

# **TELECOM REGULATORY AUTHORITY OF INDIA**

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## **TRAI issues Consultation Paper on Billing Issues**

TRAI had been receiving complaints on billing related matters. These complaints cover areas such as inability to verify the bills, not having clarity about the tariff scheme on which they are being billed, inability to select the tariff most suited for their needs, etc. TRAI undertook a study of practices prevailing worldwide and the possibility of developing software which could help the customer select a suitable tariff. Two different programs were undertaken. In one program, "The Energy and Resources Institute" (TERI) was assigned the task of development of software which helps a customer to determine the total outgo for a given usage pattern for any tariff scheme. The efforts made so far and the results obtained for the two metros of Delhi and Mumbai have been put on the TRAI website.

In regard to building the confidence of the subscribers in the Billing and Call Charging systems of Telecom Operators, an international consultant had been engaged to help carry out an audit of the metering and billing system of different service providers. The objective of the exercise was to help TRAI define the parameters with benchmarks for fair and reliable metering and billing system.

The auditing of the billing systems of mobile operators revealed that while the billing systems being used by various operators are comparable to other systems being deployed by major international

players, some of the process/ procedure being followed by the mobile operators leads to customer complaints and the attendant customer dissatisfaction. The Authority has looked into these problem areas such as synchronization of clock, charging for SMS, publishing of tariffs, charging for value added services, premium rate services, short duration calls, credit limit and bill payment period and necessary action is being taken to address these issues. On issues of charging for SMS and short duration calls the Authority felt that public consultation may be undertaken.

In order to bring standardization and transparency in the procedures being followed by various operators, the Authority has also developed a Code of Practice for Billing Accuracy in India, which has benchmarks for metering and billing system.

This Consultation Paper analyses the issues relating to charging of SMS, charging for short duration calls and benchmarks for metering and billing accuracy, Code of Practice for Billing Accuracy in India, the international practices and regime for regulating Code of Practice.

The Authority invites responses from the stakeholders on the issues raised in this paper by 31<sup>st</sup> May, 2005. For more details, please see the TRAI website at "[www.trai.gov.in](http://www.trai.gov.in)".

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