

HOW TO APPLY FOR A CHINA ICP LICENSE

An ICP license is a mandatory step for companies wishing to host their website in Mainland China. Without an ICP registration number, you will not be eligible for China-based web hosting and CDN services. Your domain also runs the risk of being blacklisted for not abiding by Chinese content laws.

Foreign companies successfully apply for an ICP license for China on a daily basis, but this is not to say that the process is easy or straightforward. This info paper will help you walk through the procedure of applying for an ICP license.



ICP license is a registration number issued by MIIT

Overview of China ICP License

An ICP (Internet Content Provider) license is a registration number issued by MIIT (Ministry of Industry and Information Technology) China and divided into two certification categories:

- **ICP Filing (known as 'Bei'An' in Chinese):** An ICP Filing, also referred to as a 'recordal' by some sources, is the first level of ICP certification. All applicants need to apply for an ICP Filing regardless of whether their website is commercial or non-commercial in scope. After obtaining an ICP

Filing, websites that are purely informational and not commercial in the form of direct sales can access hosting and CDN services for their website.

- **ICP Commercial License (known as 'Zheng' in Chinese):** An ICP Commercial License allows online platforms or third-party sellers of goods and services to host their website or access CDN services in China. To apply for an ICP Commercial License, you must first obtain an ICP Filing.



A registered business is a must for an ICP license

Eligibility

To apply for an ICP license you must have a registered business in China, and this is normally the biggest challenge for overseas applicants. If you have the appropriate business registration in China, then your application will be managed by your Chinese web hosting provider. For example, the responsibility for receiving your application materials and applying for the license lies with Alibaba Cloud if you are our customer.

The relevant licenses required for foreign companies to apply for an ICP Filing are Wholly Foreign Owned Enterprise (WFOE), Representative Office (RO), and Joint-Venture (JV). Please note that Representative Offices and Wholly Foreign Owned Enterprises are not eligible to apply for an ICP Commercial License. Once your documents are verified and approved by MIIT, you will be notified of the outcome by SMS (Chinese phone number) and email.



All documents must be submitted in Chinese characters

Application Material

As a foreign applicant you will need to provide the following documents:

For an ICP Filing

- Website domain name certificate
- Copy of Passport and Temporary Residence / Residency Permit of the owner of the website/business
- Photo ID of the Webmaster in-charge of the website (must be a Chinese national) with an official backdrop. Alibaba Cloud customers can have the photo backdrop mailed to a location in China free of charge
- Completed and signed ICP application form (downloaded from web provider website)
- Completed and signed Authenticity Verification Form

- issued by the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology
- Certification of a China-registered business with company seal
- Chinese mobile number of Webmaster

Additional Documents for a Commercial ICP License

- Proof of 100 million RMB in minimum registered company capital

Application material requirements may also differ according to the provincial government branch of MIIT that you are applying to. Applicants must apply in the province where their business is registered.



Applicants must apply in the province of their business registration

Note: All the above documents have to be filed by you or a company representative in Chinese. ICP licenses take 20 business days to process.



Applications may need relevant industry authority approval

Special Requirements

Applications for gaming websites require additional certification in the form of a 'Business License of Internet Culture.' Internet Content Providers engaged in Internet information services like news, publishing, education, healthcare, pharmaceuticals, and medical devices need approval from respective relevant authorities. For example, a website that provides

online education of English courses for high school students will need a pre-approval from the relevant educational authorities before applying for an ICP license for China. Please note that the ICP application cannot be filed without pre-approval (if applicable) from the relevant industry body. Also, applicants from the above mentioned industries tend to experience a high failure rate.



ICP license arrives within 20 business days

Application Procedure for Obtaining a China ICP License

Submit the required documents to your web provider in Chinese

- Once the documents are submitted, they are reviewed by your web provider, who might ask you to submit additional documents if required.
- After successful validation, your web-hosting provider will submit your documents to the Provincial Government Branch of the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT) for further processing.

web provider with the appropriate reason, who in turn will inform you about the concerns and the need for any additional documents.



Start purchasing hosting/CDN services after obtaining ICP license

Apply for a PSB ICP Filing

- You can typically expect to receive the ICP registration number within 20 business days of successfully submitting the documents to a hosting provider.
- The last step is to apply for a PSB (Public Security Bureau) Filing within 30 days of receiving the ICP registration number. This step is necessary to ensure that the applicant is not involved in any criminal or sensitive activities. As the PSB application portal is hosted on an official government website, your application must be submitted in Chinese.



Registered information must be up-to-date or license can be revoked

MIIT reviews your ICP license application documents

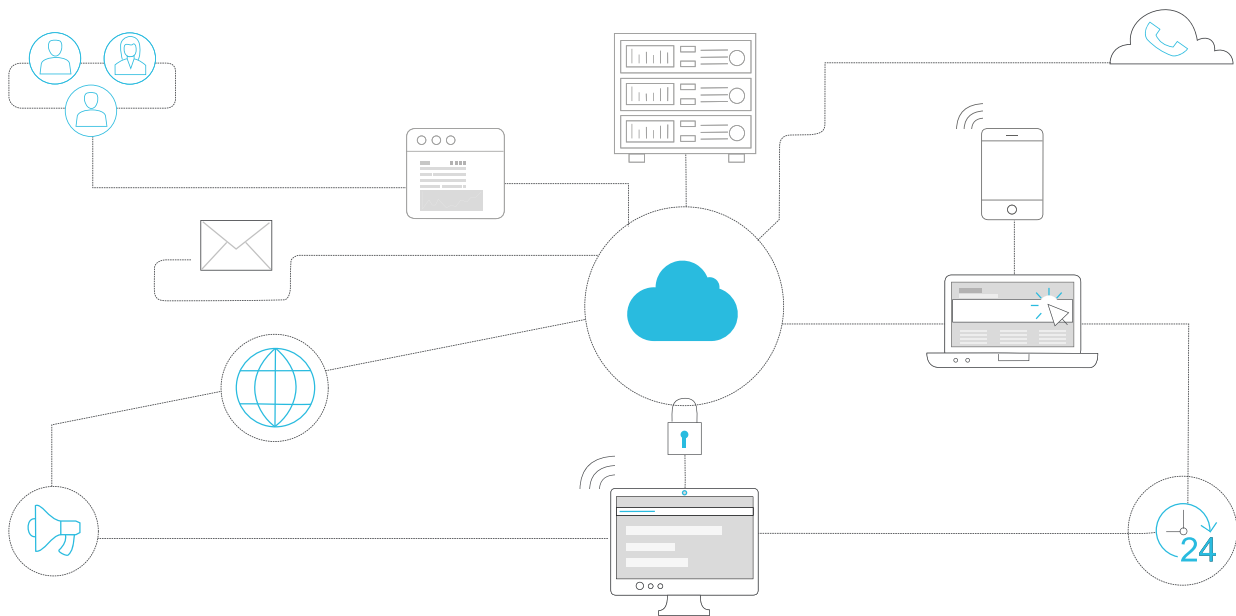
- Once you documents are verified and approved by MIIT, you will be notified of the outcome by SMS (Chinese phone number) and email.
- In case your application is not approved, MIIT will notify your

Submit the required documents to start accessing China-based web services

- After you have obtained the appropriate ICP license you are eligible to purchase hosting or CDN services in China. At the time of purchase, your web hosting provider will automatically be able to verify whether the domain

name has a valid and linked ICP registration.

- It is important to keep the information you registered with MIIT up-to-date. Otherwise, you may run the risk of a fine and your ICP license being later revoked.



Alibaba Cloud offers online support for filing an ICP application. Please [Contact Alibaba Cloud](#) for more details.

References

1. MIIT Filing Requirements (Chinese)
<http://www.miitbeian.gov.cn/?spm=a3c0i.7939108.401983.10.wJ9PHj>