

TELECOM REGULATORY AUTHORITY OF INDIA



E-NEWSLETTER



AUGUST 2023



Bilateral discussions between Dr. P.D. Vaghela, Chairman, TRAI and Prof. John Nkoma, Board Chairperson, Universal Communications Service Access Fund (UCSAF) Govt. of Tanzania, who visited at TRAI on 6th July 2023.



Recommendations

TRAI released recommendations on “Leveraging Artificial Intelligence and Big Data in Telecommunication Sector” on 20 July 2023

In order to create a roadmap for AI, emerging technology and its use in the communication sector, vide letter dated 6th June 2019, Department of Telecommunication (DoT) sought recommendation of TRAI on the provision no. 2.2(g) of NDCP-2018 i.e. “Leveraging Artificial Intelligence and Big Data in a synchronized and effective manner to enhance the overall quality of service, spectrum management, network security and reliability”.

AI being a developing technology, a virtual conference on “Leveraging Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning (ML) and Big Data (BD) in the Telecom Sector” was organized by the TRAI on 5th and 6th of August 2020. The conference served as a platform to engage with industry experts, telecom service providers, and leading solution providers to gain insights into AI/ML from a telecom perspective. TRAI issued Consultation Paper (CP) on "Leveraging Artificial Intelligence and Big Data in telecommunication sector" on 05th August 2022. In the Consultation Paper (CP), wide-ranging issues covering all sectors were included. A workshop on "Metaverse" was conducted on 12th September 2022 by TRAI to understand the various dimensions of emerging technologies including AI. TRAI organized another workshop on "Metaverse: Understanding and Regulatory Framework" on 5th December 2022. The workshop aimed to explore the concept, challenges, and opportunities of the metaverse and AI as well as the possible regulatory implications.

Based on the comments of the stakeholders, discussion during the Open House Discussion and analysis thereof, the Authority issued the Recommendations, in which inter alia states that in view of the impact of AI in all sectors, the framework which must be suggested cannot be treated in isolation for telecom and hence a common framework covering all the sectors is being proposed. The recommendation emphasizes on the need for adoption of a regulatory framework by the Government that should be applicable across sectors for ensuring development of responsible Artificial Intelligence (AI) in India. TRAI also recommended that the regulatory framework should ensure that specific AI use cases are regulated on a risk-based framework where high risk use cases that directly impact humans are regulated through legally binding obligations.

The broad tenet of the suggested regulatory framework comprises of:

- a) An independent statutory authority named as Artificial Intelligence and Data Authority of India (AIDAI) for ensuring development of responsible AI and regulation of use cases in India.
- b) A Multi Stakeholder Body (MSB) that will act as an advisory body to the proposed statutory authority. The MSB will give a platform to the regulator, Government, academia, domain experts and the industry to collaborate on various issues.

- c) Categorizations of the AI use cases based on their risk and regulating them according to broad principles of Responsible AI.

Main Regulatory Functions of the proposed Authority - Framing regulations on various aspects of AI including its responsible use, defining principles of responsible AI and their applicability on AI use cases based on risk assessment, developing model AI Governance Framework to guide organizations on deploying AI in a responsible manner.

Role of AIDAI in data digitization, data sharing and data monetization in the country-AIDAI shall be the apex body to oversee all issues related to data digitization, data sharing and data monetization in the country.

Formation of a Global Agency- Considering the sensitivity and far-reaching impact of AI across the nations which defies borders, the Indian Government should collaborate with international agencies and governments of other countries for forming a global agency that will act as the primary international body for development, standardization and responsible use of AI. India should play a leading role in shaping the Global AI standards and governance structures.



https://traai.gov.in/sites/default/files/Recommendation_20072023.pdf

Consultations

TRAI released Consultation Paper on Regulatory Mechanism for Over-The-Top (OTT) Communication Services, and Selective Banning of OTT Services on 7th July 2023

Department of Telecommunications (DoT), through a letter dated 07.09.2022, requested TRAI to reconsider its recommendations on Regulatory Framework for Over-The-Top (OTT) Communication Services dated 14.09.2020 and suggest a suitable regulatory mechanism for OTTs, including issues relating to 'selective banning of OTT services' as part of its recommendations.

Through the letter dated 07.09.2022, DoT has also mentioned that "in view of the humongous growth of OTT services in the recent past and these services having reached a matured stage, there is a need to holistically look into the various aspects of these services including regulatory, economic, security, privacy, and safety aspects. This is also in keeping with para 2.2 of the National Digital Communications Policy -2018 which mentions the policy goal for "Ensuring a holistic and harmonized approach for harnessing Emerging Technologies". It has been mentioned therein that a policy framework for 'Over the Top' services will be developed."

In response to the DoT letter dated 07.09.2022, TRAI vide letter dated 01.11.2022 conveyed to DoT that "the Authority is of the view that a fresh consultation process may be initiated to frame suitable regulatory framework for OTT".

In this regard, a **Consultation Paper on Regulatory Mechanism for Over- The-Top (OTT) Communication Services, and Selective Banning of OTT Services**, has been released on 07 July 23 seeking inputs from stakeholders.



https://tra.gov.in/sites/default/files/CP_07072023.pdf

Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) released draft Telecommunication Consumers Education and Protection Fund (Sixth Amendment) Regulation, 2023 for stakeholders' comments on 24th July 2023

TRAI had notified the Telecommunication Consumers Education and Protection Fund Regulations, 2007 (6 of 2007) on 15th June 2007. In terms of these regulations, a fund called "Telecommunication Consumers Education and Protection Fund" (TCEPF) was created. The income generated by the TCEPF is utilized to undertake activities such as conduct Consumer Outreach Programmes, seminars, workshops, developing educational and awareness material etc. for dissemination of information to the consumers. The activities are planned by the Committee for Utilisation of Telecommunication Consumers Education and Protection Fund (referred as "CUTCEF") setup under the regulations.

The Authority has observed that for preparation, maintenance & audit of accounts, and for the participation of representatives of consumer groups for attending the meetings of CUTCEF, expenditure are to be incurred from TCEPF and provisions are required in the regulations. Accordingly, amendments have been proposed in regulations 6 and 13 of the principal regulations.

During the year 2020, Corporation Bank in which the TCEPF was maintained has been merged with the Union Bank of India. Further, the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 (68 of 1986) has been repealed by the Consumer Protection Act, 2019 (35 of 2019). Therefore, amendments have been proposed to change the relevant provisions in the principal regulations.

The draft regulation is accessible on TRAI website www.tra.gov.in.



https://tra.gov.in/sites/default/files/Draft_Regulation_24072023.pdf

Regulations

TRAI released Telecom Regulatory Authority of India Repealing Regulations, 2023 (02 of 2023) on 26th July 2023

Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) issued *Telecom Regulatory Authority of India Repealing Regulations, 2023 (02 of 2023)* dated 25.07.2023 to repeal the Regulation on quality of service of dial-up and leased line internet access service, 2001 (4 of 2001) with effect from date of its notification in Official Gazette.

TRAI notified the Regulation on quality of service of dial-up and leased line internet access service, 2001 (4 of 2001) on 10th December 2001. This regulation was applicable to all the Basic Service Operators and Internet Service Providers including the incumbent operators viz. BSNL, MTNL and VSNL. The purpose of laying down Quality of Service Parameters was to ensure customer satisfaction by laying down norms of network performance, which the service provider is required to achieve by proper dimensioning of his network; measure the Quality of Service from time to time and to compare that with the specified norms so as to monitor the level of performance, provided by various service providers and to protect the interests of subscribers of the Internet services.

These regulations were issued when the dial up service was the only service available for accessing low speed internet. With the passage of time, the telecommunication networks, both wireline as well as wireless, have evolved to offer high speed broadband service on xDSL, FTTH, LTE and 5G etc., technologies. Whereas the leased line access services are generally offered by Internet Gateway Service Providers (IGSPs) holding an ISP license to enterprises, is a Service Level Agreement (SLA) based service. Being SLA based service, the agreement among the contracting parties has sufficient provisions to safeguard concerns regarding service quality, Hence, the regulation on quality of service of dial-up and leased line internet access service, 2001, appears to be no more relevant in the present context.

In view of the above, earlier the Authority issued draft Telecom Regulatory Authority of India Repealing Regulations, 2023 on 03.04.2023 inviting comments of the stakeholders up to 17th April 2023. Based on the comments of the stakeholders and considering the aspect of Ease of Doing Business (EoDB), Authority has decided to repeal the Regulation on quality of service of dial-up and leased line internet access service, 2001 (4 of 2001) with effect from date of publication of Telecom Regulatory Authority of India Repealing Regulations, 2023 (02 of 2023) in Official Gazette.

https://traf.gov.in/sites/default/files/Regulation_26072023.pdf



Directions

Direction regarding implementation of UCC Detect System under Telecom Commercial Communications Customer Preference Regulations, 2018 (6 of 2018) on 19th July 23.

TRAI issued direction regarding implementation of UCC Detect System under Telecom Commercial Communications Customer Preference Regulations, 2018 (6 of 2018). In this regard, the Authority is of the view that there is a need to put in place adequate and effective checks to ensure that unauthorized use of AI/ML based UCC Detect systems does not take place and utmost care and precaution is taken in the use of systems to ensure the safety and security of the customer data. Under the provisions of the regulations, the Authority directed the Access Providers to: -

- i. ensure that the data generated through these systems and platforms shall only be used for the purposes specified by the Authority in its Direction dated 13th June 2023 regarding implementation of UCC Detect System under Telecom Commercial Communications Customer Preference Regulations, 2018;
- ii. ensure that strict access control shall be adhered wherein only authorized person/agencies, after obtaining prior approval from the Government, or TRAI, or any entity empowered by the Government or TRAI in this behalf, shall be permitted to access the system, and Logs in respect of access shall be maintained;
- iii. ensure that the activity logs and system trails shall be maintained online for a minimum period of two years or as prescribed by the Government or TRAI from time to time;
- iv. create a trusted execution environment for development of their platforms and systems with necessary requisite security features as may be notified by the Government, or TRAI, or entity empowered by the Government or TRAI in that behalf, from time to time;
- v. ensure compliance with necessary certification process as provided by the Government, or TRAI, through a security auditor empanelled or appointed by the Government, or TRAI, or its designated agencies such as CERT-IN/ Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology;
- vi. facilitate regular system audit by the Government or TRAI, or any entity empowered by the Government or TRAI, including agencies authorized by the Government or TRAI or the entities empowered by the Government in this behalf;
- vii. put in place adequate and effective internal checks to ensure that unauthorized use of AI/ML systems does not take place and utmost care and precaution is taken in the use of systems to ensure the safety and security of the subscriber data as per the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885.



https://tra.gov.in/sites/default/files/Direction_19072023.pdf

Events

Dr. P.D. Vaghela, Chairman, TRAI with Officers of TRAI participating in seminar organized on WIFI & IEEE Standards by TRAI Centre of Studies and research on 6th July 2023.



Ms Meenakshi Gupta, Member, TRAI with officers of TRAI participating in workshop on cloud computing organized by TRAI Centre of Studies and research on 24th July 2023



TRAI and C-DOT India sign MoU for cooperation in the areas of Telecom & Broadcasting technologies in the august presence of Dr. P.D. Vaghela, Chairman, TRAI and Shri K Rajaraman, Chairman, DCC & Secretary (Telecom) on 25th July 23



Open House Discussion

TRAI conducted an Open House Discussions (OHDs) through virtual conference on Draft Regulations on “Review of The Quality of Service (Code of Practice for Metering and Billing Accuracy) Regulations, 2023 on 7th July 2023



TRAI conducted an Open House Discussions (OHDs) through virtual conference on the Consultation Paper on Assignment of Spectrum for Space-based Communication Services on 14th July 2023



An Open House Discussion on the Consultation Paper “Issues Related to Low Power Small Range FM Radio Broadcasting” was held on 19th July 2023 through video conferencing.



Telecom Subscriptions

Telecom Subscription Data as on 30th June 2023:

Particulars	Wireless	Wireline	Total
Urban Telephone subscribers (Million)	626.07	27.63	653.70
Rural Telephone subscribers (Million)	517.51	2.68	520.19
Total Telephone subscribers (Million)	1143.58	30.31	1173.89
Overall Tele-density (%)	82.25	2.18	84.43
Share of Urban Subscription (%)	54.75	91.16	55.69
Share of Rural Subscription (%)	45.25	8.84	44.31
No. of Broadband Subscribers (Million)	826.37	35.10	861.47

Active wireless subscribers on the date of Peak VLR in June 2023 were 1042.86 million.

In June 2023, 10.87 million subscriber requests were made for MNP. By the end of June 2023, a total of 852.99 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 6th July 2023, vide which one audit firm namely 'M/s Sumat K. Jain & Co.' has been added to the list of auditors. Further, another updated list of panel of Auditors was released on 28th July 2023 vide which Empanelment extension was given to three (03) firms. M/s Rodi Dabir & Co and M/s SGCO & Co were given extension up to 03rd August 2025 and M/s Nitin Mittal & Co was given extension up to 14th September 2025. As on 31st July 2023, the total number of auditors empanelled by TRAI to carry out the audit of DAS of DPOs is 53.

Consumer Outreach Programmes

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

S. No.	Place	Date
1	Kudal (Sindhudurg)	5 th July 2023
2	Dausa (Rajasthan)	6 th July 2023
3	Coonoor, Nilgiris (Tamilnadu)	6 th July 2023
4	Aizwal (Mizoram)	13 th July 2023
5	Jalandhar (Punjab)	26 th July 2023
6	Papum Pare (Arunachal Pradesh)	26 th July 2023
7	Agra (Uttar Pradesh)	27 th July 2023
8	Gadag-Betageri (Karnataka)	27 th July 2023

PHOTO GALLERY



Consumer Outreach Program at Kudal (Sindhudurg) was held on 5th July 2023 by Regional Office, Bengaluru



Special Consumer Outreach Programme in association with Tea board of India at Coonoor (near Ooty), Nilgiris (Tamilnadu) on 6th July 23 by Regional Office, Hyderabad



Consumer Outreach Program at Dausa (Rajasthan) held on 6th July 2023 by Regional Office, Jaipur



Consumer Outreach Program at Aizwal (Mizoram) held on 13th July 2023 by Regional Office, Kolkata



Consumer Outreach Program at Jalandhar (Punjab) held on 26th July 2023 by Regional Office, Jaipur



Consumer Outreach Program at Papum Pare (Arunachal Pradesh) held on 26th July 2023 by Regional Office, Kolkata



Consumer Outreach Program at Agar (Uttar Pradesh) was held on 27th July 2023 by Regional Office, Bhopal



**Consumer Outreach Program at Gadag-Betageri (Karnataka) held on 27th July 2023
by Regional Office, Bengaluru**


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

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