

**Email****Saumyata Bhargava**

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**Fwd: Covering Note for WASME's Digital Inclusion Consultation**

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**From :** S.M.K. Chandra <ja-cadiv@traigov.in>  
**Subject :** Fwd: Covering Note for WASME's Digital Inclusion Consultation  
**To :** Saumyata Bhargava <Saumyata.bhargava@traigov.in>

Thu, Sep 21, 2023 06:04 PM

 1 attachment

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**From:** es@wasmeinfo.org  
**To:** "A.K Singh" <advisorit@traigov.in>, "S.M.K. Chandra" <ja-cadiv@traigov.in>  
**Cc:** sg@wasmeinfo.org  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 21, 2023 5:27:39 PM  
**Subject:** Covering Note for WASME's Digital Inclusion Consultation

Dear Sir / Ma'am,

Greetings from WASME!!!

I hope this message finds you well.

I am writing on behalf of the World Association for Small and Medium Enterprises (WASME) to bring to your attention our active participation in the ongoing "Digital Inclusion in the Era of Emerging Technologies" consultation organized by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI).

As an esteemed member of the global business community, WASME is deeply committed to advocating for the interests and needs of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) worldwide. In the era of rapid digital transformation, we recognize that digital inclusion is of paramount importance to the sustainable growth and competitiveness of SMEs across the globe.

The TRAI consultation paper underscores the pivotal role that digitalization plays in empowering SMEs, and we believe that our insights and expertise can contribute significantly to the discourse surrounding this critical issue. We are committed to actively participating in this consultation by providing comprehensive and well-informed responses to the questions posed by TRAI.

**Kindly find enclosed the WASME's responses from Q 23 to Q 26 which are meant for MSME sector for your reference.**

Our responses will reflect our dedication to fostering an environment where SMEs can harness the benefits of emerging technologies such as 5G, Big Data, and AI/ML to enhance their operations, expand their market reach, and contribute to economic development.

At WASME, we have a rich history of collaborating with government bodies, industry leaders, and international organizations to support SMEs in adapting to the digital age. We firmly believe that the recommendations and insights generated through this consultation will contribute to shaping policies and initiatives that facilitate greater digital inclusion and empowerment for SMEs.

We also look forward to sharing our valuable perspectives and recommendations with TRAI and engaging in constructive dialogue with fellow stakeholders. Our aim is to ensure that the voices and needs of SMEs are well-represented in the formulation of strategies that promote digital inclusion and economic growth.

Should you require any further information or wish to collaborate on this endeavor, please do not hesitate to contact us. We greatly appreciate your support and partnership in our shared mission to advance the interests of SMEs globally.

Thank you for your attention, and we eagerly anticipate a productive and impactful consultation process.

Warm regards,

Dr. Sanjiv Layek  
Executive Secretary

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 **WASME \_ Inputs on Consultation Paper.docx**  
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**Q.23 What efforts are required to provide reliable digital connectivity to MSMEs at affordable costs to empower them through new technologies for effective participation in the digital economic activities?**

Efforts to provide reliable digital connectivity to MSMEs at affordable costs should focus on the following:

1. **Infrastructure Development:** Invest in expanding and strengthening digital infrastructure, including broadband networks, to ensure widespread coverage in both urban and rural areas where MSMEs are located.
2. **Last-Mile Connectivity:** Ensure last-mile connectivity to MSMEs, even in remote areas, by leveraging existing schemes like BharatNet. This could involve setting up Wi-Fi hotspots, fiber connections, and satellite-based solutions.
3. **Affordable Data Plans:** Collaborate with telecom providers to offer special data plans tailored to the needs of MSMEs, making data access more affordable for them.
4. **Digital Literacy Programs:** Implement digital literacy programs targeted at MSME owners and employees to enhance their skills and make them proficient in utilizing digital tools and technologies.
5. **Financial Incentives:** Offer subsidies or incentives for MSMEs to adopt digital technologies, such as grants for purchasing hardware or software, or tax incentives for digitalization investments.
6. **Public-Private Partnerships:** Foster partnerships between the government, private sector, and non-profit organizations to jointly support digital connectivity initiatives for MSMEs.
7. **Supportive Policies:** Develop policies that promote competition among telecom providers, leading to reduced costs for digital services, and create a regulatory environment that encourages innovation and investment in digital infrastructure.
8. **Mobile Apps and Services:** Encourage the development of mobile apps and services that specifically cater to the needs of MSMEs, including tools for inventory management, e-commerce, and financial management.
9. **Data Security Measures:** Implement robust data security measures and privacy regulations to instill confidence in MSMEs regarding the safety of their digital operations.
10. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Continuously monitor the effectiveness of these efforts and collect feedback from MSMEs to make necessary adjustments to the digital connectivity programs.

**Q.24 Whether the schemes of fibre connectivity in villages and rural areas such as BharatNet can be leveraged to provide the digital connectivity to MSMEs at affordable costs? If yes, please suggest the steps to be taken to extend such connectivity?**

Yes, schemes like BharatNet can indeed be leveraged to provide affordable digital connectivity to MSMEs in rural areas. Here are the steps to extend such connectivity:

1. **Assessment of Current Coverage:** Conduct a comprehensive assessment to identify the existing coverage of BharatNet in rural areas and areas where MSMEs are located. Determine coverage gaps.

2. **Last-Mile Connectivity:** Focus on bridging the last-mile connectivity gap by establishing community Wi-Fi centers or digital service kiosks in close proximity to clusters of MSMEs.
3. **Fiber-to-the-Enterprise:** Implement a "Fiber-to-the-Enterprise" program where dedicated fiber connections are extended to individual MSMEs, ensuring high-speed and reliable connectivity.
4. **Affordability:** Collaborate with telecom operators to offer cost-effective data plans and tariffs tailored to the needs and budgets of rural MSMEs.
5. **Digital Literacy:** Launch digital literacy programs alongside connectivity initiatives to empower MSMEs with the skills needed to make the most of digital tools and resources.
6. **Local Entrepreneurship:** Encourage local entrepreneurs to establish and manage last-mile connectivity centers, creating job opportunities and fostering economic growth in rural areas.
7. **Public Awareness Campaigns:** Conduct awareness campaigns to inform MSMEs about the availability and benefits of affordable digital connectivity through BharatNet.
8. **Government Subsidies:** Explore the possibility of government subsidies or financial incentives to reduce the initial setup and subscription costs for MSMEs connecting to BharatNet.
9. **Quality of Service:** Ensure that the quality of service meets the requirements of MSMEs, including reliable connectivity and sufficient bandwidth for their digital operations.
10. **Monitoring and Support:** Establish a monitoring and support system to address any technical issues promptly and provide assistance to MSMEs in utilizing the connectivity effectively.

#### **Q.25 How DPIs can be used to allow the marginalized communities and MSMEs to access new technologies?**

Deep Packet Inspection (DPI) can play a crucial role in enabling marginalized communities and MSMEs to access new technologies in the following ways:

1. **Traffic Prioritization:** DPI can be used to prioritize and optimize network traffic, ensuring that essential services and applications for MSMEs, such as cloud-based tools or e-commerce platforms, receive the necessary bandwidth and low latency.
2. **Security:** DPI can enhance network security by identifying and mitigating potential threats, which is vital for protecting sensitive data of MSMEs and building trust in online transactions.
3. **Bandwidth Management:** DPI can help manage bandwidth usage efficiently, ensuring fair distribution among users and preventing network congestion, which can be critical for MSMEs with limited resources.
4. **Content Filtering:** DPI can be employed to filter out malicious content and restrict access to inappropriate or harmful websites, providing a safer online environment for MSMEs and marginalized communities.

5. **Quality of Service (QoS):** DPI can enforce Quality of Service policies, guaranteeing that MSMEs receive consistent and reliable network performance for their critical applications and services.
6. **Data Usage Insights:** DPI can provide insights into data usage patterns, helping MSMEs make informed decisions about their digital strategies and optimizing their operations.
7. **Tiered Pricing:** Service providers can offer tiered pricing models based on DPI analysis, allowing MSMEs to choose plans that align with their specific needs and budget constraints.
8. **Customized Services:** DPI can enable service providers to offer customized packages and services tailored to the requirements of MSMEs, including options for scalability as their businesses grow.
9. **Traffic Shaping:** DPI can shape traffic to prioritize applications that are essential for MSMEs, such as video conferencing or inventory management systems, ensuring a seamless user experience.
10. **Compliance and Regulation:** DPI can help service providers comply with regulatory requirements, ensuring that MSMEs have access to services that meet legal standards and data protection regulations.

Overall, DPI, when used transparently and ethically, can enhance the accessibility of new technologies for marginalized communities and MSMEs by optimizing network performance, improving security, and tailoring services to their specific needs. However, it's crucial to strike a balance between network management and user privacy to avoid potential controversies and ensure a fair and open internet.

**Q.26 What efforts can be made to increase awareness and digital literacy levels, especially in 5G, Big Data and AI/ ML, to the business owners and employees of the MSMEs? What kind of framework is needed in this regard? Please provide your answers with suitable justification.**

Increasing awareness and digital literacy levels among MSME business owners and employees in the areas of 5G, Big Data, and AI/ML is essential for their competitiveness in the digital age. Here are efforts and a framework to achieve this:

1. **Training Programs:** Develop comprehensive training programs that cover the fundamentals of 5G, Big Data, AI, and ML. These programs should be available online and offline, catering to different learning preferences.
2. **Webinars and Workshops:** Conduct regular webinars and workshops, featuring industry experts, to introduce MSMEs to the latest technologies and their practical applications.
3. **Digital Resource Centers:** Establish digital resource centers in collaboration with industry associations or educational institutions. These centers should provide access to learning materials, hands-on tutorials, and reference guides.
4. **Online Courses:** Partner with e-learning platforms to offer specialized courses on 5G, Big Data, AI, and ML. Make these courses affordable and accessible to MSMEs.
5. **Certification Programs:** Develop certification programs that allow MSME employees to validate their knowledge and skills in these technologies. Recognized certifications can enhance employability and credibility.

6. **Industry Collaborations:** Collaborate with industry associations to create industry-specific training modules that address the unique needs of MSMEs in various sectors.
7. **Local Workforce Development:** Encourage MSMEs to invest in workforce development by offering incentives or subsidies for training and upskilling programs.
8. **Digital Literacy Campaigns:** Launch targeted digital literacy campaigns that highlight the benefits of these technologies and their potential to improve business operations and competitiveness.
9. **Peer Learning Networks:** Facilitate peer-to-peer learning networks where MSMEs can share their experiences and best practices in adopting 5G, Big Data, AI, and ML.
10. **Government Support:** Provide government grants or tax incentives to MSMEs that actively participate in digital literacy and upskilling programs.

Framework Justification:

- **Accessibility:** Ensure that training programs and resources are easily accessible, including through mobile-friendly platforms and offline centers in rural areas.
- **Customization:** Tailor training content to different skill levels and industries, allowing MSMEs to choose courses that align with their specific needs.
- **Continuous Learning:** Encourage a culture of continuous learning by offering advanced courses and updates on emerging technologies.
- **Measurable Outcomes:** Implement assessment and evaluation mechanisms to measure the impact of training programs on the digital literacy and skills of MSMEs.
- **Feedback Loop:** Establish a feedback loop to gather input from MSMEs about their training experiences and use this feedback to refine and improve the training framework.
- **Partnerships:** Collaborate with educational institutions, industry experts, and technology providers to ensure the quality and relevance of training materials.
- **Awareness Campaigns:** Promote awareness of the importance of digital literacy and upskilling through targeted marketing campaigns and government initiatives.

By implementing such efforts and framework, MSMEs can enhance their digital capabilities, adapt to technological advancements, and remain competitive in the rapidly evolving digital landscape. This will contribute to their growth and overall economic development.