

TELECOM REGULATORY AUTHORITY OF INDIA



सत्यमेव जयते

E-NEWSLETTER



भादूविप्रा
TRAI

JUNE 2021



A bilateral agreement in the form of Letter of Intent was signed between Dr. P.D. Vaghela, Chairman, TRAI, and H.E. Chenda Thong, Chairman, Telecommunication Regulator of Cambodia (TRC), in a virtual meeting held on 17th June 2021.

1. Consultation Paper

1.1 TRAI released a Consultation paper on the “Validity period of Tariff Offers” on 13th May 2021.



TRAI has been receiving many references from consumers regarding the offering of tariff by telecom service providers (TSPs) for 28 days instead of a monthly offering. The consumers have stated in their complaints that not only the same causes confusion, but they also feel cheated. It also results in hardships for them as they end up making 13 monthly recharges in a year, as the validity period offered is 28 days instead of a month. The extent of resentment amongst consumers in this regard can also be gauged from numerous RTIs/complaints on the issue. Further, TRAI has also been receiving Parliament Questions from Hon'ble Member of Parliaments on the issue of considering 28 days as a month in the Telecom Sector which also underscores the concern surrounding the issue.

As per the present regulatory framework, there is no specific requirement for TSPs to introduce a tariff for validity period viz., days, weeks, months, etc.

While it is observed that the TSPs have been transparently disclosing the validity period as 28 days, etc. yet it is felt that considering the perspective of the consumer, it may be prudent to look into the issue from the aspect of consumer choice as well.

In this regard, a consultation paper has been released seeking inputs from the stakeholders to identify such tariff offers and explore the possibility of making tariff/vouchers offered by the service providers and their validity issues align with the aspirations/requirements of the consumers at large, and if required, amend the regulatory framework to this extent.

Comments and counter-comments on the issues raised in the consultation paper are invited from the stakeholders by 11th June 2021 and 25th June 2021, respectively. Open-House Discussion is scheduled to be held on 28th July 2021.



https://tra.gov.in/sites/default/files/CP_13052021.pdf

1.2 The Supplementary Consultation paper on “Roadmap to promote Broadband Connectivity and Enhanced Broadband Speed”

TRAI has received a reference from DoT on 12th March 2021 regarding proliferation of Fixed-line Broadband Services in the Country. The background of this reference and reasons for release of the supplementary consultation paper are as following:

The widespread availability and use of broadband have both economic and social benefits. Broadband connectivity has become vital, and it would be difficult to imagine life without it. Keeping in view the increasing requirement of the broadband services, the Authority issued its Recommendations dated 17th April 2015 to the Government on “Delivering Broadband Quickly: What do we need to do?”. In these recommendations, one of the recommended action points was: “To promote fixed-line broadband, the license fee on the revenues earned on fixed line broadband should be exempted for at least 5 years.”

While considering the aforesaid recommendations DoT felt necessary to seek revised recommendations of the Authority considering new issues like exemption of the license fee keeping in view the current factual matrix, likelihood of misuse by the licensees and possibility of promoting proliferation of fixed-line broadband by providing direct benefit transfer to consumers for usage of fixed-line Broadband services.

As these new issues were neither explicitly consulted with the stakeholders at the time of recommendations dated 17th April 2015 nor in the

recent consultation paper on 'Roadmap to Promote Broadband Connectivity and Enhanced Broadband Speed' dated 20th August 2020; therefore it has been decided to issue a supplementary consultation paper on the above issues to provide its consolidated and updated recommendations for proliferation of fixed-line broadband services.

This Supplementary Consultation Paper was issued on 19th May 2021 seeking comments and counter-comments from the stakeholders.



https://traigov.in/sites/default/files/CP_19052021.pdf

2. Telecom Subscriptions

3.2 Telecom Subscription Data as on 31st March 2021.

Particulars	Wireless	Wireline	Total
Urban Telephone subscribers (Millions)	645.20	18.57	663.77
Rural Telephone subscribers (Millions)	535.75	1.67	537.42
Total Telephone subscribers (Millions)	1180.95	20.24	1201.19
Overall Tele-density (%)	86.68	1.49	88.17
Share of Urban Subscription (%)	54.63	91.76	55.26
Share of Rural Subscription (%)	45.37	8.24	44.74
No. of Broadband Subscribers (Million)	755.35	22.75	778.09

Active wireless subscribers on the date of Peak VLR in March 2021 were 993.92 million.

In March 2021, 12.74 million subscriber requests were made for MNP. By the end of March 2021, a total of 576.67 million consumers has availed MNP facility since its implementation.

3. Other Information

3.1 Achievement in Digital Communication



TRAI released “Achievement in Digital Communication” for the period 2014–2020 on 31st May 2021.

It highlights the following important achievements in Digital Communication:

- Plethora of opportunities boosting the Indian economy.
- The contribution of telecom sector to GDP.
- Robust COVID-19 pandemic pre-emptive measures and enabling of 30% of the GDP during COVID-19.
- Improving the lives of Indian farmers.
- Remote medical appointments.
- Strengthening of mobile number portability (MNP).
- Enhancing consumer choice in Broadcasting.
- Increase in wireless tele-density.

Full details are accessible on TRAI website in given link:

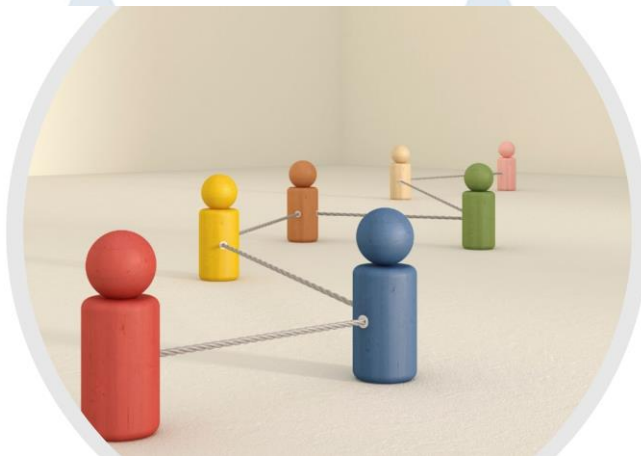
https://traigov.in/sites/default/files/ADC_31052021.pdf



3.2 Registration of Consumer Organizations

One of the important objectives of TRAI is to safeguard consumer interests and enhance consumer education and awareness.

TRAI registers Consumer organisations or NGOs as Consumer Advocacy Groups from time to time under 'Registration of Consumer Organizations Regulation, 2013' dated 21st February 2013. The regulations, inter alia, outlines the eligibility criteria, procedure and the roles expected from the consumer organizations.



This scheme of registrations has been recently opened for selected states. Applications are invited from the consumer organisations working for the interest of consumers to register with TRAI. Interested organisations may send their applications along with all relevant documents to the Joint Advisor (CA), TRAI (HQ). They can also send the scanned copy of applications through email at jaca@trai.gov.in.

The last date for receipt of application form is 3rd September 2021. The detailed information is available on TRAI's website through the below links:



<https://www.trai.gov.in/consumer-info/telecom/consumer-groups>



https://www.trai.gov.in/sites/default/files/Scheme_Registration_CAG.pdf



<https://trai.gov.in/sites/default/files/201302210758166133991Regulation%20-%20201%20of%202013%20-%20English1.pdf>

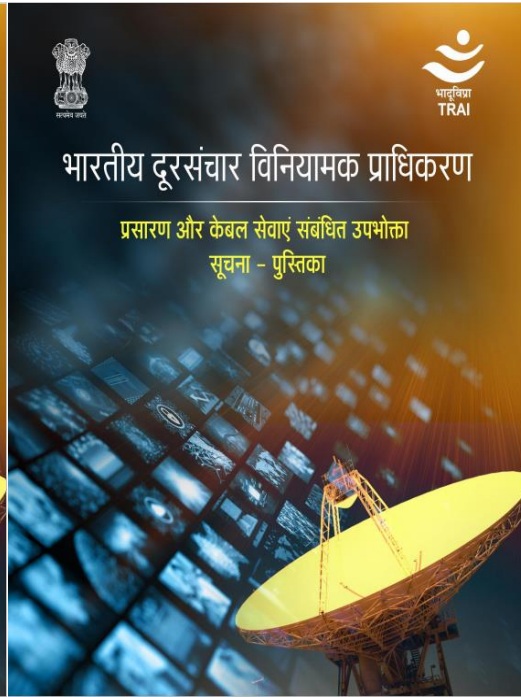
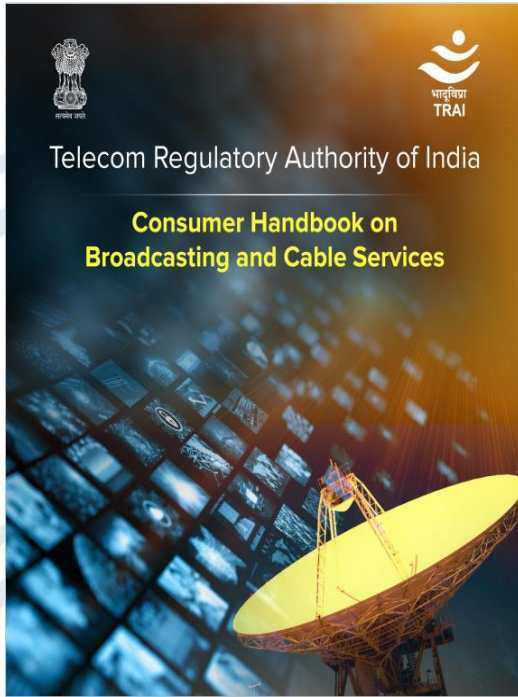
3.3 Consumer Handbook on Broadcasting and Cable Service

TRAI released new Consumer Handbook on “Broadcasting and Cable service.”

TRAI has been issuing Regulations, Directions, and orders on various consumer-centric issues from time to time in the broadcasting and cable sector. To enable consumers and consumer organizations to take advantage of these measures, it is important that they are made aware of these initiatives.

TRAI has notified a new comprehensive regulatory framework for broadcasting and cable services in March 2017, which had been effective since 29th December 2018. The transparency in terms of choosing the channels/bouquets, i.e., what one wants to see and pay only for what has been chosen, has been the basic premise of this framework. TRAI came up with a new consumer handbook that will help to create awareness amongst TV subscribers about their rights and freedom as granted by TRAI through the implementation of this framework across the country. The electronic version of Consumer Handbook (Hindi and English version) is available on TRAI’s website.

This handbook has been shared electronically with all regional offices and Consumer Advocacy Groups for wider circulation.



https://traigov.in/sites/default/files/Handbook_04052021_1.pdf



https://traigov.in/sites/default/files/Handbook_04052021_Hindi.pdf


Full details of the Directions/Orders/Consultation Paper/Report, Subscription Data, etc mentioned in this newsletter are available on TRAI website

www.traigov.in

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