

Treasury Department Reaffirms Commitment to Fostering Internet Freedom and Supporting the Iranian People



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WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of the Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) today highlighted existing guidance to underscore the U.S. Government’s ongoing commitment to ensure that the Iranian people can exercise their universal right to freedom of expression and can freely access information via the Internet. OFAC’s guidance, authorizations, and licensing policies support the Administration’s continued commitment to promote the free flow of information to citizens of Iran – which the Iranian regime has consistently denied to its people.


“The Iranian regime has demonstrated contempt for fundamental freedoms, such as expression, assembly, and association. By restricting access to satellite services, blocking access to social media sites and apps, and imposing other Internet restrictions, the regime seeks to impede the Iranian people from freely communicating with the outside world and with each other,” said Secretary of the Treasury Steven T. Mnuchin. “The Iranian people should be free to seek, receive, and impart information as they see fit. The United States is committed to empowering Iranians to engage with the world, express themselves, and hold the Iranian regime accountable for its actions.”


OFAC continues to foster and support the free flow of information to the Iranian people through the following authorizations and licensing policies:

General Licenses. OFAC has two Iran-related general licenses that authorize the provision of certain hardware, software, and services incident to the exchange of personal communications over the Internet, such as instant messaging, chat and email, and social networking software and services, as well as certain apps for mobile operating systems, anti-censorship tools, anti-tracking software, mobile phones, and other devices.

- [Section 560.540](#) of the Iranian Transactions and Sanctions Regulations (ITSR), 31 C.F.R. Part 560, authorizes the exportation from the United States or by U.S. persons, wherever located, to persons in Iran of certain publicly available, no-cost services incident to the exchange of personal communications over the Internet and certain publicly available, no-cost software

necessary to enable such services.

- [General License D-1](#)  (GL D-1), which is broader than the general license in section 560.540 of the ITSR, authorizes the export and reexport of fee-based services and software incident to the exchange of personal communications over the Internet, as well as the export, reexport, or provision of certain software and hardware incident to personal communications. The Annex to GL D-1 provides a list of services, software, and hardware that are considered “incident to personal communications” and eligible for export or reexport to Iran under this general license.

Guidance. OFAC has provided extensive guidance on its website on these general licenses, including “[Interpretive Guidance and a Statement of Licensing Policy on Internet Freedom in Iran](#) ” (describing the authorization in Section 560.540 of the ITSR and OFAC’s policy for reviewing specific licenses in this area) and multiple “Frequently Asked Questions” (FAQs) on GL D-1 ([FAQs 337-348](#) and [FAQs 434-443](#)).

Licensing Policies. OFAC will consider applications to provide products and services outside the scope of these authorizations on a case-by-case basis based on U.S. foreign policy and national security interests. Section 560.540 includes a specific licensing policy for the export of other services and software incident to information-sharing over the Internet, subject to certain conditions. Additionally, GL D-1 also includes a specific licensing policy for the export of other services, software, or hardware incident to personal communications that are outside the scope of the general license.

As the Iranian people seek to exercise their universal right to freedom of expression and continue to seek access to information via the Internet, OFAC remains committed to engaging with the private sector to provide guidance on the range of activities authorized by section 560.540 and GL D-1 of the ITSR. If you require assistance with interpreting the authorizations contained in section 560.540 and GL D-1 of the ITSR or assessing how they apply to your situation, or need guidance on how to apply for a specific license, please contact [OFAC’s Licensing Division](#) online, by phone at 202-622-2480, or by email at ofac_feedback@do.treas.gov.

[View the OFAC guidance concerning Iran and GL D-1.](#)

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