

**Information note to the Press (Press Release No. 18/2017)**

For Immediate Release

**Telecom Regulatory Authority of India**

**TRAI releases Recommendations on “Proliferation of Broadband through Public Wi-Fi Networks”**

**New Delhi, 09<sup>th</sup> March, 2017** – The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has today issued its Recommendations on **“Proliferation of Broadband through Public Wi-Fi Networks”**.

2. The Authority suo-moto issued a Consultation Paper on “Proliferation of Broadband through Public Wi-Fi Networks” on 13<sup>th</sup> July, 2016 to explore the regulatory and commercial constraints that potentially hinder the growth of scalable and ubiquitous Wi-Fi in the country. This included a review of any potential licensing restrictions, measures required to facilitate interoperability between Wi-Fi networks, possible de-licensing of additional bandwidths for the purposes of expediting the deployment of public Wi-Fi, and several demand-side issues such as roaming capabilities, authentication and payment processes, that potentially hinder the uptake of public Wi-Fi. The comments and counter-comments received from the stakeholders were placed on the TRAI’s website.

3. During the course of the consultation, the Authority conducted a workshop on public Wi-Fi networks, in collaboration with International Institute of Information Technology (IIIT), Bangalore on 28<sup>th</sup> September, 2016. The purpose of this workshop was to explore various models of public Wi-Fi that could address the resource gap in terms of delivering public Wi-Fi in remote areas. Based on the discussions held at the workshop, the Authority released a Consultation Note on “Model for Nationwide Interoperable and Scalable Public Wi-Fi Networks” on 15<sup>th</sup> November, 2016. The Consultation Note attempted to (a) explore the roles of different stakeholders in the Public Wi-Fi network value chain and build



an ecosystem for promoting scalable and sustainable partnerships for large scale nation wide deployment; and (b) explore viable models that could be adopted towards rapidly deploying affordable and interoperable public Wi-Fi networks. The comments received from the stakeholders were placed on the TRAI's website. Further, an Open House Discussion (OHD) with stakeholders was organized on 09<sup>th</sup> January, 2017 at New Delhi.

4. After considering the comments from the stakeholders and further analysis, the Authority has come out with its Recommendations on "Proliferation of Broadband through Public Wi-Fi Networks".

5. The salient features of the recommendations are as follows:

- Subject to the DoT's agreement with the Authority's interpretation, the DoT issue a clarification in respect of Clause (1)(xxii) of the UL VNO Guidelines, specifically clarifying that there is no exclusivity requirement upon UL VNO licensees for internet services i.e. a UL VNO can parent to multiple NSO for providing internet service.
- Existing requirement of authentication through OTP for each instance of access may be done away with. Authentication through eKYC, eCAF and other electronic modes be allowed for the purposes of KYC obligations. In consultation with the security agencies, DoT may consider authentication by MAC ID of the device or through a mobile APP which stores eKYC data of the subscriber and automatically authenticate the subscriber.
- The import duty applicable upon Wi-Fi access point equipment be revisited in coordination with the Ministry of Commerce. This will reduce cost of providing Wi-Fi service in the country leading to proliferation of broadband services.
- A new framework should be put in place for setting up of Public Data Offices (PDOs). Under this framework, PDOs in agreement with Public Data Office Aggregators (PDOAs), should be allowed to provide public Wi-Fi services. This will not only increase number of public hotspots but also make internet service more affordable in



the country.

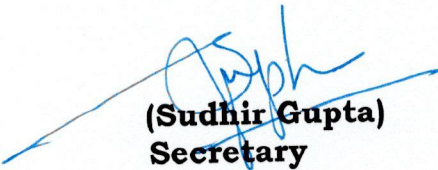
- PDOAs may be allowed to provide public Wi-Fi services without obtaining any specific license for the purpose. However, they would be subject to specific registration requirements (prescribed by the DoT) which will include obligations to ensure that e-KYC, authentication and record-keeping requirements (for customers, devices and PDOs enlisted with the PDOAs) are fulfilled by the PDOAs. This will encourage village level entrepreneurship and provide strong employment opportunities, especially in rural areas.
- Authentication through eKYC, eCAF and other electronic modes be allowed for the purposes of KYC obligations cast upon PDOAs. This would enable PDOAs to obtain eKYC information and automatically authenticate the user device based on parameters such as the device's MAC ID or through a mobile APP, which will store data required for authentication of the subscriber. This will further improve user experience.
- PDOAs be allowed to enter into agreements with third party application/ service providers for the purposes of managing authentication and payment processes. Appropriate guidelines may be issued to ensure that customer consent is obtained, and other issues surrounding privacy and protection of sensitive personal information are addressed. This will encourage innovation in authentication and payment processes resulting in ease in access of the Wi-Fi services.

6. The Authority is of the view that implementation of the recommendations will lead to introduction of new set of small players in the Wi-Fi service provisioning space, who will be able to contribute in a big way in making broadband available to the masses.

The recommendations have been placed on TRAI's website [www.trai.gov.in](http://www.trai.gov.in).



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**Secretary**