

Information note to the Press (Press Release No. 80/2023)

For Immediate release

TELECOM REGULATORY AUTHORITY OF INDIA

TRAI releases Recommendations on “Issues related to FM Radio Broadcasting”

New Delhi, 5th September 2023 - The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has today released its Recommendations on “Issues related to FM Radio Broadcasting”.

2. Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB) vide its reference dated 11th May 2022 has sought recommendations of the Authority, under section 11(1)(a) of the TRAI Act, 1997 on the following issues:

(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 25.07.2011.

(ii) Extend the existing FM license period of 15 years by 3 years.

3. In order to discuss various issues related to FM Radio broadcasting, the Authority held a meeting with representatives of AROI on 5th August 2022. Representatives of AROI, *inter-alia*, raised the following issues for consideration of the Authority:

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

(ii) Availability of FM Radio Receivers in Mobile Handsets

4. In this regard, a consultation paper was issued on 09th February 2023 seeking comments of the stakeholders on the issues related to FM Radio Broadcasting. The last date of submission of comments was 09th March 2023 and counter-comments was 23rd March 2023. TRAI received 11 comments and 9 counter-comments from stakeholders. These comments are available on TRAI's website. In this regard, an Open House Discussion was also held on 26th April 2023 through online mode.

5. After considering all comments/counter-comments received from stakeholders during the consultation process and further analysis of the issues, the Authority has finalized its recommendations. The salient features of the recommendations are given below:

- (i) The annual license fee of a FM radio channel should be de-linked from Non-Refundable One Time Entry Fee (NOTEF).
- (ii) The license fee should be calculated as 4% of the Gross Revenue (GR) of the FM radio channel during the respective financial year. GST should be excluded from Gross Revenue (GR).
- (iii) The Government may take appropriate measures to provide relief to the FM radio operators to address challenges posed due to COVID-19 pandemic.
- (iv) Private FM Radio Operators should be allowed to broadcast news and current affairs programs, limited to 10 minutes in each clock hour.
- (v) The program code of conduct as applicable to All India Radio for news content may also be applied to Private FM Radio channels.

- (vi) Functions or features pertaining to FM radio should remain enabled and activated on all mobile handsets having the necessary hardware. Built-in FM radio receiver in mobile handset must not be subjected to any form of disablement or deactivation.
- (vii) A Standing Committee, headed by a senior officer of Joint Secretary or above level, to oversee and monitor the compliance by mobile phone manufacturers (or importers) may be established by MeitY. The committee should include key stakeholders such as MIB, AROI, MAIT, and ICEA.
- (viii) An online grievance redressal portal should be provided for submitting information or complaints of case of any non-compliance as regards enablement of FM radio functionality in such mobile handsets that have the necessary functionality for FM receivers.

6. The full text of the Recommendations is available on TRAI's website www.trai.gov.in.

7. For any clarification/ information, Shri Anil Kumar Bhardwaj, Director General TRAI CSR and Advisor (B&CS) may be contacted at Tel. No. +91-11-23237922.


(V. Raghunandan)
Secretary, TRAI