

Information note to the Press (Press Release No. 41/2021)

For Immediate release

Telecom Regulatory Authority of India

TRAI releases Recommendations on “Roadmap to Promote Broadband Connectivity and Enhanced Broadband speed.”

New Delhi, 31st August, 2021: The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) today released its recommendations on **“Roadmap to Promote Broadband Connectivity and Enhanced Broadband speed”**.

1. Department of Telecommunications (DoT) as per objectives of the National Digital Communications Policy – 2018 sought recommendations of the Authority on issues relating to the broadband speed and its categorizations, infrastructure creation, and promoting broadband connectivity.
2. Accordingly, Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) issued a Consultation Paper (CP) on “Roadmap to Promote Broadband Connectivity and Enhanced Broadband Speed” dated 20th August 2020 seeking comments and counter comments from stakeholders. Open House Discussion (OHD) was conducted on 18.02.2021 through video conferencing.
3. DoT vide it's another reference letter dated 12th March 2021 sought consolidated and updated recommendations on proliferation of fixed-line broadband services in the Country. In this reference DoT referred additional issues relating to License Fee exemption and direct benefit to consumers. To consult these issues with stakeholders, a supplementary CP was issued on 19th May 2021. Open House Discussion (OHD) was conducted on 23.06.2021.
4. Based on the inputs received from the stakeholders and on its own analysis, TRAI has finalized its recommendations on **‘Roadmap to Promote Broadband Connectivity and Enhanced Broadband speed’**. The salient features of the recommendations are as follows:
 - (i) Definition of broadband has been reviewed and the minimum download speed for broadband connectivity revised upward from the present 512Kbps to 2Mbps. Based on download speed, fixed broadband has been categorized into 3 different categories - Basic, Fast and Super-fast.

V. Rayhanwarde

- (ii) To encourage lakhs of cable operators to provide broadband services, the Authority's past recommendation on "Definition of Revenue Base (AGR) for the Reckoning of Licence Fee and Spectrum Usage Charges" has been reiterated.
- (iii) To enhance mobile broadband speed in rural and remote areas by fiberisation of the cellular networks, backhaul connectivity on optical fiber using the BharatNet network with Service Level Agreements (SLA) should be made available to service providers.
- (iv) To incentivise investment in the last-mile linkage for fixed-line broadband, notify a skill development plan and an interest subvention scheme for Cable Operators registered as Micro and Small size enterprises.
- (v) To enhance mobile broadband speed, radio spectrum used for backhauling connectivity of cellular networks should be assigned to service providers on demand and in time bound manner.
- (vi) Creation of National Portal for RoW permissions to facilitate expeditious rollout of telecom and other essential utilities infrastructure.
- (vii) Incentivize establishment of common ducts and posts for fiberisation of networks. In line with BhartNet Project, exempt RoW charges for next five years for expeditious laying of common ducts and posts.
- (viii) A Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) to incentivize States/ UTs for RoW reforms. Incentives to be linked to the net improvement in the Broadband Readiness Index (BRI) score of a State/ UT.
- (ix) Mandates co-deployment of common ducts during the construction of any roadway, railway, and water & gas pipelines receiving public funding.
- (x) To facilitate the sharing of passive infrastructure such as ducts, optical fibers, posts, etc., all the passive infrastructure available in the country should be mapped by each service provider and infrastructure provider using Geographic Information System (GIS). The Telecom Engineering Center (TEC) should notify the standards for this purpose. Establishment of e-marketplace on common GIS platform to facilitate leasing and trading of passive infrastructure.

V. Rajguru

- (xi) Target linked incentive i.e. License Fee (LF) exemption on specified revenues to eligible licensees for proliferation of fixed-line broadband services in urban and rural areas.
- (xii) A pilot DBT (Direct Benefit Transfer) scheme in rural areas for proliferation of fixed-line broadband subscribers. After ascertaining the practicability of the pilot DBT scheme in accelerating the growth of fixed-line broadband services; specifics of the DBT scheme like eligibility criteria for beneficiaries, quantum of benefit, period of the scheme etc. to be worked out subsequently.

5. The recommendations on '**Roadmap to Promote Broadband Connectivity and Enhanced Broadband speed**' have been placed on TRAI's website www.trai.gov.in

V. Raghunandan
31/8/2021
(V. Raghunandan)
Secretary, TRAI