inaugural meeting.
- With the growing adoption of AI, concerns have arisen over potential infringements of third-party property rights and the occurrence of physical accidents involving actuators. However, there is currently no unified view or court decisions on where civil liability should lie in the event of such incidents, making the determination of responsibility unclear. To address this issue, the expert panel will examine hypothetical cases in which AI-based services or systems contribute to accidents, and will work to clarify legal interpretation and application issues from the perspectives of tort law and product

³ https://www.soumu.go.jp/main_sosiki/joho_tsusin/eng/pressrelease/2025/8/12_1.html

⁴ https://www.meti.go.jp/shingikai/mono_info_service/ai_utilization_civil/001.html (in Japanese)

liability law.

- The use cases under review were categorized into two types:
 - cases where AI supports human actions or decisions (e.g., incorporating the output of a chatbot AI into a service), and
 - cases where AI makes autonomous decisions (e.g., AI performing spatial recognition and control to operate machinery).

In the first type, it was indicated that, in principle, the person using the AI tends to bear final responsibility. In contrast, in the second type, greater emphasis tends to be placed on the appropriateness of the AI's design and development phase when determining responsibility.

- In this meeting, particular focus was placed on the first type of case. For example, one scenario discussed involved a logistics company using an AI system to optimize delivery routes. In this case, the AI system identified a narrow, poorly maintained road as the optimal route. The driver followed the AI's instructions, which resulted in the vehicle going off the road, delays in delivery, and damage to the cargo. The discussion examined where responsibility lies among the logistics company, the driver, and the AI system provider.

Takeaway: In future sessions of the study group, in addition to the second type of case mentioned above, discussions are also expected to address the relationship between civil liability and the government's published "AI Guidelines for Business". For businesses that are currently offering AI-based services or considering their implementation in Japan, it will be important to closely follow the progress of the study group's discussions and use the insights gained to inform their own risk management strategies and response policies.

Publication of the “2025 Report by the Study Group on Consumer Protection Rules” and Call for Public Consultation on the Draft Revisions to the “Guidelines on Consumer Protection Rules under the Telecommunications Business Act”⁵⁶

(Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, August 29)

- On August 29, 2025, MIC released the “2025 Report by the Study Group on Consumer Protection Rules.” This report was compiled by the Study Group after extensive discussions on four main themes and reflects the results of a public Consultation period conducted from June 28 to July 28, 2025.
- The 2025 Report covers the following four main themes:
 - (1) Improving User Understanding of Service Terms of an Offering
 - A key issue identified was the gap between users' understanding and the actual terms of telecommunications service contracts. Discussions were held with

⁵ https://www.soumu.go.jp/menu_news/s-news/01kiban08_03000444.html (in Japanese)

⁶ https://www.soumu.go.jp/menu_news/s-news/01kiban08_03000445.html (in Japanese)

telecommunications carriers to address this concern. The report outlines the need for new initiatives to enhance user comprehension, for example, implementing a declaration to improve customer service tailored to users' intended usage.

(2) Display of “Down Payments”

In response to user confusion caused by insufficient explanations about the device selling price (including down payment), a study was conducted which included hearings Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) as part of the review process. It was found that less than half of users were aware of price differences between stores. The report proposes measures to promote better-informed purchasing decisions, such as prominently displaying down payment amounts in in-store advertisements and publicly informing device retail price before discount.

(3) Current Status of Fixed Wi-Fi Services

Due to inadequate explanations of contract terms, many users did not fully understand their fixed Wi-Fi service agreements, leading to issues at the time of cancellation. In response, hearings were conducted with service providers to assess how they explain contract terms at the time of signing and how they handle cancellations. Based on these findings, the report outlines necessary measures, such as improving in-store displays and providing clear explanations of key contract terms.

(4) Follow-up on the 2024 Report on Consumer Protection Rules

The report provides a follow-up to the 2024 Report, outlining the direction of responses to the issues identified in the previous report, for example, the use of written documents to explain service terms during telemarketing, and the current status of online contracts.

Takeaway: On August 29, 2025, MIC also announced a draft revision to the “Guidelines on Consumer Protection Rules under the Telecommunications Business Act,” based on discussions from the Study Group on Consumer Protection Rules. Public consultation on the draft were invited from August 30 to September 30. The proposed revisions clearly state, for example, that in cases where a portion or the entire installment payment for a purchased device is discounted from the monthly communication charges over a certain period, users must be clearly informed that if they cancel midway through the campaign, they will be required to pay the remaining balance. Therefore, businesses subject to the Telecommunications Business Act are required to conduct their operations with careful attention to these revised guidelines.

Industry

Japan's Strategy for Strengthening the Broadcasting and Distribution Content Industry⁷

(Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, August 26)

- The Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC) convened the Study Team on Broadcasting and Distribution Content Industry Strategy under the Study Group on the Broadcasting System in the Digital Age on March 6, 2025. The team conducted an intensive review and analysis with a view to strengthening the competitiveness of the broadcasting and distribution content industry, taking into account the changing environment surrounding the sector. Discussions focused on:
 - Key challenges and possible countermeasures to promote the broadcasting and distribution content industry, and
 - The appropriate framework for public–private collaboration.
- A draft report of the Study Team's findings was made available for public consultation between June 25 and July 9, 2025. Based on the comments received, the Study Team further deliberated and has now published its final report. Key points highlighted in the report include:
 - Going forward, the public and private sectors will work together to address challenges at every stage of the value chain—planning & development, production, rights management, and distribution—while also tackling cross-cutting issues such as human resource development and digital transformation (DX). The aim is to strengthen production capacity and create a positive cycle that promotes overseas expansion.
 - As a framework for public–private cooperation, preparations have begun for the establishment of the Council for the Promotion of Competitiveness in the Broadcasting and Distribution Content Industry, with the goal of launching it during FY2025.

Takeaway: The report primarily organizes the key challenges and possible responses for promoting the broadcasting content industry, taking into account global market trends in countries such as the United States, China, the United Kingdom, the EU, and South Korea as reference. It emphasizes public–private collaboration to address these challenges and to strengthen production capacity.

⁷ https://www.soumu.go.jp/menu_news/s-news/01ryutsu04_02000239.html (in Japanese)

Japan's Ministerial Conference on Promoting the Globalization of Digital Industries⁸

(Cabinet Secretariat, August 27)

- To promote the globalization of Japan's digital industries, the government has launched the Ministerial Conference on Promoting the Globalization of Digital Industries. The purpose of this initiative is to develop and implement policies in a strategic and integrated manner across ministries.
- **First Meeting (June 30, 2025):**
The inaugural meeting highlighted the growing deficit in Japan's digital trade balance. Discussions centered on strengthening domestic cloud and digital infrastructure, enhancing the supply capacity of Japan-made cybersecurity solutions, and accelerating the industrialization of emerging digital technologies, including AI.
- **Second Meeting (August 27, 2025):**
The second session focused on encouraging globalization of the entertainment and content industry. Participants emphasized that overseas expansion in areas such as games, anime, and manga has contributed positively to Japan's digital trade balance. Industry and relevant ministries representatives shared their experiences and challenges in global markets, while discussions addressed issues such as anti-piracy measures and the high cost of international promotion.

Takeaway: Through these conferences, Japan is addressing the multifaceted challenges of digital industry globalization. By September 2025, the government aims to compile a comprehensive policy package to further promote the international competitiveness and global reach of Japan's digital industries.

⁸ https://www.cas.go.jp/jp/seisaku/digital_global_kakuryokaigi/dai2/siryou.html (in Japanese)

Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry calls for proposals from municipal government and business operators to support Green Transformation⁹

(Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, August 26)

- To promote a smooth transition from industrial/social structures which mainly rely on fossil fuels to one based on clean energy, on February 18, 2025, the Japanese government published its green transformation (GX) promotion strategy, called GX 2040 Vision.¹⁰
- As a part of the implementation of the strategy, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) called for proposals from local governments and business operators on projects to support GX on a regional basis.
- METI called for the following three types of projects:
 - Industrial complexes
 - Data centers
 - Decarbonized power plants
- Any municipal governments or business operators can submit proposals by October 27, 2025.¹¹

Takeaway: There will be more business opportunities in Japan for companies who have experience in developing industrial complexes, data centers, or decarbonized power plants, which promote GX.

⁹ <https://www.meti.go.jp/press/2025/08/20250826003/20250826003.html> (in Japanese)

¹⁰ <https://www.meti.go.jp/press/2024/02/20250218004/20250218004.html> (in Japanese)

¹¹ https://mm-enquete-cnt.meti.go.jp/form/pub/innovation-datsutanso/soudan_touroku (in Japanese)

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