TELECOM REGULATORY AUTHORITY OF INDIA

E-NEWSLETTER

JULY 2023

Dr. P.D. Vaghela, Chairman, TRAI met Ms. Doreen Bogdan-Martin, Secretary General-ITU (International Telecommunications Union) at the sidelines of ITU Global Symposium of Regulators at Egypt on 7th June 2023

TRAI released recommendations on "Licensing Framework and Regulatory Mechanism for Submarine Cable Landing in India" on 19th June 2023

TRAI received a reference from DoT seeking recommendations on licensing framework and regulatory mechanism for submarine cables landing in India within existing ULILD/standalone ILD license. The reference focused on ownership aspects in a submarine cable landing in India. In addition, TRAI *suo moto* identified some other issues such as (i) Need for Indian Flagged vessel for submarine cable operation and maintenance, (ii) Enabling provisions for domestic submarine cable between two or more cities on the coastline of India, (iii) Stub-cables – new concept of placing pre-laid "dark fiber" from the CLS through Beach Manhole (BMH) into the territorial waters for upcoming new cables, and (iv) Clarity on terrestrial connectivity between different Cable Landing Stations.

Accordingly, TRAI issued a Consultation Paper on 'Licensing Framework and Regulatory Mechanism for Submarine Cable Landing in India' on 23rd December 2022 seeking comments and counter-comments from stakeholders. Subsequently, an Open House Discussion was held on 19th April 2023 to seek further views from the stakeholders on the issues.

After considering the comments/inputs received from the stakeholders during consultation process and further analysis of the issues, the Authority has finalized Recommendations on 'Licensing Framework and Regulatory Mechanism for Submarine Cable Landing in India'. The recommendation has been sent to DoT for consideration.

https://trai.gov.in/sites/default/files/Recommendation_19062023.pdf

TRAI's response to MIB back reference on renewal of MSOs on 27th June 2023

TRAI has issued its response to the back-reference received from Ministry of Information & Broadcasting (MIB) regarding its earlier Recommendations on "Renewal of Multi-System Operators (MSOs) Registration" dated 29th December 2022.

MIB through their letter dated 27th April 2023, referred back to TRAI's Recommendations. After examination, TRAI has finalized its response to the back reference by agreeing to the comments/ suggested modifications of MIB on 27th June 2023.

https://trai.gov.in/sites/default/files/TRAI_Response_27062023.pdf

Consultation Papers

Consultation Paper issued on 19th June 2023 on "Encouraging Innovative Technologies Services, Use Cases, and Business Models through Regulatory Sandbox in Digital Communication Sector"

Through this Consultation Paper, TRAI intends to examine the possibility for a regulatory sandbox in the field of digital communications. The Consultation paper discusses some of the regulatory sandbox frameworks that are working in the digital communication sector globally and details some of such frameworks working within the country in other sectors. The consultation paper proposes a draft sandbox framework and seeks feedback from stakeholders on it. This draft sandbox framework includes information on the goals and scope of the framework, participant eligibility requirements, prerequisites for applicants, supporting materials needed with applications, application evaluation criteria, application and approval process, waivers or modifications to the rules, validity period, revocation of permission, reporting oversight body, and funding of innovation for societal growth.

The last date for receiving stakeholder's comments and counter-comments is 17th July 2023 and 01st August 2023, respectively.

https://trai.gov.in/sites/default/files/CP_19062023.pdf

Directions

TRAI issued a Direction regarding implementation of Digital Consent Acquisition under Telecom Commercial Communications Customer Preference Regulations, 2018 (TCCCPR 2018) on 02nd June 2023

TRAI has directed Access Providers to develop & deploy a Digital Consent Acquisition facility. It will help with the verification of consent acquired from the customers through an OTP process by Access Providers.

The Digital Consent Acquisition (DCA) process shall have the facility to seek maintain and revoke consent of customer, as per TCCCPR, 2018. Access Providers shall use a common short code 127xxx for sending a consent seeking message.

An SMS/IVR/Online facility shall be developed by Access Providers to register the unwillingness of the customers to receive any consent seeking message initiated by any Principal Entity. In the first phase, only subscriber-initiated content has been permitted by TRAI.

https://trai.gov.in/sites/default/files/Direction_02062023.pdf

Events

TRAI issued a Direction regarding implementation of UCC Detect System under Telecom Commercial Communications Customer Preference Regulations, 2018 on 13th June 2023

TRAI has directed all Access Providers to deploy Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning based UCC Detect system to detect, identify, and act against senders of Commercial Communication who are not registered in accordance with the provisions of Telecom Commercial Communication Customer Preference Regulations, 2018 (TCCCPR-2018). The entities who do not get registered with the Access Providers and use 10-digit mobile numbers for sending commercial communications through messages or calls are called Unregistered Telemarketers (UTMs). TRAI has been taking various steps to curb Unsolicited Commercial Communication (UCC) which is a major source of inconvenience to the public. It has resulted in a reduction in complaints against Registered Te1emarketers (RTMs). Despite measures taken by the TSPs, UCC from Unregistered Te1emarketers (UTMs) is continuing. At times these UTMs through messages with fraudulent links and telephone numbers trap the customers into sharing their critical information causing financial loss to the customers. To detect, identify and act against all such Unregistered Telemarketers (UTMs), TRAI has been insisting Access Service Providers to implement UCC Detect System with requisite functionalities within the framework of TRAI's TCCCPR-2018. Access Service providers have implemented such detect systems as per their suitability and feasibility. However, since the UTMs are continuously evolving new techniques to send unsolicited communications and the current UCC detect systems deployed by the Access Service providers are not fully capable of detecting such UCC.

Therefore, to have uniformity of UCC-Detect System implementations, TRAI has directed all Access Providers to deploy Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning based UCC Detect System capable of constantly evolving to deal with new signatures, new patterns and new techniques used by UTMs. Access Providers have also been directed to share intelligence with other Access Providers using DLT platform. Access Providers have further been directed to ensure that such UCC-Detect System shall detect senders who are sending Unsolicited Commercial Communications in bulk and not complying with the provisions of the regulations.

https://trai.gov.in/sites/default/files/Direction_13062023.pdf

Dr. P.D. Vaghela, Chairman, TRAI shared his views on "Digital Accessibility - The Key to an Inclusive Society" during the session at Global Symposium of Regulators (GSR23) in Egypt on 7th June 2023.

Bilateral Meeting between Dr. P.D. Vaghela, Chairman, TRAI and Eng. Hossam El-Gamal, Executive President, National Telecom Regulatory Authority-Egypt at the sidelines of Global Symposium of Regulators at Egypt on 7th June 2023.

Dr. P.D. Vaghela, Chairman-TRAI shared his views and experiences on "National Strategies and Approaches to Foster Cross-Sectoral collaboration in Digital Space" in the Heads of Regulators' Executive Roundtable a Global Symposium of Regulators (GSR23) in Egypt on 7th June 2023.

Dr. P.D. Vaghela, Chairman, TRAI met Mr. Dan Sjöblom, Director General, Swedish Post and Telecom Authority, Sweden in the presence of Mr. V. Raghunandan, Seceretary TRAI at the sidelines of ITU Global Symposium of Regulators at Egypt on 7th June 2023.

Dr. P.D. Vaghela, Chairman, TRAI and Senior Officers & Staff of TRAI performed Yoga on International Yoga Day 2023 at TRAI HQ, New Delhi on 21st June 2023.
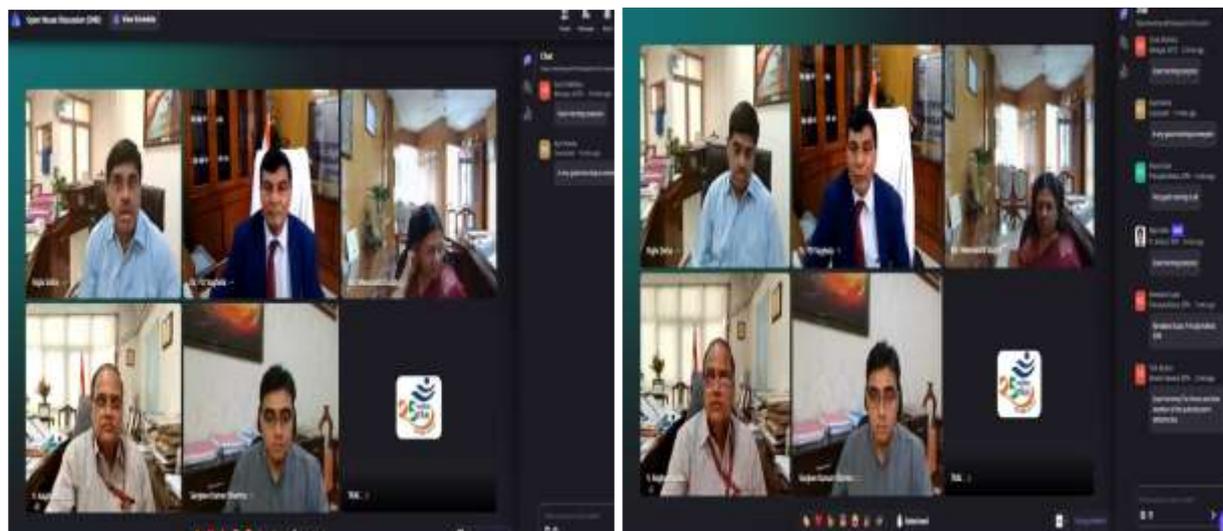

Ms. Meenakshi Gupta, Member, TRAI gave a keynote address on 'Perspectives from India in the Broadband for All' in Conference held in Stockholm, Sweden on 27th June 2023.

Open House Discussions

An Open House Discussion on the Consultation Paper "Introduction of Digital Connectivity Infrastructure Provider Authorization under Unified License (UL)" was held on 20th June 2023

An OHD was conducted on 20th June 2023 regarding the Consultation Paper on "Introduction of Digital Connectivity Infrastructure Provider Authorization under Unified License (UL)" through Video Conference. Several stakeholders including Telecom Service Providers, Industry Associations, etc. participated. The open house discussion held through video conferencing received a good response. Some visuals of the said OHD are attached below:-

Telecom Subscriptions

Telecom Subscription Data as on 31st May 2023:

Particulars	Wireless	Wireline	Total
Urban Telephone subscribers (Million)	626.26	27.18	653.43
Rural Telephone subscribers (Million)	516.95	2.19	519.14
Total Telephone subscribers (Million)	**1143.21**	**29.36**	**1172.57**
Overall Tele-density (%)	82.29	2.11	84.40
Share of Urban Subscription (%)	54.78	92.55	55.73
Share of Rural Subscription (%)	45.22	7.45	44.27
No. of Broadband Subscribers (Million)	822.34	34.47	856.81

Active wireless subscribers on the date of Peak VLR in May 2023 were 1043.41 million.

In May 2023, 11.47 million subscriber requests were made for MNP. By the end of May 2023, a total of 842.12 million consumers availed the MNP facility since its implementation.

Other Miscellaneous

Extension of last date to receive comments/counter comments on TRAI's Consultation Paper on "Definition of International Traffic".

A Consultation Paper on 'Definition of International Traffic' seeking inputs from stakeholders was released on 02nd May 2023.

The industry association and other stakeholders requested for further extension of timelines. Accordingly, after considering their requests, the timelines for sending the written comments/ counter comments on the issues raised in the Consultation Paper were further extended up to 11th July 2023 and 25th July 2023, respectively.

Extension of last date to receive counter-comments on TRAI Consultation Paper on Assignment of Spectrum for Space-based Communication Services

TRAI had earlier released a Consultation Paper on **'Assignment of Spectrum for Space-based Communication Services'** on **06th April 2023** seeking inputs from stakeholders. On the closing date of receiving comments, 64 stakeholders had furnished their comments, and all were uploaded on TRAI's website.

Subsequently, the industry association requested for extension of time to submit the counter comments. After considering the request of the Industry Association, the timelines for sending the written counter comments were extended up to 22nd June 2023.

Forum of Indian Regulators (FOIR)- Collaborative Regulatory Mechanism for Socio-economic development on 15th June 2023

TRAI attended the 24th Annual General Body Meeting with the Forum of Indian Regulators FOIR wherein Honorary Chairperson, FOIR/Chairperson, Airport Economic Regulatory Authority (AERA), Honorary Vice Chairperson, FOIR/Chairman, Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), Honorary Vice Chairperson, FOIR/Chairperson, Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (CERC), Honorary Vice Chairperson, FOIR/Chairperson, Competition Commission of India (CCI) and other Chairpersons and member of various regulatory authorities were present in the meeting. During the meeting, discussions were held on faster adoption of 5G and associated technologies in different vertical sectors represented in FOIR.

5G services have been launched in India on 1st Oct 2022. 5G technology holds the potential to enable unprecedented degrees of flexibility, productivity, and efficiency in various industry verticals. The potential of 5G, combined with artificial intelligence (AI), ARNR, smart platforms and IoT, can deliver enormous value to consumers, organizations, and society at large. It will also pave the way for developing services for making smart cities, autonomous vehicles, smart factories, etc. The adoption of 5G technology is expected to boost the Indian economy by 450 billion dollars over the next 15 years.

Earlier, based on the discussions held during the 21st Annual General Body Meeting of FOIR on 30th September 2020, a Working Group was constituted to submit its recommendations on "Cross Sector Collaborative Regulation between TRAI and Electricity Regulators". The working group submitted its recommendations on cross-sector collaboration for aerial/underground fiber deployment, 5G Small Cells deployment, smart metering, smart grid monitoring and on issues related to rapid infrastructure creation and faster rollout of 5G services. The report of the sub-group was discussed in FOIR and also in the Forum of Regulators (FOR) which resulted in the identification of action points including SERCs regulations on revenue sharing between DISCOMs and consumers for income other than core business; single bill for multiple connections issued to the telecom service provider and payment for all the commutative bills at one go, separate tariff slab for energy consumed by the telecom service providers.

Encouraged by the success of the working group on "Cross Sector Collaborative Regulation between TRAI and Electricity Regulators" towards deployment of 5G infrastructure, TRAI proposed formation of another working group to study and give recommendations on faster adoption of 5G and associated technologies in different vertical sectors represented in FOIR. In view of the immense potential and likely contribution of 5G, FOIR has agreed to set up a group to study the opportunities and challenges associated with adoption of 5G and related technologies such as AIML/IOT/M2M/AR/VR/lndustry 4.0 etc. in different sectors represented in FOIR viz. Industries, ports, airports, power sector, petroleum & natural gas, Real Estate, Food industry etc. for sector specific applications as well as common applications in Data analytics, office management, MIS etc. for the regulators. As deliberated and agreed by FOIR members, the Working Group will be formed by drawing members from expert sector regulators with TRAI as convenor of the Group.

Consumer Outreach Programmes

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

S. No.	Place	Date
1	Shillong (Meghalaya)	28th June 2023
2	Itarsi (Narmadapuram) (Madhya Pradesh)	28th June 2023

PHOTO GALLERY

Consumer Outreach Program at Shillong (Meghalaya) was held on 28th June 2023 by Regional Office, Kolkata

Consumer Outreach Program at Itarsi, Narmadapuram (Madhya Pradesh) held on 28th June 2023 by Regional Office, Bhopal