

TELECOM REGULATORY AUTHORITY OF INDIA

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**TRAI RELEASES CONSULTATION PAPER ON 'ISSUES PERTAINING TO
NEXT GENERATION NETWORKS (NGN)'**

Telecom Regulatory Authority of India today released Consultation Paper on 'Issues Pertaining to Next Generation Telecom Networks' to solicit the comments of stakeholders for arriving at the requisite recommendations & enabling regulation to facilitate migration to NGN.

Presently, various telecom services are provided through separate networks. Technological advancements in telecommunications are forcing a trend towards unification of networks and convergence of services setting up the stage for the emergence of Next Generation Networks. As per the present legal framework, telecom operators can easily migrate to NGNs by licencing themselves as ISPs and by registering as Cable TV operators, with simple entry conditions. The key aspects of the Next Generation Networks (NGN) are that these networks enable access through a variety of networks, and because they are based on IP technology, they not only offer much cheaper bandwidth, they also make available a wide variety of services. In fact, with these networks, the intelligence resides at the edges so that a user can create a service of his choice if he so desires. Thus, NGN promises to provide a number of significant benefits and opportunities both for service providers and end users by providing new innovative services and applications through a common platform.

These key features were brought out by TRAI in July 2005 when it released a Study Paper on NGN with the objective of initiating awareness and thought process among various stakeholders. Some of the telecom operators in

the country, it is understood, are already planning to set up such networks. Operators in many developed countries like U.K., Japan, Singapore, Holland, Italy and Hong Kong have initiated the process of migration towards NGN.

In its recommendations on Unified Licensing in January 2005, TRAI mainly focused on a service neutral licensing regime keeping in view the development in technologies. Further, TRAI has also recently issued a consultation paper on “Convergence & Competition” which inter-alia focused on legal framework for convergence and various issues raised by a Committee on Broadband & Telephony over Cable TV Network. The Paper highlighted the definition of convergence, impact of convergence on markets and regulations as well as its impact on consumers.

As a next step, this Consultation paper focuses on the issues related to Next Generation Network (NGN) and the main emphasis in this paper is on various technical and regulatory issues with a view to facilitate the migration to NGN in case industry decides to adopt this technology, within the existing legal framework. It also deals with the core network & transport part of telecom systems, highlighting various issues related to Next Generation Networks like relevance and timing for transition to NGN, Regulatory & Technical issues as well as Migration related issues. In addition, Background on NGN technologies and International case studies have also been annexed to the paper.

SALIENT FEATURES OF ISSUES RAISED: -

- 1. Awareness and relevance:** Is NGN relevant for India? When should the industry migrate? For which category of stakeholders is NGN relevant?
- 2. Regulatory approaches:** Is there need for regulatory initiatives on NGN? Should there be ‘light touch’ regulation or are there areas needing more detailed regulation? What regulatory incentives could

help boost benefit from NGN and reduce risks? Will a move to NGN in rural areas reduce the gap between urban and rural tele-densities? If yes, how to push NGN to rural India? What interconnection regime needs to be developed in the NGN context?

3. **Technical issues:** Is there need for NGN specifications or a technology-neutral approach be adopted? How can security related concerns be addressed?
4. **Migration issues:** Is there a role for Regulator to ensure smooth migration?

Comments from all the stakeholders have been solicited by 3rd February 2006, after which Open House Discussions will be held in 2nd week of February 2006. The Consultation Paper is available on TRAI's website (www.trai.gov.in).

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