

Summary of issues for consultation

TRAI Consultation Paper on issues relating to blocking of IMEI for lost/stolen mobile handsets

1. In order to reduce/discourage mobile theft do you think the blocking of IMEI is an effective solution? Please give reasons.

Response: Blocking of IMEI is certainly an effective tool to reduce / discourage mobile theft. As the handset is rendered useless once the IMEI is blocked, the perceived 'value' of an instrument for the unscrupulous elements will drastically go down and hence, this can be an effective, though not a preventive, solution.

2. In case blocking of IMEI is implemented, to what extent load on the network will increase? Please give details.

Response: Telecom operators to provide answers.

3. In your opinion who should maintain the CEIR? Please give reasons

Response: From the examples given in the subject Consultation Paper, it appears that the operators jointly maintain the CEIR. In India, too, a joint responsibility should be borne by the telecom operators at their cost. However, the Authority may also explore the option of maintaining it with the Government itself, through DoT, especially in view of the mobile number portability roll-out planned in near future.

4. Should the CEIR be maintained at national level or zonal level? Provide details including the estimated data size.

Response: It would be efficient to maintain CEIR at national level.

5. Please comment on cost and funding aspects of Centralized EIR? Please provide detailed cost estimates?

Response: Telecom operators to provide cost estimates. However, it is without doubt that as it is an essential service, both for the consumers as well as from nation's security perspective, the cost should not be passed on to the end users and should be borne by the operator themselves.

6. Should blocking of IMEI /ESN be chargeable from customer? If yes, what should be the charge?

Response:Ideally, there should not be a charge for blocking of IMEI, as the blocking is more in the interest of national security.

7. Please give your views on bringing a legislation to prevent reprogramming of mobile devices? In your opinion what are the aspects that need to be covered under such legislation?

Response: There should be a legislation on reprogramming of the devices. Although the example of UK confirms that manufacturers are allowed to reprogramme, in India, the ground reality needs to be evaluated for the efficacy of this, in the light of the fact that most of the handsets are imported.

8. What should be the procedure for blocking the IMEI?

Response:The consumer should be able to block the IMEI temporarily over a phone call to the respective telecom operator's helpline, after confirmation of credentials. However, the same may have to be corroborated by a personal visit to the operator, alongwith the information report filed with the local police within, say 72 hours, of the temporary blocking.

9. If lost mobile is found, should there be a facility of unblocking the IMEI number? If yes, what should be the process for it? Should there be a time limit for unblocking the IMEI number? Should it be chargeable?

Response: There should be a facility for unblocking available. Similar to blocking, even unblocking should be free of cost. Time limit of six months may be granted for unblocking of the handset.

Another issue that needs attention of the Authority:

If the example of Poland was to be followed in India, what would be done if the user does not have his original invoice and other purchase-related papers at the time of requesting for blocking of IMEI?

Regards

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