Information note to the Press (Press Release No. 64/2015)

<u>For Immediate Release</u>

<u>**Telecom Regulatory Authority of India**</u>

TRAI issues Consultation Paper on "Implementation Model for BharatNet"

New Delhi, 17.11.2015 – The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has today issued a Consultation Paper on **"Implementation Model for BharatNet"**

1.   Digital India was conceived by weaving various strands of communication and information technology for digital empowerment of citizens and delivering better governance. Establishment of broadband highways forms the first pillar of Digital India. Therefore, timely commissioning of a reorganized version of National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN) is very imperative. The implementation of NOFN was not moving as per plans, TRAI had given certain recommendations on 'Delivering Broadband Quickly: What do we need to do?' dated 17th April, 2015. In addition, DoT had appointed an expert Committee which submitted its detailed report recommending rechristening of the project as BharatNet with three implementation models.

2.   Some views regarding the implementation have been raised and therefore the Authority looked into one more possible alternate model – "Build-Own-Operate-Transfer" (BOOT) model. The Authority has come out with this Consultation Paper (CP) to discuss issues related to strategies to find best model of implementation for BharatNet.

3.   The CP raises the following main implementation and policy issues:

- The "Report of the Committee on NOFN" has recommended three models and risks/advantages associated with these models. What are the other challenges with these models?

- Whether these three models along with implementation strategy as indicated in the report would be able to deliver the project within the costs and time-line as envisaged in the report?

- Whether alternate implementation strategy of BOOT model will be more suitable (such as cost, execution and quality of construction) for completing the project in time?

- What are the advantages and challenges associated with the BOOT model?
- What should be the eligibility criteria for the executing agency so that conflict of interest can be avoided?
- What measures are required to be taken to avoid monopolistic behaviour of executing agency?
- What terms and conditions should be imposed on the executing agency so that it provides bandwidth/fibre in fair, transparent and non-discriminatory manner?
- What should be the methodology of funding the project? In case of VGF, what should be the maximum value of VGF for each State/ service area and what should be the terms and conditions for making payments?
- What measures should be put in place in case the executing agency earns windfall profits?
- Whether there is a need to mandate the number of fibres to be offered as a dark fibre to other operators to ensure more than one operator is available for providing bandwidth at GP level?
- What measures are required so that broadband services remain affordable to the public at large?
- The success of BOOT Model depends on participation of private entities which will encourage competition. What measures should be adopted to ensure large scale participation by them?

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 07th December 2015. For any clarification/information Shri Arvind Kumar, Advisor (NSL), TRAI may be contacted at Tel. No. +91-11-23220209 Fax No. +91-11—23230056.

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