TELECOM REGULATORY AUTHORITY OF INDIA

E-NEWS LETTER

JUNE 2023

Mr. Seizo Onoe, Director, TSB, ITU visited TRAI, New Delhi for bilateral meeting with Dr. P. D. Vaghela, Chairman-TRAI on 10th May 2023

Recommendations

TRAI released its recommendations on "Ease of Doing Business in Telecom and Broadcasting Sector" on 2nd May 2023

TRAI on 2nd May 2023 has suo moto released recommendations on "Ease of Doing Business in Telecom and Broadcasting Sector" to review the existing processes of both the telecom and broadcasting sectors. These processes span across MIB, DoT, Department of Space, MeitY, and Ministry of Power. Vide the said recommendations, the Authority recommended that each Ministry and its department should establish an Ease of Doing Business (EoDB) Committee to regularly review, simplify and update the existing processes and to ensure ease of doing business in the sector as an on-going activity. The Authority inter alia also recommended that all the concerned Ministries/ Departments should adopt a user-friendly, transparent, and responsive digital single window system. The portal should provide easy to navigate mechanisms for access to all statutory/ policy guidelines, amendments, orders, office memorandums related to a license/ registration/permission/ clearance.

https://trai.gov.in/sites/default/files/Recommendations_02052023.pdf

TRAI's Response on 2nd May 2023 to the back reference dated 27th January 2023 received from DoT

DoT requested TRAI to furnish its recommendations on (i) whether the incremental 0.5% in SUC rate in cases of sharing of spectrum should be applied only on the specific band in which sharing is taking place; or on the overall Weighted Average Rate of SUC, which has been derived from all bands and (ii) any other recommendations deemed fit for the purpose. After following a comprehensive consultation process with the stakeholders, TRAI sent the Recommendations on Methodology of applying Spectrum Usage Charges (SUC) under the weighted average method of SUC assessment, in cases of Spectrum Sharing' to DoT on 17th August 2020.

Department of Telecommunications (DoT), through its letter dated 27th January 2023, referred back the said recommendation of TRAI. After examination, TRAI finalized its response to the back-reference and sent it to the Government on 2nd May 2023.

https://trai.gov.in/sites/default/files/Response_02052023.pdf

Consultation Papers

TRAI released a Consultation Paper on Definition of International Traffic on 2nd May 2023

Department of Telecommunications (DoT) through a reference dated 30th August 2022 requested the Authority to provide its recommendations on definition of International SMS and Domestic SMS.

The load carried on a telecommunication network is called traffic, or more specifically 'telecommunication traffic'. Telecommunication traffic comprises of several types of traffic such as voice call, SMS, etc. Further, telecommunication traffic comprises domestic traffic (i.e., traffic within the country), and international traffic. In the Indian context, domestic traffic comprises intra-circle traffic and inter-circle traffic which have been specifically defined in the Unified License. As intra-circle traffic and inter-circle traffic are the only two components of domestic traffic, the term 'domestic traffic' has been defined implicitly in the Unified License. The Authority noted that the term 'international traffic' has not been defined in the Unified License and that 'international SMS' is a type of 'international traffic'.

Therefore, the Authority is of the view that instead of defining international SMS in the Unified License Agreement, it would be appropriate to define the term 'international traffic', instead.

In this regard, a Consultation Paper on 'Definition of International Traffic' seeking inputs from stakeholders was released on 2nd May 2023.

https://trai.gov.in/sites/default/files/CP_02052023.pdf

Events

Dr. P.D Vaghela Chairman TRAI, visited to State-of-the-Art facility of Sterlite optical fiber at Aurangabad on 4th May 2023. Secretary Sh. V. Raghunandan and Advisor Sh. Brajinder Kumar, and Advisor RO Bengaluru were also present.

The World Telecommunication & Information Society Day was celebrated in TRAI in the presence of Dr. P. D. Vaghela Chairman TRAI 17th May 2023. On the occasion, a session on Metaverse - Introduction, Applications & Upcoming Challenges was delivered by the esteemed Professor Dr. Rajesh Bhadada, Prof. & HoD of E & C. E MBM University, Jodhpur.

Bilateral meeting with Dr. P D Vaghela, Chairman, TRAI and H.E. Mahamat Allahou Taher, Hon'ble Minister of Telecommunications and Digital Economy, Republic of Chad on 23rd May 2023.

Dr. P.D. Vaghela, Chairman TRAI visited the Nokia Manufacturing facility at Chennai on 25th May 2023 along with Sh. V. Raghunandan, Secretary TRAI and the Officers of RO, Hyderabad.

Visit of Dr. P.D. Vaghela, Chairman TRAI to Bharat FIH at Chennai on 26th May 23 alongwith Sh. V Raghunandan, Secretary, TRAI and officers of Hyderabad.

Visit of Dr. P.D. Vaghela, Chairman-TRAI to AIRTEL NXTRA DATA CENTRE facility at Chennai on 27th May 2023 along with Sh. V. Raghunandan, Secretary TRAI

Seminars

Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), New Delhi organised a seminar on Digital Inclusion - empowering people digitally at Leh on 12th May 2023.

Sh. Mahendra Srivastava, Pr. Advisor (CA, QOS, IT) TRAI welcomed all the participants and briefed them about TRAI's suo-moto actions on initiating a consultation process on Digital Inclusion- in the era of New Emerging Technologies. He emphasized the relevance and importance of organizing the Seminar at Leh, Ladakh, which has a great potential for developing local entrepreneurships through tourism and handicraft industries etc.

The seminar was inaugurated by Ms. Meenakshi Gupta, Member, TRAI. In her keynote address, the Member emphasized the need for coordinated efforts to address digital inclusion issues and explained TRAI's special efforts in digital inclusion, specially, for remote and difficult areas and for marginalized people who cannot afford the accessibility to digital connectivity. She referred to high tele density of the Ladakh UT in comparison to the average tele density of the country. She mentioned about TRAI's recent recommendations to improve connectivity for the hilly regions of Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim and Ladakh. Member also requested officers of the Union Territory Ladakh to provide support to all Service Providers in Right of Way (ROW) and other issues.

Member further stressed upon the potential benefits for digital inclusions in education, health, tourism, and promotion of local handicraft industries and expressed happiness to observe that UT Government through its IT department is taking proactive actions in enabling required IT system at Gram Panchayats and Villages to utilize connectivity being provided through USOF/DoT.

Sh. Kacho Mehboob Ali Khan, Secretary, IT, in his address explained the efforts made by the Government of UT Ladakh for the support of Telecom Infrastructure. He welcomed Member TRAI and the participants and expressed his happiness for organizing the Seminar in Leh, Ladakh (UT) region. Secretary IT emphasized the need to provide proper 5G/4G Telecom Services in all parts of the State. He also highlighted the underlined need of proper connectivity to whole region to provide the citizen's service in each corner of the region.

Session 1

✓ The Theme of the first session was "Digital Inclusion – the need of the Hour'. Sh. S.M.K. Chandra, Joint Advisor, TRAI highlighted the importance of digital technologies / services and the efforts of TRAI towards reaching them to all. He explained the TRAI's recent recommendations to improve connectivity in Ladakh in detail.

✓ Sh. Kuldeep Kumar Singh, GM, BBNL/BSNL highlighted the efforts made by BBNL/BSNL in providing connectivity to villages in the UT.

✓ Sh. Sita Ram Meena, Director (T-2), USOF explained the schemes of USOF for connecting unconnected through Bharat Net, 4G Mobile Saturation Project, Border Area Post Connectivity with Mobile Services etc.

Session 2

✓ Sh. Nitin Jain from Hughes India Ltd, Satellite Service Industry explained the deployment VSATs in Ladakh region.
✓ Sh. Subrata Mitra, Ericsson explained the trends of Enhanced Mobile Broadband (eMBB) and Fixed Wireless Access in 5G.

- ✓ Sh. Amit Marwa, Nokia mentioned the digital divide as a global phenomenon, he gave some global and India statistics of digital divide. He covered various 5G enabled IoT applications, rural Broadband with FWA for homes and businesses across semi-rural and remote areas.
- ✓ Sh. Huneef Mohammad Sofi, Dy. CTO, Jio explained the efforts of M/s Jio Infocom to propagate digital inclusion in Ladakh region. He covered deployment strategy covering 5G/ 4G and Fiber to home powered by DWDM, Raman Amplifiers, Advanced IP/MPLS technology.

In conclusion, all the participants emphasized that there is a need of coordinated approach by all stakeholders for making availability of all type of telecom services (i.e., 5G/6G, high speed Broadband, etc) to all the citizens across the country.

The seminar was attended by Officers from UT Ladakh, representatives from the Central Government, Industry, Public Sector Undertakings, Telecom Service Providers, Academia, local artisans and craftsmen.

Open House Discussion

An Open House Discussion held on TRAI conducted through virtual conference on the Consultation Paper on Telecommunication Infrastructure Sharing, Spectrum Sharing, and Spectrum Leasing on 24th May 2023

Telecom Subscriptions

Telecom Subscription Data as on 31st March 2023:

Particulars	Wireless	Wireline	Total
Urban Telephone subscribers (Millions)	627.54	26.16	653.71
Rural Telephone subscribers (Millions)	516.38	2.25	518.63
Total Telephone subscribers (Millions)	**1143.93**	**28.41**	**1172.34**
Overall Tele-density (%)	82.46	2.05	84.51
Share of Urban Subscription (%)	54.86	92.09	55.76
Share of Rural Subscription (%)	45.14	7.91	44.24
No. of Broadband Subscribers (Millions)	813.08	33.49	846.57

Active wireless subscribers on the date of Peak VLR in March 2023 were 1034.26 million.

In March 2023, 11.70 million subscriber requests were made for MNP. By the end of March 2023, a total of 819.70 million consumers have availed the MNP facility since its implementation.

Miscellaneous

On 19th May 2023, TRAI extended the last date to receive comments/counter-comments on TRAI Consultation Paper titled "Issues Related to Low Power Small Range FM Radio Broadcasting". The last date of receiving comments on the issues raised in the consultation paper from the stakeholders was fixed as 15th May 2023 and counter-comments as 29th May 2023. Keeping in view the request received from the stakeholder for extension of time for submission of comments on the above-mentioned consultation paper, the last date for submission of comments and counter-comments were further extended up to 22nd May 2023 and 5th June 2023, respectively.