

RESPONSES TO

Consultation Paper on Formulation of a Regulatory Framework for Application-based Linear Television Distribution (ALTD) Services (Including Free Ad-Supported Streaming Television (FAST) Services)



Telecom Regulatory Authority of India

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TOTAL RESPONSES

1

Consultation published on

Summary

Regulating digital TV: TRAI seeks views on streaming-based television services

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has released a consultation paper on creating a regulatory framework for Application-based Linear Television Distribution (ALTD) services, including Free Ad-Supported Streaming Television (FAST) services.

These services deliver traditional TV-like channels over the internet, often for free and supported by advertisements. The consultation looks at how these emerging services fit into India's existing broadcasting framework.

Why should you care?

The way people watch television is changing rapidly, with more viewers shifting from cable and DTH to internet-based platforms.

This affects everyday experiences:

- How people access TV content
- Whether content is free or paid
- The type of ads and programming shown

It also connects to larger issues:

- Fair competition between traditional TV and digital platforms
- Consumer protection and content standards
- Regulation of digital media and platforms

Overview of Key Information

Stage: Consultation Paper

Feedback Status: Open

Deadline: 4 May 2026 (comments), 18 May 2026 (counter-comments)

Sector: Broadcasting / Digital Media / Telecom

Body: Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI)

Type: Regulatory Framework Consultation

Stakeholder Mapping

Who this affects

- Viewers using smart TVs, mobile apps, and streaming platforms
- Broadcasters and content creators
- OTT platforms and app-based TV providers
- Cable TV, DTH, and IPTV operators
- Advertisers and digital platforms

Who shapes the policy

- Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB)
- TRAI
- Industry stakeholders such as broadcasters, MSOs, and tech platforms
- Research and policy experts

- Smart TV manufacturers
- Operating system providers
- Content aggregators and distributors

Key Proposals / Issues for Consultation

1. Defining ALTD and FAST services

- Services that stream linear TV channels over the internet through apps
- Often free and supported by advertising
- May also include on-demand content
- Currently not clearly defined in Indian regulations

This aims to clearly identify where these services fit within the broadcasting system

1. Identifying the primary responsible entity

- Multiple players involved: app providers, TV manufacturers, OS providers, content aggregators
- Question of who should be responsible for compliance and licensing
- Application providers seen as central in many models

This addresses accountability in a multi-layered ecosystem

1. Creating a regulatory and authorisation framework

- Existing TV distribution services require licenses (DTH, cable, IPTV)
- ALTD services currently operate without similar regulatory oversight
- Proposal to bring these services under a structured authorisation system

This aims to ensure parity with traditional broadcasting services

1. Ensuring content compliance and consumer protection

- Concerns about adherence to Programme Code and Advertising Code
- Lack of consistent monitoring, grievance redressal, and accountability
- Need for safeguards against objectionable or misleading content

This focuses on protecting viewers in a digital environment

1. Addressing regulatory gaps and market imbalance

- FAST services may offer TV channels without following existing licensing rules
- Pay channels sometimes available for free on these platforms
- Creates uneven competition with regulated operators like DTH and cable

This highlights concerns around fairness in the broadcasting ecosystem

- Multiple business models involving manufacturers, apps, and aggregators
- Revenue primarily from advertising and revenue-sharing arrangements
- Data collection typically anonymised and usage-based

This reflects how the industry currently operates

1. Tracking growth and changing viewer behaviour
 - Rapid rise in connected TV and internet-based viewing
 - Increasing shift from traditional TV to digital platforms
 - FAST services growing due to low cost and accessibility

This indicates why regulation is being considered now

1. Exploring future regulatory needs
 - Whether ALTD services should be treated like traditional broadcasters
 - Possibility of introducing new licensing categories
 - Need for long-term framework as services evolve

This looks at how regulation should adapt to future trends

Additional Resources

- TRAI Consultation Paper on ALTD and FAST Services, [here](#).

Have your say

Television is no longer limited to cable or satellite—it is increasingly app-based and internet-driven.

Public responses

[What are public responses?](#)



Paritosh

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