



Press Release

December 17, 2024
ispace, inc.

ispace Obtains License to Conduct Lunar Surface Operations from Japanese Government for Second Mission

TOKYO – December 17, 2024 –ispace, inc. (ispace) ([TOKYO: 9348](#)), a global lunar exploration company, announced today that it has received a license from the Japanese government to conduct on the Moon as part of its upcoming lunar mission.

This marks the second time ispace has received such a license. ispace also received a license to operate Mission 1 in 2022, the first time a commercial company had been granted a license by the Japanese government.

The license, granted under Japan’s Act on the Promotion of Business Activities for the Exploration and Development of Space Resources (Space Resources Act), was provided by the Cabinet Office in advance of ispace’s planned Mission 2 set to launch on a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket from Cape Canaveral, Fla., no earlier than January 2025.

“Today, we granted permission for ispace to conduct its lunar mission under the Space Resources Act. This is the second mission to be granted permission under the Act, with the first also obtained by ispace, which at the time attempted the world's first private, commercial soft landing on the moon,” said Minoru Kiuchi, Japan’s Minister of State for Space Policy at a press conference announcing the granting of the license. “As this will be a second attempt using the experience gained from the first, the government is looking forward to its success. If ispace is able to transfer ownership of lunar regolith to NASA, it will be a ground-breaking event for commercial space especially in Japan. As space development around the world becomes more prevalent, we hope Japan leads the international community by building a track record of resource utilization by private operators based on this law, in cooperation with the United States, Europe, and other countries.”

“We are very pleased to receive this approval for our planned activities on the lunar surface. During Mission 2, we will transfer the lunar regolith we collect to NASA, and we believe that this initiative will become the cornerstone for future commercial use of space resources,” said Takeshi Hakamada, Founder & CEO of ispace. “We will continue to work with various public and private sector stakeholders to develop the lunar economy and advance human life beyond the confines of Earth.”

The license allows ispace to complete a contract awarded by NASA in December 2020, to acquire regolith from the lunar surface and transfer ownership to the space agency. During the mission, ispace is expected to collect regolith that accumulates on the footpad of the landing gear of the RESILIENCE lunar lander during the touchdown on the surface, photograph the collected regolith with the TENACIOUS micro rover and conduct an “in-place” transfer of



ownership of the lunar regolith to NASA. After ownership transfer, the collected material becomes the property of NASA, under the Artemis program. Under the contract, the lunar regolith will not be returned to Earth.

Under a second contract awarded to ispace EUROPE S.A. (ispace EU) by NASA, ispace EU will acquire the lunar material via the TENACIOUS micro rover. To fulfill this contract, the micro rover will use a scoop to pick up regolith from the lunar surface, photograph the regolith in the scoop and conduct an “in-place” transfer of ownership of the lunar regolith to NASA.

In order to receive a license to operate, ispace presented a business activity plan for Mission 2 to Japan’s Cabinet Office under the Space Activities Act and the Promotion of Business Activities for the Exploration and Development of Space Resources.

ispace is leveraging its global presence through its three business units in Japan, the U.S., and Luxembourg, for the simultaneous development of upcoming missions. Mission 2 is led by ispace Japan. Mission 3, debuting the APEX 1.0 lunar lander, is led by ispace-U.S. and is expected to launch in 2026. Mission 6, which will utilize the Series 3 lander, currently being designed in Japan, is scheduled to be launched by 2027.

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About ispace

ispace, a global lunar resource development company with the vision, “Expand our planet. Expand our future.”, specializes in designing and building lunar landers and rovers. ispace aims to extend the sphere of human life into space and create a sustainable world by providing high-frequency, low-cost transportation services to the Moon. The company has business entities in Japan, Luxembourg, and the United States with approximately 300 employees worldwide. For more information, visit: www.ispace-inc.com and follow us on X: [@ispace_inc](https://twitter.com/ispace_inc).