

TELECOM REGULATORY AUTHORITY OF INDIA



E-NEWSLETTER



OCTOBER 2023



Dr. P.D. Vaghela, Chairman, TRAI delivered Keynote at GSMA Mobile 360 APAC and Policy Leaders Forum 2023 being held at Seoul, Republic of Korea, 7-8 September 2023.

Recommendations

TRAI released recommendations on “Issues related to FM Radio Broadcasting”

Ministry of Information and Broadcasting vide its letter dated 11th May 2022 sought recommendations of TRAI on the following two issues:

- a. Removing the linkage to Non-Refundable One Time Entry Fee (NOTEF) in the formula for annual fee as prescribed in the FM Ph-III Policy Guidelines dated 25.07.2011.
- b. Extending the existing FM license period of 15 years by 3 years.

TRAI issued a Consultation Paper (CP) on ‘Issues related to FM Radio Broadcasting’ on 9th February 2023. After considering comments of stakeholders TRAI released its recommendations on 5th September 2023.

Excerpts of the recommendations are as follows:

- i. The annual license fee of an FM radio channel should be di-linked from the Non-Refundable One Time Entry charge (NOTEF).
- ii. The license fee should be calculated as 4% of the Gross Revenue (GR) of the FM radio channel during the respective financial year. GST should be excluded from Gross Revenue (GR).
- iii. The Government may take appropriate measures to provide relief to the FM radio operators to address challenges posed due to COVID-19 pandemic.
- iv. Private FM radio operators should be allowed to broadcast news and current affairs programs, limited to 10 minutes each clock hour of broadcasting.
- v. The program code of conduct as applicable to All India Radio for news content for may also be applied to Private FM Radio channels.
- vi. Functions or features pertaining to FM radio should remain enabled and activated on all mobile handsets having the necessary hardware. Built-in FM radio receiver in mobile handset must not be subjected to any form of disablement or deactivation.
- vii. A Standing Committee, headed by a senior officer of Joint Secretary or above level, to oversee and monitor the compliance by mobile phone manufacturers (or importers) may be established by MeitY. The committee should include key stakeholders such as MIB, AROI, MAIT, and ICEA.
- viii. An online grievance redressal portal should be provided for submitting information or complaints of case of any noncompliance as regards enablement of FM radio functionality in such mobile handsets that have the necessary functionality for FM receivers.



https://traai.gov.in/sites/default/files/Recommendation_05092023.pdf

TRAI releases recommendations on "Rationalization of Entry Fee and Bank Guarantees" on 19th September 2023

Department of Telecommunication (DoT) vide letter dated 3rd March 2022, sent a reference to TRAI seeking, inter alia, the rationalization of Entry Fees and Bank Guarantees of the various licenses operating in the telecom sector.

Entry Fee is a fixed one-time amount that prospective entrants must pay to enter a market. Entry Fees are typically non-refundable and constitute start-up costs for a firm. Whereas, a Bank Guarantee is a type of financial instrument to safeguard the interests of the Government as it ensures that the licensee pays its dues on time and fulfills their obligations as per the terms and conditions prescribed in the license agreement.

Based on the reference, a Consultation paper on "Rationalization of Entry Fee and Bank Guarantees" was issued by TRAI on 26th July 2022.

In an environment of rapid technological transformation in the telecommunications sector, in order to facilitate the orderly growth of the telecom sector and Ease of Doing Business, TRAI has made recommendations to the Government for reducing the entry fees across various license authorizations and the merging of bank guarantees. It is expected that reductions in entry fee will lead to the entry of new service providers in the market, increase investment and enhance competition in telecom sector. The merging of bank guarantees will encourage ease of doing business and enable licensees to make investments in the sector thereby ushering the growth in the sector. Both these measures will improve the quality of service and enhance consumer welfare.

The Authority has also recommended no entry fee at the time of renewal of license. Such a move will ease the financial burden on existing, as well as new entrants, and will be beneficial for UL (VNO) licensees especially.

Following are the prominent features of the recommendations:

- i) The entry fees for Unified License (UL) as well as Unified License (Virtual Network Operator) (UL (VNO)) licenses should be reduced from the current level.
- ii) No entry fee for M2M ("A"/ "B"/ "C"), Audio conferencing/ Audiotex/ Voice mail service, ISP "C" recommended.

- iii) Entry fee for following UL authorizations should be rationalized:
- a) **Access service:** from Rs 1 crore to Rs 50 Lakh for each telecom circle/ metro area; from 0.5 crore to 25 lakh for J&K and North east each.
 - b) **NLD and ILD:** from Rs 2.5 crore to Rs 50 lakh.
 - c) **PMRTS:** from Rs. 50 thousand to Rs. 20 thousand for each telecom circle/ metro area.
 - d) **ISP "B":** from Rs. 2 lakh to Rs. 50 thousand for each telecom circle and Rs. 25 thousand for J&K and North-East each.
 - e) **ISP "A":** from Rs. 30 lakh to Rs. 10 lakh.
- iv) The entry fee for UL (VNO) authorizations has been significantly reduced to encourage competition and improve services.
- v) There should not be any entry fee at the time of license renewal.
- vi) For Unified License, Financial Bank Guarantee (FBG) and Performance Bank Guarantee (PBG) should be merged into a single Bank Guarantee for securitizing the dues, to cover the violation of license conditions and to ensure the performance under license agreement.
- vii) Similarly, for Mobile Number Portability license, FBG and PBG should be merged into a single Bank Guarantee.
- viii) For enhancing the ease of doing business, the process for submission of electronic bank guarantee (eBG) should be adopted.



https://traai.gov.in/sites/default/files/Recommendation_19092023.pdf

TRAI released Recommendations on "Issues related to Low Power Small Range FM Radio Broadcasting".

The Ministry of I&B had received an application from M/s PVR Limited, seeking permission to establish a Community Radio Station, to be used for commercial purposes. It intends to establish a low power FM transmission system, to be used commercially for Drive-in theatre application. The idea behind the application is that a theatre-sized screen may be placed in an open space for viewing the content and a low power FM Transmitter, with a range confined to that space, may be used to broadcast the audio of the content on a certain frequency. The driven-in audience then would be able to tune in to the said frequency in their cars and listen to the content. This would avoid any noise pollution. The idea is additionally inspired by the restrictions imposed on large public gatherings due to ongoing pandemic.

In this context, TRAI received a reference from MIB regarding introduction of new category of service provider for using low power small range FM Radio broadcasting. To deliberate on the issues, TRAI issued a Consultation Paper (CP) on 'Issues related to Low Power Small Range FM Radio Broadcasting' on 17th April 2023. After considering comments of stakeholders, TRAI released its

recommendations on 21st September 2023

The key features of the recommendations are as follows:

- A. In this recommendation, TRAI introduces a new category of service provider for provision of low power small range FM Radio and this is termed as 'Low Power Small Range FM Radio Broadcasting'.
 - B. An online application portal will help in granting license/registration/authorization by a simple registration process.
 - C. Approval by Telecom Engineering Centre (TEC) for transmitting equipment for low power small range FM broadcasting.
 - D. Eligible entities to hold license registration authorization for 'Low Power Small Range FM Broadcasting':
 - a) Individuals who are citizens of India and above eighteen years of age. Following are not eligible to hold license, registration/ authorization for 'Low Power Small Range FM Broadcasting':
 - i. A person with an unsound mind and stands so declared by a competent court;
A person having unsound mind and has been declared so by a competent court;
 - ii. A person who is an un-discharged insolvent.
A person who is a retired bankrupt.
 - iii. A person convicted by a court of any offense, whether involving moral turpitude or otherwise.
 - b) A company registered under the Companies Act 2013 including LLP and partnership firms.
- Those who are not eligible to hold license/registration/ authorization for 'Low Power Small Range FM Broadcasting' are as follows:
- i. Political Parties and their affiliate organizations; [including students, women's, trade unions and such other wings affiliated to these parties]
 - ii. A company controlled by or associated with a political body;
 - iii. A company controlled by or associated with a religious body;
 - iv. A company that has been convicted by a court of any offense, whether involving moral turpitude or otherwise.
A company convicted by a court of any offense, whether involving moral turpitude or otherwise.
- E. Permission period for 'Low Power Small Range FM Radio Broadcasting' service should be:
 - (i). up to thirty days
 - (ii). up to five years.
 - F. There should be no application/entry fee

G. License/ Permission/Authorization Fee of Rs. 1000/- for a permission of up to thirty days and Rs. 10,000/- per annum for a permission of five years.

H. WPC should conduct a thorough evaluation and reserve appropriate frequency spots for the specific needs of low-power, small-range FM broadcasting.

I. Frequency for low power small range FM broadcasting should be assigned administratively by WPC through online portal within two days of submitting the application.

J. License/Registration/Authorization holders for low power small range FM broadcasting should be allowed to deploy any type of transmission technologies (analog/digital / any other).

K. The maximum permissible transmission range of 'Low Power Small Range Radio Broadcasting' should be 500 meters.

L. The licensed area of frequency assignment in case of low power small range FM be defined as location-specific based on the precise geographical coordinates such as longitude and latitude of the of the intended service location (be it a building, stadium, convention center, expo area etc.).

M. Maximum permissible transmission power should be 1 watt for low power small range FM broadcasting.



https://traai.gov.in/sites/default/files/Recommendations_21092023.pdf

Recommendations on “Promoting Networking and Telecom Equipment Manufacturing (NATEM) in India” issued on 22nd Sept. 2023

Under Digital India program, electronics manufacturing is one of the key thrust areas. Further, National Digital Communications Policy 2018 (NDCP- 2108) envisages to maximize India’s contributions to Global Value Chains, by focusing on domestic production, increasing exports and reducing the import burden in respect of networking and telecommunications equipment, called as Networking and Telecom Equipment (NATE) in short. Given fast-paced roll-out of advanced communications technologies as well as likely proliferation of data centres, edge data centres, IoT-based networks in Smart cities, the scope of indigenous equipment manufacturing has adopted the contemporary outlook.

In accordance with the objectives of NDCP-2018 and basis reference received from Department of Telecommunications (DoT) on certain aspects of manufacturing of NATE, Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has visited the topic in totality and has issued the recommendations on “Promoting Networking and Telecom Equipment Manufacturing (NATEM) in India”. Before issuing these recommendations, TRAI has done extensive consultation with stakeholders including Manufacturers, Service Providers, and Government departments/agencies involved.

The objective of these recommendations is to move forward from the concept of "increasing domestic production" and to focus on “local value addition in global value chains."

The main focus areas which are covered in the recommendations are as follows:

- (i) facilitate local value addition in participation with cross-country value chains;
- (ii) due emphasis on “Telecom software” as a separate product line in accordance with contemporary softwarization of network elements in New Generation Networks;
- (iii) facilitating exports from India
- (iv) nurturing entrepreneurship by promoting Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and Start-ups.
- (v) promote a robust component eco system in India.



https://traai.gov.in/sites/default/files/Recommendation_23092023.pdf

Recommendations on "Improving Telecom Infrastructure in Northeastern States of India" issued on 22nd Sept 2023

TRAI has been working towards improving telecom infrastructure in remote areas of the country from time to time. Earlier, TRAI had also made some key recommendations to government for improving telecom connectivity in remote and far-flung regions of India.

The Government of India is making several efforts to increase telecom connectivity in the North-Eastern states but due to the scarcity of adequate transmission bandwidth (OFC/ Microwave/ Satellite) there is lack of high-speed mobile based internet and fixed broadband connectivity. The North-Eastern states of India suffer from a significant digital divide because of number of reasons and these reasons include Inhospitable Terrain Conditions, Poor Availability of Power Supply, Transmission Media Related Limitations, Poor Return of Investment (RoI) prospects for TSPs, Right of Way (RoW) related issues. Due to this division, the socio-economic development of the area has been hindered; essential services and information are not available in time. It widens the developmental gap between the Northeast part and other part of India.

The Authority held extensive consultations/interactions (in the form of meetings, review of progress, field visits, etc.) with the major stake holders like TSPs (i.e. Airtel, RJIL, VIL), Infrastructure Providers, Telecom PSUs (i.e. BSNL, RailTel, PGCIL), State Government departments, DoT field units, USOF, Gram Panchayat Administrations, Common Service Centre(CSCs) at Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, and Sikkim, and Tripura to assess the current status of the telecom infrastructure, issues in the deployment of telecom infrastructure, and policy measures required for further improvement for providing seamless connectivity to all population in NE States. Based on the inputs received and analysis, the Authority has formulated its recommendations on ‘**Improving Telecom Infrastructure in Northeastern States of India**’.

TRAI inter-alia recommends the following measures:

- i. To improve state Right of Way policies
- ii. Provision for support from USOF for installing solar backup

- iii. Viability gap funding for OFC backbone connectivity
- iv. Satellite backhails to mobile tower sites in remote and difficult areas
- v. To make the 4G saturation project more impactful priority should be given to all such uncovered/non-4G villages which have Schools, Health Centres, Police Stations, Post Offices, Ration Shops, Anganwadi Centres, etc. irrespective of the population of the village
- vi. budgetary assistance from central government in the form of grant to the states (including those in North East Region) only for the purpose of assisting certain village level government institutions to obtain a BharatNet connection



https://traai.gov.in/sites/default/files/Recommendations_23092023.pdf

Recommendations on "Improving Backhaul Telecom Infrastructure in far-flung areas of Himachal Pradesh" issued on 29th Sept 2023

TRAI has been continuously endeavoring towards improving backhaul and access telecom infrastructure especially in remote, hilly, and high-altitude terrain areas of the country from time to time. The Authority in its earlier recommendation on '*Improving Telecom Connectivity and Infrastructure in Far-Flung areas of Himachal Pradesh*' dated 12th December 2022 had highlighted the need for a comprehensive investment plan for the core transmission backhaul network, covering all tehsils/talukas in four identified districts (Chamba, Kullu, Lahaul & Spiti, and Mandi), and also stated that a separate recommendation will be released addressing the issue. These four districts are relatively remote and underdeveloped compared to other parts of the state, leading to a lack of proper telecom and backhaul infrastructure.

In line with the aforesaid recommendation, a team of senior TRAI officials visited Himachal Pradesh in June 2023 and conduct a comprehensive assessment of core transmission backhaul network, engaged in extensive interactions with relevant stakeholders, including TSPs, State Government officials, Senior officials from the security forces etc, are conducted by this team to get information about the ground-level situation.

Based on the analysis and with an aim to establish a robust, sustainable, and resilient backhaul telecom network, the Authority suo-moto has finalized the recommendations on '*Improving Backhaul Telecom Infrastructure in far-flung areas of Himachal Pradesh*'. These proactive endeavors will ensure that even in geographically challenging regions, access to reliable and advanced telecom services is available.



https://traai.gov.in/sites/default/files/Recommendation_29092023.pdf

Consultations

TRAI released Consultation Paper on "Digital Inclusion in the Era of Emerging Technologies" on 14th Sept. 2023

This consultation paper aims to explore and address the challenges and opportunities presented by the rapid advancement of emerging technologies, with a focus on ensuring inclusivity for all segments of society and industries particularly Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).

In today's world, being connected online has become a way of life. Connectivity works as an essential tool for everyday functions such as accessing information, receiving basic services, working remotely, pursuing education, conducting financial transactions, and staying connected with loved ones. TRAI recognizes that digital inclusion is crucial empowerment of every citizen of the country at right moment, failing which the gaps in access of digital services may widen further and thereby depriving large segments of the society from an inclusive growth along with others who are well connected and availing the benefits of the digital services. In the consultation paper, TRAI emphasizes the need for a robust policy framework and collaborative efforts among stakeholders to ensure participation of individuals in digital economic activities.

India has made remarkable progress in digital transformation, emerging as the world's second-largest telecom market in terms of subscribers. The country has experienced significant growth in mobile broadband subscriptions and internet usage, along with a substantial reduction in data costs. The government's initiatives such as Digital India, National Digital Communications Policy 2018, National Broadband Mission 2019, BharatNet, Common Service Centres (CSCs), and Universal Service Obligation Fund (USaF) have played a pivotal role in expanding connectivity and promoting digital inclusion across the nation.

The success story of Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) for an inclusive financial society has been well acknowledged across the world. The Jan Dhan- Aadhaar-Mobile (JAM) trinity has played a pivotal role in transparent direct benefit transfers of welfare subsidies to bank accounts of the underserved. UPI has empowered users to conveniently transfer money from one bank account to another in real-time. Despite these achievements, it is observed that disparities in internet broadband penetration and its effective usage across different sections of society and geographies still persist. There are concerns related to accessibility, affordability and effective & safe usage of the services and applications working on broadband connections, specially by the persons with marginalised communities, woman & girls and participation of micro or small entrepreneurs operating at remote and difficult terrains or in villages, which need to be addressed in a timebound manner.

TRAI in its consultation paper has analyzed the various gaps in digital inclusion that exist in the country, including mobile internet usage gap, rural-urban internet penetration disparities, gender gap in internet access, etc. along with those gaps which are recognized by some global indices. We can actively prioritize inclusion by building an ecosystem that is beneficial for everyone, and foster a more equitable and accessible digital economy.

The rapid pace of technological advancements and launch of 5G enabled services including Artificial

Intelligence / Machine Learning based services and the associated costs of adopting and utilizing these technologies can widen the digital divide further, particularly for marginalized communities and underserved regions. Unequal access of infrastructure limited digital literacy, and affordability issues could hinder the equitable distribution and utilization of emerging technologies, exacerbating existing disparities in digital inclusion. To ensure comprehensive digital inclusion, it is imperative to address the gaps which are likely to arise due to emerging technologies.

TRAI has also identified various challenges being faced by Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector in the country from the adoption of new and emerging digital technology solutions. As MSME sector contributes significantly towards the nation's economy, it is imperative that the MSMEs are empowered to contribute more towards the digital economy through new emerging technology solutions, especially the micro-enterprises as majority of the MSMEs are micro-enterprises.

The consultation paper may be accessed from the following link/ QR code.



https://traai.gov.in/sites/default/files/Cons_P_14092023.pdf

TRAI released draft Registration of Consumer Organisations (Amendment) Regulations, 2023 for comments on 14th Sept. 2023

TRAI had notified the Registration of Consumer Organisations Regulations, 2013 (1 of 2013) [hereinafter referred to as the "principal regulations"] on 21st February 2013.

Presently, the Authority, under the principal regulations are registering consumer organisations state-wise who can assist Authority by performing the roles mentioned in the regulations.

In a rapidly evolving digital landscape, emerging technologies like 5G, 6G, Artificial Intelligence (AI), Internet of Things (IoT) etc. hold immense potential for the betterment of the lives of consumers. The use cases of these technologies can be helpful for different sections of society. AI and IoT offer communities various opportunities to access real-time market information, optimise resource management, and enhance crop yields. AI-powered weather forecasts coupled with IoT sensor aids may help farmers to take informed agricultural decisions. 5G-enabled high-speed connectivity empowers businesses and startups with AI-driven analytics to improve production, supply chains, and customer experiences, fostering global competition. Online education and remote healthcare through 5G enhanced services in remote areas, while IoT-driven disaster prediction and response systems boost environmental sustainability and disaster resilience for vulnerable communities. These technologies, when harnessed effectively, can drive inclusive growth, enhance accessibility, and bridge socio-economic gaps.

Consumer organisations can play a supporting role in raising awareness about the benefits accrued out of these emerging technologies, particularly to the marginalised communities, people in rural areas for bridging the digital divide. For conducting theme-based events, these organisations can assist TRAI explaining the use cases of these technologies, educate consumers of different sections such as women, farmers, fisheries, students etc. about their potential benefits, and propagate cyber hygiene and make consumers aware of data privacy.

The Authority felt a need to register national level consumer organisations, having presence in multiple states/UTs having capability and experience in campaigning and conducting theme-based events by developing awareness material can provide an interface between consumers and Authority. The proposed amendment would enable Authority to register capable consumer organisations having wider reach to work in more than five states/UTs under national level registration. It simplifies the registration process for such consumer organisations.



https://tra.gov.in/sites/default/files/Consultation_Paper_14092023.pdf

TRAI released Pre-Consultation Paper on Inputs for Formulating "National Broadcasting Policy" on 21st September 2023

TRAI released Pre-Consultation Paper on Inputs for Formulating "National Broadcasting Policy" on 21st September 2023. Stakeholders have been requested to provide their comments on the possible structure and content for National Broadcasting Policy, clearly outlining the specifics along with the justification.

The consultation paper may be accessed from the following link/QR code.



https://traai.gov.in/sites/default/files/CP_21092023.pdf

TRAI released Consultation Paper on Encouraging R&D in Telecom, Broadcasting, and IT Sectors on 22nd Sept. 2023

The purpose of this consultation paper is to develop a comprehensive ecosystem for enhancing R&D in ICT Sector of the country, wherein there are well established processes for generating a pool of R&D scientists/engineers, duly supported by the Government and Private Partners for development and innovation of ICT products and services for making India Atmanirbhar and promoting exports in the ICT Sector.

R&D has played a crucial role in shaping today's world. The advent and evolution of R&D over the years have been pivotal in developing and applying new technologies, shaping economic systems, and improving people's lives through several industrial revolutions. As recognized world over, R&D ecosystem of a nation is linked to its economic growth and overall progress. It has a positive impact on the quality of life of its citizens by increasing availability, accessibility, and affordability of products and services. Furthermore, R&D and innovation is also important for a nation's self-reliance and its security.

India has made remarkable progress in R&D and innovation, emerging as the highest ranked economy in the "Central and Southern Asia" region, 40th in the Global Innovation Index 2022. The country has experienced significant growth in the generation of Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) by the residents. The government's initiatives such as "National Education Policy 2020", "National Policy on Electronics 2019", "National Digital Communications Policy 2018", "Make in India", "Digital India", "Startup India" etc. have played significant roles in strengthening R&D ecosystem in the country. Further, recent initiatives like "Atmanirbhar Bharat", "Telecom Product-Linked Incentives (PLI) scheme", "Digital Communication Innovation Square" have also been encouraging steps in this direction.

However, in the existing R&D ecosystem in India, there are areas of further improvement in promoting R&D in ICT sector, learning from the international best practices in R&D and apply relevant learnings in India and also to identify the issues which require interventions in terms of

policies and incentives to improve the R&D in the leT sector and help India emerge as a world leader. In view of this and in accordance with the TRAI Act 1997 on measures for orderly growth of LC'T industry with indigenously developed products and services, the Authority decided to take up issues of encouraging R&D ecosystem for leT sector in the country on suo-moto basis for consultation with the stakeholders with a view to make recommendations to the Government of India on this important subject matter.

In the consultation paper prepared based on the online brainstorming session and inputs from academia and industry experts from IIT Madras, IIT Kanpur and IIT Hyderabad etc., TRAI has analyzed the important issues which require intervention in the existing R&D ecosystem in India under the three focus elements: "Education & Training System", "Science System" and "Regulatory Framework". The third focus element "Regulatory Framework" has been divided into two parts, namely, "Policies and Programs" and "IPR Framework". Proactively prioritizing R&D and innovation can create a favourable environment for budding entrepreneurs and innovators in the country. In the consultation paper, TRAI emphasizes the need to build a robust R&D ecosystem and discusses potential issues which need to be addressed to enable the same.

Technological advancements and convergence in Telecom, Broadcasting and IT sectors are taking place at a rapid pace. Some of the emerging trends in these sectors are 5G, 6G, Open-RAN, Internet of Things (IoT), AI and ML, Distributed Ledger Technology (DLT), Augmented Reality (AR), Virtual Reality (VR) and Metaverse, Quantum Computing, Cloud Services, Edge computing, Network Function Virtualization (NFV), Software Defined Networking (SDN), Over-The-Top (OTT) services and Hybrid Set Top Box (STB) etc. As discussed in the consultation paper, issues related to government-industry-academia collaboration, commercialization of research, encouragement of private investment, patent approval cycles, IPR protection and IP-based finance etc. need to be focused to capitalize on these emerging trends and unleash the full potential of India's R&D and innovation efforts.

In this Consultation Paper, TRAI has also explored the R&D ecosystem of leading countries in R&D and innovation space. These include Israel, Republic of Korea, United States, Sweden, Japan, Switzerland, Germany, Denmark, Finland etc. International best practices in R&D may act as key learnings for India in its ambition to strengthen its R&D ecosystem and become a \$5 trillion economy.

The consultation paper may be accessed from the following link/ QR code.

https://tra.gov.in/sites/default/files/CPS_22092023.pdf



TRAI released Consultation Paper on 'Regulation on Rating Framework for Digital Connectivity in Buildings or Areas' on 27th September, 2023

Digital connectivity has become an integral part of personal, professional, and social life. The exponential growth in digitalization of services and manufacturing sectors has revolutionized the world impacting everything, from economy, innovation, science, and education, to health, sustainability, governance, and lifestyle. The demand for digital connectivity has increased many folds in recent years. The crucial role of digital connectivity has been acknowledged during the pandemic, witnessing a surge in the demand across all segments of users, irrespective of their locations.

Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has been monitoring the quality of service of telecom services across the country by conducting detailed studies and issuing suitable directions to the stakeholders, to improve the quality of service. While there have been significant improvements in coverage of telecom services on the street, there are still gaps observed in meeting the perceived quality of service demands of the users, especially inside the buildings, residential or commercial areas.

The quality of telecommunication services inside the buildings is an integral part of protection of the consumer interest. TRAI has already taken various policy initiatives including the Recommendation dated 20th February 2023 on "*Rating of Buildings or Areas for Digital Connectivity*". These recommendations provide for the introduction of Rating of Buildings framework to ensure good digital connectivity experience to the consumers through a collaborative and self-sustainable approach.

The consultation paper on "*Regulation on Rating Framework for Digital Connectivity in Buildings or Areas*" is released to deliberate on regulation for implementation of rating framework for buildings and areas for digital connectivity to improve QoS inside buildings and for seamless consumer experience.

The consultation paper highlights the need for Rating of Buildings or Areas for Digital Connectivity that meets not only the current expectations of the consumers but is also ready for future expansion or upgradation with the advancement of technologies or change in users' demand. This consultation paper also discusses the benefits of the rating framework to the end-users, service providers and to the ecosystem.

The consultation paper may be accessed from the following link/ QR code.



https://traigov.in/sites/default/files/Cons_Paper_27092023_0.pdf

TRAI released Consultation Paper on “Open and De-licensed use of Unused or Limited Used Spectrum Bands for Demand Generation for Limited Period in Tera Hertz Range” on 27th September 2023.

Department of Telecommunications (DoT), through a reference dated 08.12.2022, requested TRAI to provide its recommendations on Consultation Paper on Open and De-licensed use of Unused or Limited Used Spectrum Bands for Demand Generation for Limited Period in Tera Hertz Range.

Terahertz (THz) radiation is generally defined as the region of the electromagnetic spectrum in the range of 100 GHz to 10 THz, which is between the millimeter and infrared frequencies. The THz band has differing nomenclatures, such as sub-millimeter, far-infrared, and near-millimeters wave. THz radiation can be used in many potential applications, including terahertz imaging, spectroscopy, and wireless communication.

The consultation paper discusses the issues related to existing experimental licence regime and permitting of licence exempt operations in Terahertz frequencies of certain bands and its terms and conditions.

In this regard, a Consultation Paper was released on 27.09.2023 seeking comments from stakeholders by 25.10.2023 and counter-comments by 08.11.2023.

https://traigov.in/sites/default/files/CP_27092023.pdf



TRAI releases Consultation Paper on "Consultation Paper on Assignment of Spectrum in E&V Bands, and Spectrum for Microwave Access (MWA) & Microwave Backbone (MWB)" on 27th Sept 2023.

Department of Telecommunications (DoT), through its letter dated 12.08.2022, requested TRAI to provide recommendations on the following:

- (a) applicable reserve price, band plan, block size, quantum of spectrum, duration of assignment, scope of services usages, spectrum cap, payment terms, eligibility condition, methodology of auction and other associated conditions for auction of **E and V bands** spectrum for establishment of terrestrial and/ or satellite-based telecom networks;
- (b) quantum of spectrum to be earmarked for non-commercial captive isolated use in **E and V bands**; and methodology of assignment, where auction is not feasible and pricing for the same;
- (c) feasibility, including technical parameters, for allowing low power, indoor, consumer device-to-consumer device usage on license-exempt basis, in parallel to use of the auction acquired spectrum by telecom service providers for establishment of terrestrial and Or satellite-based telecom network, in part or full V band;
- (d) a fresh recommendation on allocation methodology, quantum and pricing of **MWA and MWB** RF carriers in 6/ 7/13/15/ 18/ 21 GHz bands, for establishment of terrestrial and/ or satellite-based telecom networks as well as for non-commercial captive isolated use;

In this regard, a consultation paper on the subject on 27.09.2023 seeking inputs from

stakeholders.

The consultation paper may be accessed from the following link/ QR code.



https://traf.gov.in/sites/default/files/Consultation_Paper_27092023.pdf

TRAI Releases Draft Telecommunication Mobile Number Portability (Ninth amendment) Regulations, 2023 for stakeholders' comments on 27th Sept. 2023

Telecommunication Mobile Number Portability Regulations, 2009 (8 of 2009) issued by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India lay down the regulatory framework for Mobile Number Portability (MNP) in the country. Till date eight amendments of the Telecommunication Mobile Number Portability Regulations, 2009 have been issued.

In the recent past, DoT, through its various communications to TRAI, made certain suggestions in respect of regulatory framework for Mobile Number Portability. Keeping in view of the suggestion of DoT, the Authority has decided to issue draft amendment regulations for stakeholders' comments.

In the draft regulations, amendments have been proposed for inclusion of a criteria for rejection of MNP request to prevent fraudulent SIM swap. It also seeks views from stakeholders regarding matching of demographic details of subscribers before porting.

Draft Telecommunication Mobile Number Portability (Ninth amendment) Regulations, 2023 were released on 27.09.2023 seeking comments of the stakeholders by 25.10.2023.



https://traf.gov.in/sites/default/files/Regulation_27092023.pdf

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) issued a Consultation Paper on “Digital Transformation through 5G Ecosystem” on 29th September 2023

The objective of this consultation paper is to identify the policy challenges and suggest the right policy framework for faster adoption and effective utilisation of new technologies for the holistic and sustainable development of the economy driven by 5G ecosystem.

India is undergoing a rapid digital transformation that is reshaping its economy and society. Fast and reliable mobile communication technologies are helping the Government in realising the objectives of Digital India programme. It is providing a boost to our economy and empowering the citizens through services like unified payment interface (UPI) and several other innovative G2B and G2C applications. With the advent of technologies such as 5G, Internet of Things (IoT), Artificial Intelligence (AI), Augmented/Virtual Reality (AR/VR) and Metaverse, India is poised to unlock new opportunities for growth and innovation.

5G services was launched in India on 1st October 2022 and the Telecom Service Providers are aggressively rolling out the 5G network across the length and breadth of the country. Government has taken several initiatives for building 5G infrastructure and for promoting R&D. TRAI has also made several recommendations for faster deployment of 5G network and services in the country. Cross sectoral collaborative initiatives have also been taken for facilitating fast roll out of 5G. In addition to the deployment of 5G infrastructure, development and deployment of new use cases for consumers and enterprises is essential for wide spread adoption and full realization or the potential of 5G technology. When 5G is used along with AI, extended reality (XR), and the Internet of Things (IoT), it will enable business and society to realise the full benefits of these other technological advances.

However, achieving this will require effective ecosystem collaboration between TSPs, OEMs, Infrastructure providers, and the government to increase consumer adoption and market readiness to unlock large-scale benefits of 5G. Adequate infrastructure upgradation and fiberisation for 5G deployment, alongwith network densification need to be addressed to realise the full benefit of the technology across industries. 5g adoption will depend on factors such as dedicated R&D investments to develop India-specific use cases, enterprise penetration, device affordability, and consumer adoption.

With this background, the Authority has come out with the consultation paper on suo-motu basis to identify the policy challenges and suggest the right policy framework for faster adoption and effective utilization of new technologies for the holistic and sustainable development of theeconomy driven by 5G ecosystem.

Written comments on the issues for consultation are invited from the stakeholders by 30th Oct. 2023 and counter comments by 13th November 2023, if any.

The consultation paper may be accessed from the following link/ QR code.



https://traigov.in/sites/default/files/CP_29092023.pdf

Regulations

TRAI issued the ‘Quality of Service (Code of Practice for Metering and Billing Accuracy) Regulations, 2023 (03 of 2023)’ dated 11th Sept.2023, were notified in the Gazette of India on 12.09.23. The Guidelines for conducting the Audit were also issued on 19th September 2023.

Accuracy of Metering and Billing of telecom services has been a prime focus of the Regulator to protect the interest of consumers. In this regard, TRAI notified the Quality of Service (Code of Practice for Metering and Billing Accuracy) Regulation, 2006, on 21st March 2006. These regulations contain Code of Practice for Metering and Billing Accuracy which is to be complied by all Basic Service Providers, Unified Access Service Providers and Cellular Mobile Telephone

Service Providers. The amendment to the Quality of Service (Code of Practice for Metering and Billing Accuracy) Regulation, 2006, was issued on 25th March 2013.

In the last ten years, the telecom networks and their technology have undergone significant changes, and many new services are being offered by the telecom service providers. Tariff offerings as well as the usage patterns of the services have also changed significantly.

Considering these changes, the Authority undertook a public consultation for review of the regulation. Under the consultation process, draft regulations, and guidelines on "Quality of Service (Code of Practice for Metering and Billing Accuracy) Regulations, 2023" were released on the TRAI website on 24th February 2023 inviting comments from the stakeholders by 1st May 2023. Subsequently Open House Discussion was also held with the stakeholders on 07th July 2023.

Based on the comments received from the stakeholders, discussions held during the OHD, subsequent discussion with team of the service providers, interactions with empaneled auditors and analysis thereof, Quality of Service (Code of Practice for Metering and Billing Accuracy) Regulations, 2023 (03 of 2023) are finalized and released by the Authority.

While finalizing the regulations, the Authority has ensured balance between two key objectives i.e. (i) to protect the interests of the subscribers by ensuring that service providers maintain fairness and transparency in their Metering and Billing System(s) (ii) to reduce compliance burden on the service provider to enhance Ease of Doing Business (EODB). Accordingly, the Authority has considered the emerging trends in the industry towards implementation of single centralized or few regional billing systems in the audit methodology prescribed.

By releasing new regulations, Quality of Service (Code of Practice for Metering and Billing Accuracy) Regulations, 2023 (03 of 2023) dated 11.09.2023, earlier regulations namely Quality of Service (Code of Practice for Metering and Billing Accuracy) Regulation, 2006, and its amendments issued on 25th March 2013 stand repealed.



https://tra.gov.in/sites/default/files/Regulation_13092023.pdf

TRAI released Telecommunication (Broadcasting and Cable) Services Interconnection (Addressable Systems) (Fifth Amendment) Regulations, 2023 (4 of 2023) on 15th September 2023.

The main features of the amendments are as follows:

- a) A new schedule X has been prescribed for Digital Rights Management (DRM) System Requirements which include:
 - i. DRM requirements in so far as they relate to subscriber management systems (SMS) for IPTV services.
 - ii. DRM requirements for conditional access by subscribers and encryption for IPTV services.
 - iii. DRM requirements in so far as they relate to fingerprinting for IPTV services.
 - iv. DRM requirements in so far as they relate to STBs/unique consumer subscription.

b) An enabling, technology neutral, light-touch regulatory regime, which facilitates growth and technological developments while protecting the consumer's interest is promoted to foster overall growth.



https://traf.gov.in/sites/default/files/Regulation_15092023_0.pdf

Events

Chairman TRAI met the Assistant Secretaries (IAS 2021) attached with Department of Telecommunications as part of their induction training. Secretary, TRAI and Advisor (Admn/IR) were also present at the meeting on 1st Sept 2023



Dr. P.D. Vaghela, Chairman, TRAI held bi-lateral Discussions with Chairman of NBTC, the Regulator of Thailand at the sidelines of GSMA M360 APAC conference today on 8th Sept 23



Dr. P.D. Vaghela, Chairman, TRAI addressing the audience online in the opening ceremony of ITU Regional Development Forum for Asia Pacific. The theme of the event is Digital Transformation & Innovation for a Sustainable & Equitable Digital Future: Supporting the SDGs during 13-15 Sept. 23



Dr. P. D. Vaghela Chairperson, TRAI releasing a White Paper on 6 GHz, prepared by TRAI Centre of studies and research, for publication at TRAI Head quarter, New Delhi on 25th Sept 23



Telecom Subscriptions

Telecom Subscription Data as on 31st July 2023:

Particulars	Wireless	Wireline	Total
Urban Telephone subscribers (Million)	628.55	27.92	656.47
Rural Telephone subscribers (Million)	517.69	2.69	520.38
Total Telephone subscribers (Million)	1146.25	30.61	1176.85
Overall Tele-density (%)	82.38	2.20	84.58
Share of Urban Subscription (%)	54.84	91.22	55.78
Share of Rural Subscription (%)	45.16	8.78	44.22
No. of Broadband Subscribers (Million)	832.50	35.70	868.20

Active wireless subscribers on the date of Peak VLR in July 2023 were 1046.41 million.

In July 2023, 11.77 million subscriber requests were made for MNP. By the end of July 2023, a total of 864.76 million consumers availed the MNP facility since its implementation.

Other Miscellaneous

Updated list of Panel of Auditors:

TRAI released the updated list of panel of Auditors to carry out audit of Digital Addressable Systems (DAS) on 05th September 2023, vide which extension up to 23rd Sept. 2025 was given to one Auditor. The total number of auditors empaneled by TRAI to carry out the audit of DAS as on 30th September 2023 are 50.

Consumer Outreach Programmes

TRAI conducted Consumer Outreach Programmes (CoP) for different sections of the society as under:

S. No.	Place	Date
1	Madhubani (Bihar)	5 th September 2023
2	Mananthavady (Kerala)	8 th September 2023
3	Etawah (Uttar Pradesh)	14 th September 2023
4	Pushkar (Rajasthan)	20 th September 2023
5	Dhamtari (Chhattisgarh)	25 th September 2023
6	Mangalore (Karnataka)	26 th September 2023
7	Daman and Diu (UT)	26 th September 2023
8	Bhubaneshwar (Odisha)	27 th September 2023

PHOTO GALLERY



Consumer Outreach Program at Madhubani (Bihar) was held on 5th September 2023 by Regional Office, Kolkata



Consumer Outreach Programme Mananthavady (Kerala) on 8th September 2023 by Regional Office, Bengaluru



Consumer Outreach Program at Etawah (Uttar Pradesh) held on 14th September 2023 by Regional Office, Bhopal



Consumer Outreach Program at Pushkar (Rajasthan) held on 20th September 2023 by Regional Office, Jaipur



Consumer Outreach Program at Dhamtari (Chhattisgarh) held on 25th September 2023 by Regional Office, Bhopal



Consumer Outreach Program at Mangalore (Karnataka) held on 26th September 2023 by Regional Office, Bangaluru



Consumer Outreach Program at Daman and Diu (UT) was held on 26th September 2023 by Regional Office, Jaipur



Consumer Outreach Program at Bhubaneswar (Odisha) held on 27th September 2023 by Regional Office, Hyderabad

Full details of the Directions/Orders/Consultation Paper/Report, Subscription Data, etc mentioned in this newsletter are available on TRAI website

www.trai.gov.in

Mahanagar Doorsanchar Bhawan, Jawahar Lal Nehru Marg, (Old Minto Road), New Delhi-110 002.

We are also on Facebook! Join us!



<https://www.facebook.com/TRAI/>

We are also on Twitter! Follow us!

