

IISL COLLOQUIUM ON THE LAW OF OUTER SPACE (E7)  
Legal Issues Relating to Emerging Space Activities on Celestial Bodies (3)

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CURRENT STATUS OF JAPAN'S ACTIVE DEVELOPMENT OF SPACE LAWS AND SYSTEMS FOR  
LEGAL COMPLIANCE IN THE AGE OF CELESTIAL EXPLORATION

**Abstract**

In December 2021, Japan became the fourth country in the world to enact a domestic law on space resources. One year after the enactment (November 2022), the government of Japan issued the first license to a space resources project by a private enterprise under the law. Furthermore, in November 2021, Japan formulated the world's first guideline for applying for license under the Space Activities Act for on-orbit services. These legal instruments have given legal foresight to non-governmental enterprises that envision space resource activities on the Moon and space debris removal services in orbit, and have encouraged their commercialization. For a long time, Japan's domestic space legislation lagged behind other space-faring countries, but since the enactment of the Basic Space Law in 2008 as a bipartisan Diet member's bill, Japan has caught up with other countries by enacting the Space Activities Act and the Remote Sensing Act, and has also achieved the above-mentioned advanced legislation one after another. Similarly, in the field of international law, Japan became an original signatory to the Artemis Accords in October 2020, and signed a Memorandum of Understanding concerning cooperation on a human outpost in the lunar vicinity "GATEWAY" with NASA under the Intergovernmental Agreement on the International Space Station in December 2020. In addition, the Framework Agreement for Comprehensive Space Cooperation, which has been a long-standing issue between the United States and Japan, was signed in January 2023 and is expected to be ratified and enter into force following the respective domestic procedures. This Framework Agreement cites the Artemis Accord and is the first treaty to partially incorporate the Artemis Accord into a legally binding agreement. This paper will present the notable features of these legal developments, and the domestic background and circumstances that have led to them, as well as the actual implementation status. This paper will also analyze how these legal instruments relate to Japan and its partner countries' international obligations including the Outer Space Treaty and the co-relations among these domestic and international instruments.