

Reliance Communications Limited Comments

ON

**TRAI DRAFT DIRECTION ON DELIVERING BROADBAND SERVICES
IN A TRANSPARENT MANNER**

1. At the outset we thank the authority to have provided us with an opportunity for responding to the draft direction on delivering broadband services (wire-line or wireless) in a transparent manner.
2. Our detailed comments on each clause of the said draft directions are given as follows,
 - (a) **TRAI Direction** : Telecom service providers providing broadband services (wire-line or wireless) to provide on their website and also in all advertisements published through any media, the following information in respect of all broadband tariff plans offered under Fair Usage Policy: -
 - A. for fixed broadband service;
 - (i) data usage limit with specified speed;
 - (ii) speed of broadband connection upto specified data usage limit; and
 - (iii) speed of broadband connection beyond data usage limit;
 - B. for Mobile broadband service:
 - (i) data usage limit with specified technology (3G / 4G) for providing services;
 - (ii) technology (3G / 4G) offered for providing broadband services upto specified data usage limit; and
 - (iii) technology (2G / 3G / 4G) offered for providing broadband services beyond data usage limit;

Our Response

RCom is already providing the above mentioned information, except sub clause (a).B.(iii), to its subscribers on its website.

It is intimated that beyond the prescribed fair usage data limits the technology of usage for the subscriber is not altered. Albeit, only the overall throughput is limited to a lower level.

Further, depending upon the availability of the network, the technology may fall back to a different technology based network. Thus, the TSPs should have the flexibility for the fall back option and should not be mandated to specify the same. Hence, it is requested that the Clause B(iii) should be amended as given in the recommendation below.

Our Recommendation

In view of the fact that the operators are not changing the technology on their own for provisioning of data services unless the service falls back to some other technology network due to non availability of primary network, the clause (B) (iii) may be amended as suggested below.

(iii) speed offered for providing broadband services beyond data usage limit,

- (b) **TRAI Direction** : provide information specified in para (a) above to both new and existing subscribers on their registered email address and through SMS on their mobile number registered with the service providers;

Our Response

It is intimated that the said information is already being provided to the subscribers on initiation / recharge of their data plans as a SMS to the registered number or through email, wherever available. Therefore, it is suggested that instead of mandating duplicated provisioning of information through email 'and' SMS, the operators should be provided the flexibility of sending this information through either a SMS 'or' an email.

It is further submitted that when a subscriber recharges / opts for a particular plan or pack having FUP, the information related to monthly data quota and speed, after the expiry of data quota, is being informed to the subscribers. Further, after every recharge / renewal of the pack, we are informing the said details to the subscribers. Hence, it is requested that the requirement of informing the existing subscribers who have already been informed about their plan details should not be mandated to be informed again.

Hence, the clause may be amended to cover only for the new subscribers.

Our Recommendation

It is recommended that the clause be reworded as "*provide information specified in para (a) above to new subscribers on their registered email address or through SMS on their mobile number registered with the service providers.*"

- (c) ensure that download speed of broadband service provided to the fixed broadband subscriber is not reduced below 512 kbps in any broadband tariff plan;

Our Response

In view of DoT's notification No. 4/4/2009-Policy-I dated the 18th July, 2013, wherein, 512 Kbps download speed has been mandated for a connection to be designated as broadband, it is submitted that it is being ensured that connections provisioned as broadband service are always in compliance of DoT's notified data throughput threshold.

However, in case of fair usage plans, the subscriber remains into broadband services till the expiry of his assigned quota. Beyond the assigned quota, as per his plan the speed gets reduced which may be lower than 512Kbps. In order to avoid any misuse of the broadband service beyond the designated quota, a service provider should be provided the freedom to throttle the speed after the expiry of assigned data limit to the customer.

Our Recommendation

The clause can be reworded as below.

“ensure that download speed of broadband service provided to the fixed broadband subscriber is not reduced below 512 kbps till the assigned data quota of the customer expires in case of Fair usage broadband tariff plan...”

- (d) provide alert to the subscriber when his data usage reaches eighty percent of the data usage limit under his plan and ensure that such alert is provided to the fixed broadband subscriber at each login after data usage crosses the said limit of eighty percent; and

Our Response

It is intimated that a fixed line broadband connections is mostly used as an always on backhaul connection for a WiFi Modem. At the front end, there are multiple user end devices utilizing the bandwidth, hence provisioning alerts at each login seems futile. It is also intimated that information about the usage of an individual’s data plan is being provided to the individual through his / her registered e-mail address / mobile number.

Recommendation

In view of the fact that a subscriber is being alerted about the usage of his data plan through email / SMS, it is recommended that this clause be deleted.

- (e) send alert to the subscriber either through SMS or Unstructured Supplementary Service Data (USSD) on his mobile number, registered with the service provider or to his registered email address, each time when the data usage by the subscriber reaches eighty percent and hundred percent of the data usage limit under his plan,- and furnish compliance report by the (date).

Our Response

It is submitted that in case of wireless broadband services, intimation to the subscribers are being provided as per the provisions of Telecom Consumer Protection (8th amendment) Regulations. Hence, the said clause (e) shall be made applicable only for the fixed broadband subscribers.

Our Recommendation

The clause can be retained as part of these directions. However, it is recommended that it should be limited to fixed broadband subscribers and for wireless broadband subscribers the data usage intimation should be align with the provisions of TCPR (8th amendment) Regulations.