TELECOM REGULATORY AUTHORITY OF INDIA

E-NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2023

Dr. P.D. Vaghela, Chairman TRAI shared his views on "Digital Economy and Trade Financing for ICT" in High Level Policy Session of World Summit on International Society (WSIS) 2023 held in Geneva, Switzerland on 16th March 2023

Recommendations

TRAI released its recommendations on 'Rating of Buildings or Areas for Digital Connectivity.'

The exponential growth in digitalization during the last decade has revolutionized the world impacting everything, from economy, innovation, science, and education, to health, sustainability, governance, and lifestyles. Digital technologies are fundamentally changing business models, institutions, and society. The demand for digital connectivity has increased manifold in recent years and COVID-19 has further given impetus to surge in the demand across all segments of users, irrespective of their locations.

In the past, Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) and the Government have taken various policy initiatives to fulfil the demands of telecom connectivity. These policy interventions have helped in improving connectivity, resulting in wider coverage and higher data throughput.

However, all these efforts have fallen short in achieving the desired level of digital connectivity experience of the users, who now prefer to work from anywhere, at any time. The rollout of 5G network has further stimulated the need for seamless experience of the 5G services, specifically inside the buildings.

TRAI has conducted many studies to assess the quality of connectivity, identify challenges in providing connectivity and to suggest the way forward. Based on these studies TRAI published a Monograph on 'Quest for a Good Quality Network inside Multi-Story Residential Apartments: Reimagining ways to improve quality'.

Based on the above, TRAI undertook the process of consultation on *suo-moto* basis to provide a framework for establishment of an ecosystem wherein Digital Connectivity Infrastructure becomes part of all developmental activities. TRAI issued a Consultation Paper (CP) on "Rating of Buildings or Areas for Digital Connectivity' on 25th March 2022, to seek inputs from stakeholders on issues raised, by 07th July 2022.

Based on the comments received, discussions held with stakeholders during the Open House Discussion and analysis thereof, the recommendations of TRAI on "Rating of Buildings or Areas for Digital Connectivity" have been finalized. The emphasis of these recommendations is on providing a framework for the creation of an ecosystem for Digital Connectivity Infrastructure (DCI) to be an intrinsic part of building development plan like other building services such as water, electricity or Fire Safety System. DCI is to be co-designed and cocreated

along with building development through collaborations among various stakeholders including Property Managers (owner, developer or builder etc.), service providers, infrastructure providers, DCI Professionals and Authorities at various urban/ local bodies. This framework shall also open job opportunities for the young professionals to become DCI Professionals and be part of Design, Deployment and Evaluation of Digital Connectivity Infrastructure.

TRAI has also proposed a new chapter on 'Digital Connectivity Infrastructures in Buildings' to be included in Model Building Bye Laws 2016 by modifying and updating existing provisions added in MBBL as Annexure through an Addendum to Model Building Bye Laws 2016 titled "Provisions for In-Building Solutions Digital Communication Infrastructure" issued by Town and Country Planning Organization (TCPO) of Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), in March 2022.

TRAI further emphasized that Digital Connectivity Infrastructure (DCI) developed in the Buildings by the Property Managers (Developers, Builders etc.) should be accessible to all service providers in a fair, transparent, non-discriminatory, and non-chargeable basis.

The recommendations also include development of framework for Rating of the buildings for digital connectivity, which will add value to the property. TRAI will come up, separately, with appropriate regulatory framework for Rating of Buildings, which will also include the issue of Rating certification.

https://trai.gov.in/sites/default/files/Recommendation_20022023.pdf

Consultation Papers

Consultation Paper on issues related to FM Radio Broadcasting

Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB) in its reference dated 11th May 2022 sought recommendations of the Authority on the two issues, i.e,

(i)   Remove 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 25th July 2011, &

(ii)   Extend the existing FM license period of 15 years by three years.

Further, to discuss various issues related to FM Radio broadcasting, a meeting was convened with the representatives of Association of Radio Operators for India (AROI) wherein they have raised the two issues for consideration of the Authority, i.e.

(i)   Permitting private FM Radio channels to broadcast independent news bulletins, &

(ii)   Availability of FM Radio Receivers in Mobile Handsets.

Accordingly, TRAI released a Consultation Paper on "Issues related to FM Radio broadcasting" on 9th February 2023 seeking comments/views of the stakeholders on the issues raised in MIB's reference and by the representatives of AROI, related to FM Radio broadcasting.

https://trai.gov.in/sites/default/files/CP_09022023_0.pdf

Consultation Paper on "Introduction of Digital Connectivity Infrastructure Provider Authorization under Unified License (UL)".

A robust Digital Connectivity Infrastructure (DCI) contributes significantly to economic development both by increasing productivity and by providing amenities that enhance the quality of life. In context of DCI development, various countries have aligned their telecom licensing framework to increase utilization of resources (including spectrum), reduction of cost, attract investment and strengthen the service delivery segment by segregating the infrastructure/network layer and service/application layers. The advantage of such frameworks is that they simplify the licensing process and provide a more conducive environment for market growth and improvement of the socio-economic welfare of the society while considering the convergence of technologies.

DCI plays a vital and leading role in successful implementation of various Government schemes under Digital India, Make in India, Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM), and development of Smart Cities. The recently launched 5G will transform India into a broadband super-highway and improve the country's socio-economic structure. In this light it is also imperative that new players are encouraged through conducive licensing framework for creation of both active and passive infrastructure. This is likely to result in increased common sharable DCI and network resources, reduction in cost, attract investment, strengthen the service delivery segment, and could also prove to be catalyst in proliferation of 5G services for Industry 4.0, enterprise segment and various other use cases.

DoT has sought recommendations from TRAI regarding creation of a new category of license namely 'Telecom Infrastructure License (TIL)" and its terms and conditions of such license, applicable license fee etc.

In this regard, a Consultation Paper (CP) on was issued on the subject on 09th February 2023 to seek views of stakeholders on the proposed Digital Connectivity Infrastructure Provider (DCIP) authorization under Unified License.

The last date for receiving written comments by 09th March 2023 and counter-comments, if any, by 23rd March 2023.

https://trai.gov.in/sites/default/files/Consultation_Paper_09022023.pdf

Draft on Review of The Quality of Service (Code of Practice for Metering and Billing Accuracy) Regulations, 2023' on 24th February 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 a Code of Practice for Metering and Billing Accuracy which is to be complied with 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 past the te1ecom networks have undergone significant changes, and many new services are offered by the te1ecom service providers. Additionally, tariffs against the services offered have also undergone significant changes specially after introduction of unlimited data or voice plans with fixed tariffs on daily/monthly/yearly basis. All these new tariff offerings provide unlimited usage with certain limits under Fair Usage Policy (FUP), thereby shifting focus from itemized billing to committed volume of data or voice or SMS on daily basis or till the expiry of validity of the subscribed tariff offering.

New IP based networks such as LTE/5G technologies, carrying voice over data have now shifted billing from per second/minute-based billing to data volume-based billing. Accordingly, service providers are expected to have advanced, robust, and scalable IT products for accurate billing of various services being offered to the consumers.

In view of the above, the Authority undertook a public consultation, by releasing a Consultation Paper on "Review of The Quality of Service (Code of Practice for Metering and Billing Accuracy) Regulations, 2006" on 1st September 2020 seeking comments and counter comments of stakeholders by 27th Oct 2020 and 10th Nov 2020, respectively.

However, before issuing final regulations by repealing previous regulations and their amendments on the subject, Authority decided to put forward draft regulations and guidelines in public domain for considerations of the stakeholders and offer further comments, if any.

https://trai.gov.in/sites/default/files/Draft_Regulation_24022023.pdf

Directions

TRAI issued Directions on 16th Feb. 2023 to Access Providers to stop misuse of Headers and Message Templates, and to curb unauthorized promotions using telecom resources under TCCCPR-2018.

In order to ensure that all promotional messages are sent through Registered Telemarketers (RTMs) using approved Headers and Message Templates on Distributed Ledger Technologies (DLT) platform, and also to stop misuse of Headers and Message Templates, TRAI has issued two separate Directions to Access Service Providers under Telecom Commercial Communication Customer Preference Regulations, 2018 (TCCCPR- 2018), the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India Act 1997 (24 of 1997). TRAI has observed that Headers and Message Templates of Principal Entities (PEs) are being misused by some Telemarketers. To stop the same, Access Service Providers have been directed to;

> a) reverify all registered Headers & Message Templates on DLT platform and block all unverified Headers and Message Templates within 30 and 60 days, respectively.
>
> b) ensure that temporary Headers are deactivated immediately after the time duration for which such headers were created.
>
> c) ensure that content variables in Message Template do not have flexibility to insert undesired contents. Entities involved in message transmission should be clearly identifiable and tracked, if required.
>
> d) remove confusion among recipients of message and prevent their misuse, no look-alike headers (Headers which are similarly virtue of combination of small case or large case letters) are to be registered by Access Providers in names of different Principal Entities.

To curb messages from unauthorized or unregistered telemarketers, including telemarketers using telephone numbers, Access Providers have been directed to-

- ✓ bar all Telemarketers, who are not registered on Distributed Ledger Technologies (DLT) platform from handling the message template scrubbing and delivery of messages to recipients through Access Providers' network;

- ✓ ensure that promotional messages are not transmitted by Unregistered Telemarketers or Telemarketers using telephone numbers (10 digits numbers);

- ✓ take action against all such erring Telemarketers as per the provisions of the regulations and also initiate actions as per relevant legal laws. The Access Service Provider shall also notify details of such Telemarketers to other Access Providers, who shall, in turn, bar these entities from sending any kind of commercial communications through their networks.

https://trai.gov.in/sites/default/files/Directions_16022023.pdf

TRAI issued Directions on 24th Feb 2023 to All Telecom Service Providers to submit Quality of Service (QoS) reports for each State and Union Territory (UT).

TRAI has issued the "Standards of Quality of Service of Basic Telephone Service (Wireline) and Cellular Mobile Telephone Service Regulations (7 of 2009) dated the 20thMarch 2009 as amended time to time. Currently, Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) are submitting QoS performance report on License Service Area (LSA) basis.

The Authority has observed that submission of State and Union Territory wise report for QoS parameters is essential for optimum analysis of QoS being provided by TSPs. This will also help respective State UT Governments in facilitating service providers in improving QoS in the State /UT as and when required.

Accordingly, the TSPs have been directed to submit State and Union Territory-wise reports, in respect of QoS parameters specified in regulation 3 for Basic (wireline) Services and 'Network Service Quality Parameters' of regulation 5 for Cellular Mobile Telephone Services, on quarterly basis starting from the quarter ending 31st March 2023. LSA wise data, as currently being submitted through various Performance Monitoring Reports, shall continue to be submitted as per schedule defined in The Regulation.

https://trai.gov.in/sites/default/files/Directions_24022023.pdf

Workshop

Workshop on Capacity Building of Consumer Advocacy at Ekta Nagar, Gujarat

TRAI organized the Regional Workshop on Capacity Building of Consumer Advocacy Groups (CAGs) on 23rd February 2023 at Ekta Nagar (Gujarat) Sh. A. K. Singh, Advisor (CA) delivered expert talk on the occasion.

SATRC workshop on Spectrum with the concluding remarks of Mr. Masanori Kondo, SG-APT and Sh. V. Raghunandan, Secy.-TRAI. Mr. S.T. Abbas, Pr. Advisor-TRAI Chairman-WG summarized the outcome of the workshop. Ms. Vandana Sethi, Adv-TRAI thanked all the delegates.

Seminar

Seminar on "Digital Communication: New Trends, Use Cases & Challenges" at Dehradun on 8th Feb 2023 by Regional Office, Bhopal.

TRAI organized a seminar on "Digital Communication: New Trends, Use Cases & Challenges" at Dehradun, with the objective of providing a platform for deliberation, discussion, and exchange of views on key issues on new technologies, such as 5G Technology, Artificial Intelligence (AI) /ML, Big Data analysis, Cyber security, and Blockchain. The seminar was attended by eminent experts in the field from IIT, Central & State governments, PSUs, Financial Institutions, Private sectors, and various consumer groups/individuals.

Open House Discussion

TRAI held an OHD on Consultation Paper on Leveraging Artificial Intelligence and Big Data in Telecommunication Sector on 17ᵗʰ February 2023.

TRAI held an Open House Discussion (OHD) on 24ᵗʰ February 2023 through video conferencing on the Consultation Paper on Draft Telecommunication (Broadcasting and Cable) Services Interconnection (Addressable System) (Fourth Amendment) Regulations, 2022 related to System Requirement for Digital Right Management, issued on 09ᵗʰ September 2022.

Events

A bilateral meeting between TRAI and BEREC (Body of European Regulators for Electronic Commission) delegations headed by Dr. P.D. Vaghela, Chairman-TRAI and Mr. Konstantinos Masselos, BEREC Chair 2023 at the sidelines of GSMA Mobile World Congress 23 at Barcelona, Spain on 28th Feb. 2023.

Bilateral meeting between TRAI and ICASA (Independent Communications Authority of South Africa). Dr. P.D. Vaghela, Chairman-TRAI in conversation with Dr. Charley Lewis, Acting Chairperson-ICASA at the sidelines of GSMA Mobile World Congress 2023 at Barcelona, Spain on 28th Feb. 2023

Dr. P.D. Vaghela, Chairman, TRAI met the visiting delegation from Telecom and Post Regulatory Authority (TPRA), Sudan, who are on a three-day study tour to TRAI.

Telecom Subscriptions

1. **Telecom Subscription Data as on 31st January 2023**

Particulars	Wireless	Wireline	Total
Urban Telephone subscribers (Millions)	627.13	25.59	652.72
Rural Telephone subscribers (Millions)	515.89	2.14	518.03
Total Telephone subscribers (Millions)	**1143.02**	**27.73**	**1170.75**
Overall Tele-density (%)	82.52	2.00	84.52
Share of Urban Subscription (%)	54.87	92.29	55.75
Share of Rural Subscription (%)	45.13	7.71	44.25
No. of Broadband Subscribers (Millions)	806.07	33.11	839.18

Active wireless subscribers on the date of Peak VLR in January 2023 were 1024.81 million.

In January 2023, 12.40 million subscriber requests were made for MNP. By the end of January 2023, a total of 796.84 million consumers have availed the MNP facility since its implementation.

TRAI released the updated list of Panel of Auditors to carry out audit of Digital Addressable Systems (DAS) on 6th February, 2023, vide which one audit firm namely M/s Khire Khandekar & Kirloskar have been removed from the list of auditors. As on 28th February 2023, the total number of auditors empanelled by TRAI to carry out the audit of Digital Addressable Systems of DPOs was 53.

TRAI released a press release on 17th February 2023 for extension of last date of receiving of comments/counter comments on TRAI's Consultation Paper on "License Fee and Policy Matters of DTH Services". The last date of submission of comments/counter comments by the stakeholders has been extended up to 27th February 2023.

Consumer Outreach Programmes

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

S. No.	Place	Date
1	Mussoorie (Uttarakhand)	9th February 2023
2	Guntur (Andhra Pradesh)	15th February 2023
3	Thrissur (Kerala)	23rd February 2023
4	Ekta Nagar (Gujarat)	23rd February 2023
5	Odisha	24th February 2023
6	Bikaner (Rajasthan)	27th February 2023

PHOTO GALLERY

Consumer Outreach Program at Mussoorie (Uttarakhand) held on 9th February 2023 by Regional Office, Bhopal

Consumer Outreach Program at Guntur (Andhra Pradesh) held on 15th February 2023 by Regional Office, Hyderabad

Consumer Outreach Program at Thrissur, Kerala held on 23rd February 2023 by Regional Office, Bengaluru

Special Consumer Outreach Program for students at Odisha on 24th February 2023 by Regional Office, Hyderabad. Six colleges attended the online COP.

Consumer Outreach Programme at Bikaner (Rajasthan) on 27th February 2023 by Regional Office, Jaipur

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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