

Information note to the Press (Press Release No. 52/2014)

For Immediate Release

Telecom Regulatory Authority of India

TRAI issues Regulations on “International Calling Card Services (Access Charges) Regulations, 2014”

New Delhi, 19.08.2014 – The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has today issued the Regulations on “**International Calling Card Services (Access Charges) Regulations, 2014**”.

2. In the current prevailing regime, a consumer does not have the option to choose its International Long Distance Operator (ILDO) for making ISD calls. The consumer depends on its access provider for making ISD calls. To provide the facility to subscribers to choose their NLDO/ILDO for their STD/ISD calls, TRAI issued a direction on 24th July 2002. The direction could not be implemented due to various reasons given by Telecom Service Providers (TSPs). When this issue was again revisited in 2008 by the Authority, TSPs suggested that a primary objective of providing choice of a long distance operator could be achieved by allowing Long Distance Operators to issue calling cards. The licences were amended in 2010 to allow NLDO/ILDO to issue calling cards directly to consumers. Intelligent Network Regulation was also amended to facilitate time bound agreements between TSPs. However consumers still do not have the choice of Long Distance Operator for making STD/ISD calls.

3. In a nutshell, after 14 years since the first direction was issued to TSPs to provide facility to consumers to choose their NLDO/ILDO, consumers still do not have the choice of selecting their long distance operator for making STD/ISD calls and get the advantage of competition in the long distance sector. The Authority noted that at each stage in the process, TSPs have tried to dodge the introduction of competition; their stance has shifted every time the issue has been taken up. The net result is that greater choice to

consumers for making long distance calls has been successfully averted. When the Intelligent Network Regulations were amended in 2012 to facilitate interconnect agreement so that consumer get choice of NLDO/ILDO, TSPs dragged their feet and no consensus could be achieved; some access providers offered unrealistic access charges to ILDOs making the entire process non-starter. To address this issue a Consultation Paper on 'Revenue Sharing Arrangement for Calling Card Services' was issued on 14th November, 2013.

4. After following the due consultation process, TRAI has issued Regulations prescribing access charges payable by International Long Distance Operator to the Access Service Provider. Access charges to be paid by ILDO to Access Provider shall be 40 paisa per minute for wireless services and Rs.1.20 per minute for wireline services.

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