

Information note to the Press (Press Release No. 33/2016)

For Immediate Release

Telecom Regulatory Authority of India

TRAI issues Consultation Paper on “Free Data”

New Delhi, 19.05.2016 – The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has today issued a Consultation Paper on “**Free Data**”

1. Differential Tariff Regulation dated 08th February, 2016 was issued by the Authority, after due consultation process, which prohibited discriminatory tariffs for data services. During the consultation process one question on “Are there alternative methods/technologies/business models, other than differentiated tariff plans, available to achieve the objective of providing free internet access to the consumers?” was also raised. However, the question did not get much attention of the stakeholders.
2. In order to address the issue of providing free internet access to consumers and to explore a possibility of ‘TSP agnostic platform’ which can facilitate app developers to promote their website without entering into agreement with TSPs for making their website popular, the Authority has come out with this Consultation Paper (CP) to explore model(s) that could achieve the benefits of offering free data while avoiding the ingenuity that the Differential Tariff Regulation is meant to prevent.
3. The CP raises the following issues:
 - Is there a need to have TSP agnostic platform to provide free data or suitable reimbursement to users, without violating the principles of Differential Pricing for Data laid down in TRAI Regulation?
 - Whether such platforms need to be regulated by the TRAI or market be allowed to develop these platforms?
 - Whether free data or suitable reimbursement to users should be limited to mobile data users only or could it be extended through technical means to subscribers of fixed line broadband or leased line?



4. Copy of the full text of the CP is available on TRAI website: www.trai.gov.in. The written comments on the issues raised in the consultation paper are invited from the stakeholders by 16th June 2016 and counter comments by 30th June 2016. For any clarification/information Shri Arvind Kumar, Advisor (Broadband & Policy Analysis), TRAI may be contacted at Tel. No. +91-11-23220209 Fax No. +91-11—23230056.



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