



EBG FEDERATION

EBG FEDERATION RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION NOTE ON MODEL FOR NATION-WIDE INTEROPERABLE AND SCALABLE PUBLIC WI-FI NETWORKS

EBG Federation (EBG) was established on 11th March, 2015 as a Section 8 company under the Companies Act 2013 in order to ensure long term stability and clarity on its purpose as a not for profit organization offering support and advocacy for European businesses in India. Founded as the European Business Group (EBG), in 1997, as a joint initiative of the European Commission and the European Business Community in India, EBG has come to be recognized by the Indian Government and the European Commission as the industry advocacy group representing the interest of European companies in India.

EBG Federation is supported by the Delegation of the European Union to India and represents the 27 Member States of the European Union, UK as well as accession countries and its partners in European Economic Area (EEA). The EU Ambassador is our Patron. Currently EBG has Chapters in Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore and Chennai with approximately 170 companies as Members including a number of companies from the Telecom Sector. Mr. TV Ramachandran is currently the Chairman of the Telecom Sector Committee of the EBG.

The primary objective of EBG is to actively support growth in India-EU trade relations, become the most relevant advocate for European business in India and ensure that the needs of European business are well presented to policy and decision makers.

EBG Responses are as follows:

Q1. Is the architecture suggested in the consultation note for creating unified authentication and payment infrastructure will enable nationwide standard for authentication and payment interoperability?

EBG RESPONSE: The option proposed by TRAI is a good solution as a model for authentication & payment interoperability but the option for other solutions may also be considered.

Choice of solution, including OTP based authentication, should be allowed to the Wifi Hotspot provider.

All Hotspots may link up to a central Authentication Service, but Interoperability of Authentication and payments, whether Aadhar based on phones or biometric authentication but it should be ensured that the burden of subscriber verification/ authentication should not be shifted to the Hotspot Provider if they use some authentication agency for this purpose.



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Q2. Would you like to suggest any alternate model?

EBG RESPONSE: answered in Ans 1

Q3. Can Public Wi-Fi access providers resell capacity and bandwidth to retail users? Is “light touch regulation” using methods such as “registration” instead of “licensing” preferred for them?

Q4. What should be the regulatory guidelines on “unbundling” Wi-Fi at access and backhaul level?

Q5. Whether reselling of bandwidth should be allowed to venue owners such as shop keepers through Wi-Fi at premise? In such a scenario please suggest the mechanism for security compliance

EBG RESPONSE: All telecom activity has to be under a relevant authorization under UL. The ISP authorization under UL states “*In case the Licensee provides the Internet Access using de-licensed frequency band, the licensee shall adhere to the prevailing directions/instructions and shall also abide by further directions / instructions as may be issued by Licensor from time to time in this regard.*” (enhancement added)

The Indian Telegraph Act 1885 Section 4 on PRIVILEGES AND POWERS OF THE GOVERNMENT states “*Exclusive privilege in respect of telegraphs, and power to grant licenses.— 9[(1)] Within 10[India], the Central Government shall have exclusive privilege of establishing, maintaining and working telegraphs: Provided that the Central Government may grant a license, on such conditions and in consideration of such payments as it thinks fit, to any person to establish, maintain or work a telegraph within any part of 11 [India]:.....” (enhancement added)*

However, as per The Indian Telegraph Act 1885, it is the prerogative of the Government to deem fit the nature and payment of operational license. Recently, Government has released a Unified License specifically for VNO’s which is unique. The ISP authorization under UL calls for adherence to “*further directions/instructions that may be issued by the Licensor from time to time.*” An extremely light licensing (Unified License) with no fee may be the way to maintain the licensing regime and ease the way for the proliferation of public WiFi services.

In keeping with the objectives of National Teecom Policy 2012 to “*Simplify the licensing framework to further extend converged high quality services across the nation including rural and remote areas*” the Authority and Licensor may kindly decide what such conditions may be.

WiFi is unlicensed spectrum available to the general public to use free of cost and it may be treated differently from mobile services.



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Unbundling of Networks should be driven by competitive market forces and not through a Regulatory mandate.

Q6. What should be the guidelines regarding sharing of costs and revenue across all entities in the public Wi-Fi value chain? Is regulatory intervention required or it should be left to forbearance and individual contracting?

EBG RESPONSE: It should be left to forbearance and individual contracting. For the sake of innovative development market forces should be allowed to shape the future with a view that there are enough competitive forces at work to ensure a healthy growth.