TELECOM REGULATORY AUTHORITY OF INDIA
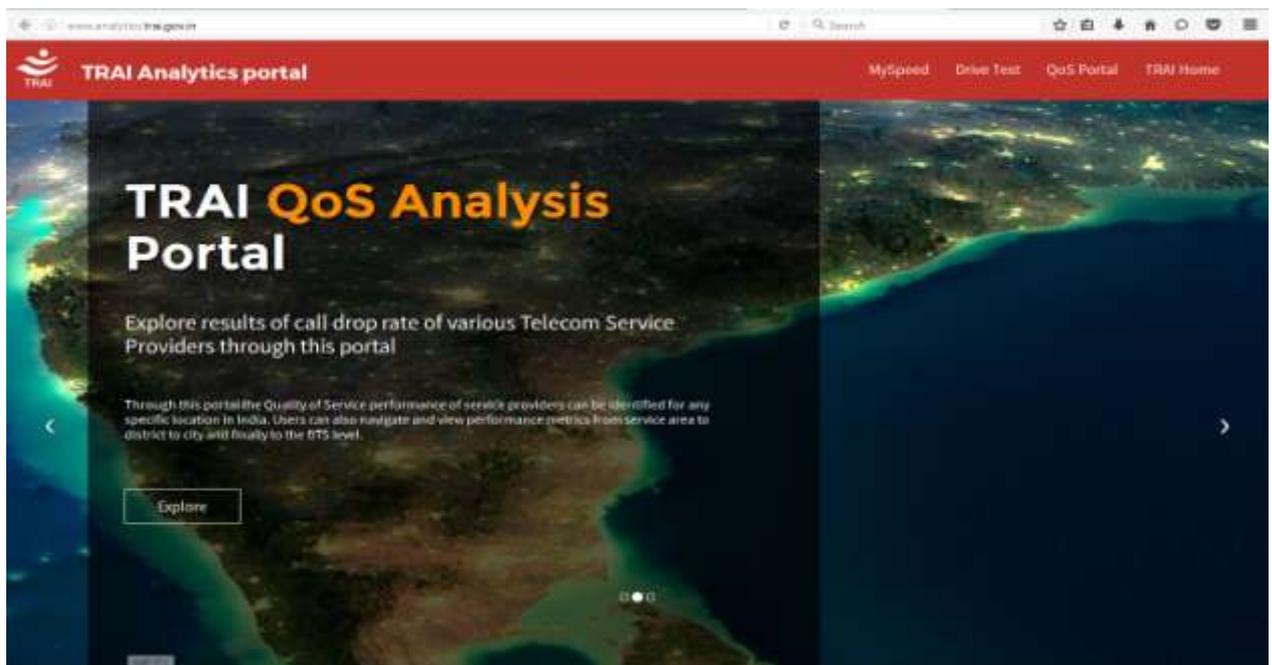
NEWSLETTER: Vol. VIII/2016   **August 2016**

Newsletter for Consumer Advocacy Groups (CAGs)

This newsletter brings you information and developments that have taken place during the month of August, 2016.

1. **TRAI launched "Quality of Service Portal" – Consumers can now view the performance of mobile operators**

Continuing with the efforts to ensure Quality of Service and to enhance transparencyin service provision, TRAI launched a web portal "**Quality of ServicePortal**" www.analytics.trai.gov.in on 10th August 2016. TRAI had earlier released two Mobile Apps -"TRAI MySpeed" enabling the customers to explore the Wireless Internet Speeds and "DND Services App" that facilitate customer to manage Unsolicited Commercial Communications.

QoS analytics Portal enables consumers to check the call drop rate of the 2G network of any particular telecom operator, on an all India level, service area level, and district level and even at BTS level. The Portal also provides an all India view shows the average call drop rate for the entire country. Consumers can navigate

and view the performance of all the operators or of a particular operator for a service area or a district in a service area and even up to BTS level. Thus the

portal facilitates information about call drop in a particular area covered by a BTS .The portal also provides a search facility so that the user can search a location anywhere in the country and can get information about the BTS's within 4 Kms of the location.

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Recommendations:

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1. Adoption of Aadhaar based e-KYC services for mobile subscriber verification

In order to make the entire system of mobile subscriber verification more secure and robust, the Authority through its letter dated 6th January 2016, recommended to the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) for acceptance and adoption of Aadhaar based e-KYC service along withAadhaar based e-Sign as a valid alternative process to the existing process for digitally signed, biometric based verification of new mobile subscribers. Aadhaar linked e-KYC service is a fool-proof mechanism to

verify the identity of the person electronically and instantaneously from the source itself, based on the biometrics of the person. Thereafter, through letter dated 9th August 2016, the recommendations of the Authority were reiterated.

DoT has since issued on 16th August 2016 necessary Guidelines to all the licensees for use of 'Aadhaar' e-KYC service for issuing mobile connections to subscribers. These guidelines are largely in line with the recommendations of the Authority.

The guidelines issued by the DoT is available in the link http://www.dot.gov.in/sites/default/files/u75/2016_08_16%20eKYC-AS-II.pdf.

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Regulations :

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1. **Telecom Consumers Protection (Tenth Amendment) Regulations dated 19.08.2016.**

The present regulatory regime governed by TCPR-2012 allows Telecom Service Providers to offer data services in the form of Special Tariff Voucher (STV) either exclusively or in combination with other tariff items with a maximum permitted validity of 90 days. Requests were received in TRAI seeking longer validity for data-packs (i.e. Special Tariff Vouchers with only data benefits) primarily to address the concern of marginal consumers of wireless Internet who prefer lower denomination data packs with longer validity.

After undertaking a consultation process, Telecom Regulatory Authority of India on 19.08.2016 notified the Telecom Consumers Protection (Tenth Amendment) regulations (TCPR), 2016 permitting longer validity for data–packs (i.e. Special Tariff vouchers with only data benefits).

The amendment increases the maximum validity of STVs with exclusive data benefits to 365 days instead of 90 days allowed presently.

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Consultation Papers:

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I. Consultation Paper on Review of network related Quality of Service Standards for Cellular Mobile Telephone Service

TRAI issued a Consultation Paper on Review of network related Quality of Service Standards for Cellular Mobile Telephone Service on 5th August 2016 for seeking the comments of stakeholders. This consultation paper describes the various parameters and respective benchmarks for assessment of Quality of Service of 2G & 3G networks. The views of the stakeholders are called for so as to bring about changes in these benchmarks and possibly add new parameters, if required, to improve the Quality of Service experience by the customers. It is also envisaged to add relevant parameters for 4G/BWA services also, in view of their development in the network. The consultation paper seeks to know from the stakeholders as to what will be the appropriate way to calculate call drop rates through meta data analysis of CDRs. The mechanism of imposing financial disincentives on TSPs for non-compliance of Quality of Service benchmarks has also been raised in this consultation paper.

II. Consultation Paper on 'Review of Interconnect Usage Charges'

An Interconnection Usage Charges (IUC) regime is an essential requirement to enable subscribers of one service provider to communicate with subscribers of another service provider. Providing interconnection entails costs for which service providers need to be fairly compensated. The IUC regime not only determines the revenue accruable to the service providers but also how this revenue is to be distributed among them. An

efficient interconnection and charging regime is central to efficient and seamless connectivity between various networks.

The Authority specified IUC for the first time in 2003. Subsequently, these charges have been revised in 2006, 2009 and 2015. The prevailing termination charges are given in the following Table:

Type of call	Type of traffic	Termination charge
Local and national long distance call	Wireless to wireless	₹0.14 per minute
	Wireless to wireline	0 (Zero)
	Wireline to wireline	0 (Zero)
	Wireline to wireless	0 (Zero)
International call	International incoming	₹0.53 per minute

The Authority has released a consultation paper on 05.08.2016 to review the IUC charges in view of the fact that several telecom services providers in the country have, in the recent past, built access networks using 4G mobile technology. A few of these TSPs may carry voice on Voice over LTE (VoLTE) technology in near future. Further, world-over, Internet Telephony (in which voice travels over public Internet) is beginning to emerge as a cost-effective mode of delivery of voice calls. Together, these developments require a review of the IUC regime in the country. The Consultation Paper, *inter-alia,* seeks inputs of the stakeholders mainly on the following broad issues:

(i) Approaches to be used for prescribing domestic termination charges (viz. mobile termination charges and fixed termination charges) for maximization of consumer welfare, adoption of more efficient technologies and overall growth of the telecommunication services sector; and

(ii) Approaches to be used for prescribing international termination charges and international settlement rates in the country for long-

term sustainable growth of the International Long Distance (ILD) service segment.

III. Consultation Paper on review of regulatory framework for the use of USSD for mobile financial services.

TRAI released a Consultation Paper on 'USSD-based Mobile Banking Services for Financial Inclusion' on 2nd August, 2016.

The expansion of banking and reach of financial services is considered to be vital for the long-term sustainable development of any country. From the standpoint of equity, it is essential that financial services are provided at an affordable cost to those who are presently excluded from the formal financial system. Mobile telephony could be the answer to the problems related to 'last mile' service delivery of financial services.

With about 22.5 crore Jan-Dhan accounts in the country, more than 100 croreAadhar cards issued to the citizens and more than 100 crore mobile connections in the country (of which about 45 crore are in rural areas), it was expected that the USSD-based mobile banking service would gain popularity amongst the unbanked/under-banked population (the target masses of financial inclusion) with passage of time and would soon achieve a critical mass. However, even after nearly two years since August 2014, when it became available to all GSM subscribers' in the country, the progress of USSD-based mobile banking has not gained traction. In May 2016, only about 37 lakh mobile banking transaction attempts (over USSD channel) reached NPCI's platform (*99#). The Authority has issued the Consultation Paper in order to identify and address the various issues involved in the USSD-based Mobile Financial Services,

IV. **Consultation Paper on 'Spectrum Usage Charges and Presumptive Adjusted Gross Revenue for Internet Service Providers and Commercial Very Small Aperture Terminal Service Providers'**

TRAI released Consultation Paper on 'Spectrum Usage Charges and Presumptive Adjusted Gross Revenue for Internet Service Providers and Commercial Very Small Aperture Terminal Service Providers' on 19thAugust 2016.

The consultation paper has been issued following a request from DoT for TRAI's recommendations on 'Spectrum uses charging for Internet Service Providers (ISPs) and floor level of AGR based on amount of spectrum held by Commercial VSAT operators' under section 11(1) of TRAI Act, 1997 as amended. The consultation paper covers specific issues for consideration of stakeholders viz. rates of spectrum usage charges (SUC) based on adjusted gross revenue (AGR) for ISP licensee, minimum AGR for ISP licensee and VSAT licensee, allied issues like schedule of payment, charging of interest, penalty and other related issues.

Open House Discussions/Interactions

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1. **Multi System Operators to provide signals of TV channels to LCOs only with written interconnection agreement".**

The Telecommunication (Broadcasting and cable services) Interconnection (Digital Addressable Cable Television Systems) Regulations, 2012 requires that no Multi System Operator shall make available signals of TV channels to any linked local cable operator without entering into a written interconnection agreement and MSO shall handover a copy of the interconnection agreement signed by the MSO & LCO to the respective LCO within 15 days and obtain an acknowledgement thereof.

TRAI has also notified formats of the Model Interconnection Agreement (MIA) and Standard Interconnection Agreement (SIA) to be signed between MSOs and LCOs, so that there is a level playing field and less disputes between MSOs and LCOs. While the MIA enables MSOs and LCOs to have a mutual agreement in a structured manner in line with the regulatory framework, the SIA provides standard terms and conditions prescribed by the regulation that can be adopted by MSOs & LCOs for retransmission of TV signal, if they fail to mutually agree on MIA.

It has been brought to the notice of TRAI that some MSOs are alluring LCOs to provide signal without entering into written interconnection agreement. Such arrangements are against the interconnection regulations and also may result in disputes.

Accordingly, all MSOs are advised not to venture into such deals/arrangements which are liable to be punished under the TRAI Act.

CAGs may like to bring the above positions to the notice of LCOs/MSOs during their interaction with them.

2. Interaction with 'Multi System Operator' and 'Local Cable Operators '

An interaction with 'Multi System Operator' and 'Local Cable Operators, the third one by TRAI, was held on 12.08.2016 at Agra coordinated by Regional Office, Bhopal.

Other Information:

1. Audit Report:

The reports relating to audit work undertaken by the independent agencies during the period January to March 2016 have been published in TRAI's website on 9thAugust 2016.

2. Indian Telecom Services Performance Indicator Report

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TRAI has released the 'Indian Telecom Services Performance Indicator Report' for the quarter ending March, 2016. The report provides broad perspective of the Telecom Services as well as cable TV, DTH and radio broadcasting services in India for the period from 1st January, 2016 to 31st March, 2016. The report is available on TRAI's website http://www.trai.gov.in

Advertisements released in the month of August, 2016:

TRAI aired advertisement on "TRAI My Speed App" in Hindi and 11 regional languages through 61 FM Radio Channels across 37 cities from 08.08.2016 to 12.08.2016 to inform the customers about this mobile launched by TRAI to enhance transparency in service provision.

TRAI EVENTS HELD IN AUGUST

1. Consumer Outreach Programmes:

TRAI organized 4 Consumer Outreach Programmes in the month of August at the following places:

Rajganj (West Bengal)	29.08.2016
Bolpur (West Bengal)	30.08.2016
Dausa (Rajasthan)	30.08.2016
Jaunpur (Uttar Pradesh)	31.08.2016

TRAI Interactions with Consumers/Consumer Groups

CoP at Bolpur (West Bengal) held on 30.08.2016

CoP at Rajganj (West Bengal) held on 29.08.2016

CoP at Dausa (Rajasthan) held on 30.08.2016

Full details of the Directions/Orders, Consultation Paper,Subscription Data, etc as mentioned in this newsletter are available on traiwebsitewww.trai.gov.in

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