

Information Note to the Press (Press Release No. 92/2024)

For Immediate Release

Telecom Regulatory Authority of India

Subject: TRAI achieves key milestone in ensuring SMS traceability for secure messaging

New Delhi, 19th December 2024-The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has successfully implemented a framework to ensure the traceability of all commercial SMS, a major step towards creating a safer and spam-free messaging ecosystem. This initiative marks a significant milestone in TRAI's ongoing efforts to safeguard consumers from spam while enhancing the transparency and accountability of commercial messaging systems.

Under this framework, all Principal Entities (PEs) such as businesses, banks, and government agencies along with their Telemarketers (TMs), were required to declare and register their message transmission paths through blockchain-based Distributed Ledger Technology (DLT). This chain declaration & binding process ensures end-to-end traceability of every message, from its origin to its delivery, without compromising data security or delays in SMS delivery.

To operationalise this, TRAI issued a directive on 20 August 2024 mandating the traceability of all commercial messages starting 1 November 2024. Recognising the scale of the activities involved in implementation, TRAI extended the compliance deadlines first to 30 November 2024 and later to 10 December 2024 to enable the smooth onboarding of approximately 1.13 lakh active PEs across diverse sectors such as banking, insurance, healthcare, and real estate.

TRAI adopted a collaborative approach by engaging with key sectoral regulators like RBI, SEBI, IRDAI, PFRDA, and government agencies such as NIC, CDAC, and state governments to promote awareness and accelerate

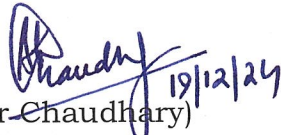
declaration & binding efforts. Access Providers also played a crucial role in supporting PEs and TMs through targeted outreach campaigns and technical guidance for seamless integration into the DLT system.

To minimize disruptions, TRAI introduced an innovative implementation strategy during the initial enforcement period. While the chain binding regulations were technically enforced, messages sent through undeclared paths were temporarily allowed but flagged with error codes. These error codes were shared with the concerned PEs to enable corrective actions without disrupting critical messages like OTPs or other time-sensitive communications. This consumer-centric approach ensured uninterrupted messaging services while maintaining regulatory compliance.

As a result of these coordinated efforts led by TRAI, all major PEs have now registered their message transmission chains with Access Providers. Effective 11th December 2024, SMS traffic sent through unregistered paths is being rejected, marking the culmination of this massive exercise.

This achievement reinforces TRAI's commitment to combating spam and enhancing consumer trust in telecom services. The traceability initiative complements other anti-spam measures introduced by TRAI, such as the disconnection of all telecom resources used by spammers, URL whitelisting in SMS, and the migration of 140-series telemarketers to DLT platforms.

TRAI will continue to drive innovation and enforce stringent measures to ensure a safe and transparent telecom ecosystem for all.


(Atul Kumar Chaudhary) 19/12/24
Secretary, TRAI