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3GPP Non-Terrestrial Networks

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"Direct to device from space" flavors

Different ways of connecting a smartphone/IoT device to NTN

SAT Proprietary

- Building proprietary satellite technology into the smartphone/device
- *"Legacy" NTN-specific spectrum*

Pre Rel17 3GPP

- NTN for existing 3GPP devices (not Rel17+ NTN-capable devices)
- Requires network compensation for NTN-specifics like Doppler and timing drifts
- Terrestrial spectrum

3GPP Rel17 / 18 / 19

- Support of NR & NB-IoT/eMTC
- Includes handhelds and VSATs
- First NB-IoT devices available 3GPP NTN-specific spectrum
- ~1.6 GHz (L-band; n253-n255)
- ~2 GHz (S-band; n256)
- ~30 GHz (Ka-band; n510-n512)

Evolution path (incl. 6G)



3GPP-based NTN release 17-19

Standardized enhancements of 5G/IoT lead to **performance improvements** (throughput, capacity, mobility, battery life, ...)

- UE is responsible for **time/frequency synchronization**
 - PHY/MAC layers & core enhanced for large delays
- System information defines **satellite assistance info**
 - Serving and neighbor NTN cells
 - Information on TN coverage within NTN cells
- Mobility schemes rely on **deterministic satellite movement**
 - Conditional handover, RACH-less, satellite switch with unchanged PCI



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NTN service in Europe

3GPP provides an evolution path for satellite communication with enhanced performance, but per-country deployments in Europe poses (regulatory) challenges?



Beam size versus country size/border shape



Lawful Intercept implies the CN is in the country being served?

TS 33.127 Figure 6.2-2: 5G core-anchored LI architecture

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