

## **Information Note to the Press (Press Release No. 21/2024)**

For Immediate Release

### **Telecom Regulatory Authority of India**

#### **TRAI releases Recommendations on 'Telecommunication Infrastructure Sharing, Spectrum Sharing, and Spectrum Leasing'.**

**New Delhi, 24<sup>th</sup> April 2024** — The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has today released recommendations on '**Telecommunication Infrastructure Sharing, Spectrum Sharing, and Spectrum Leasing**'.

2. The Department of Telecommunications (DoT), through its letter dated 07.12.2021 had requested TRAI to provide recommendations under Section 11(1)(a) of TRAI Act, 1997 (as amended) on allowing sharing of core network elements also such as MSC, HLR, IN etc., among telecom operators. Subsequently, DoT through its letter dated 10.02.2022, mentioning its earlier reference dated 07.12.2021, informed that to promote optimum resource utilization among the licensees, it is proposed to allow sharing of all kinds of telecom infrastructure and network elements among all categories of service providers licensed under the Section 4 of Indian Telegraph, Act, 1885 for provision of authorized telecom services, and requested TRAI to submit its recommendations on the subject.

3. Considering the request of stakeholders to permit inter-band spectrum sharing and leasing of spectrum in the country, the Authority decided to take up the issues related to spectrum sharing and leasing of spectrum along with the issues related to the infrastructure sharing in the stakeholders' consultation.

4. The National Digital Communications Policy (NDCP) 2018 recognizes spectrum as a key natural resource for public benefit to achieve India's socio-economic goals. NDGP 2018 aims to further liberalize the spectrum sharing, leasing, and trading regime in the country. The newly enacted Telecommunications Act, 2023 provides that the Central Government may permit the sharing, trading, leasing and surrender of assigned spectrum, subject to the terms and conditions, including applicable fees or charges, as may be prescribed.

5. On 13.01.2023, TRAI issued a Consultation Paper on Telecommunication Infrastructure Sharing, Spectrum Sharing, and Spectrum Leasing for soliciting comments/ counter comments from stakeholders. In response, 21 comments, and five counter comments were received from stakeholders. An open house discussion on the consultation paper was held on 24.05.2023 through virtual mode.

6. Based on the comments/ counter comments received from stakeholders, and on its own analysis, TRAI has finalized the Recommendations on '**Telecommunication Infrastructure Sharing, Spectrum Sharing, and Spectrum Leasing**'. The salient features of the recommendations are as follows:

- (i) **Telecommunication service licensees should be allowed to share the passive infrastructure such as building, tower, electrical equipment including battery and power plant, dark fiber, duct space, Right of Way, etc. owned, established, and operated by them under the respective licenses with all types of telecommunication service licensees.**
- (ii) **Telecommunication service licensees should be allowed to share all types of active infrastructure elements owned, established, and operated by them under respective licenses with all types of telecommunication service licensees as per the scope of their services.**
- (iii) **In the future projects of Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) under the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885 (or Digital Bharat Nidhi under the Telecommunications Act, 2023), DoT should include a provision in the agreement with the Universal Service Provider (USP) that the USP shall not refuse to share the passive infrastructure laid under the project to at least two other telecom service providers on a transparent and non-discriminatory basis.**
- (iv) **In the already assigned projects of USOF, DoT should explore the feasibility of issuing instructions to such USPs that the USP shall not refuse to share the passive infrastructure laid under the project with at least two other telecom service providers on a transparent and non-discriminatory basis.**

- (v) **In the interest of consumers, a telecom service provider, which has built mobile network infrastructure in the remote and far-flung areas of the country with full or partial funding from the Government under USOF (or Digital Bharat Nidhi), should be mandated to allow roaming to other TSPs on its network in such remote and far-flung areas initially for a period of three years.**
- (vi) **Inter-band access spectrum sharing between access service providers [which may be implemented either by way of pooling of access spectrum held by the participating access providers in different frequency bands through common radio access networks, or by way of allowing the partnering access service providers to use the radio access networks of each other operating in the shared frequency band(s)] in an LSA should be permitted.**
- (vii) **DoT should explore the possibility of implementing authorized shared access (ASA) technique-based spectrum sharing in India, under which, the spectrum assigned to Government agencies or other entities (non-TSPs) in the globally harmonized spectrum bands for IMT services, can be assigned to access service providers as secondary users.**
- (viii) **A field trial of ASA technique-based spectrum sharing between the willing access service providers should be conducted under the supervision of DoT.**
- (ix) **The leasing of access spectrum should be permitted among access service providers.**

7. Through these recommendations, TRAI has also provided the essential terms and conditions for the implementation of the above recommendations.

8. The implementation of the recommendations on telecommunication infrastructure sharing will help telecom service providers in greater cost efficiencies and improved time to market. The recommendations on mandatory sharing of passive infrastructure laid under the Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) projects are aimed at extending the benefits of telecommunication coverage in underserved areas to more than one telecom service providers through effective utilization of Government funded infrastructure. Further, the

recommendations on mandatory roaming on the mobile network infrastructure built with Government funding in remote and far-flung areas are aimed at reducing the hardship being faced by the subscribers due to connectivity issues of the home network provider.

9. At present only spectrum trading and intra-band spectrum sharing are permitted in the country. For a more efficient utilization of the scarce spectrum, TRAI has recommended that spectrum leasing and inter-band spectrum sharing should also be permitted. Implementation of these recommendations will enable telecom service providers to provide better quality of service and wider coverage of telecommunication services. Further, the recommendations for exploring the possibility of implementing authorized shared access (ASA) technique-based spectrum sharing are aimed at further strengthening the efficient and effective utilization of the scarce resource.

10. The Recommendations have been placed on TRAI's website [www.trai.gov.in](http://www.trai.gov.in). For clarification/ information, if any, Shri Akhilesh Kumar Trivedi, Advisor (Network Spectrum & Licensing), TRAI, may be contacted at Telephone Number +91-11-23210481 or email at [advmn@trai.gov.in](mailto:advmn@trai.gov.in).

  
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