



भारतीय दूरसंचार विनियामक प्राधिकरण
Telecom Regulatory Authority of India
[भारत सरकार / Government of India]



File no. RP-2/15/(3)/2023-BBPA-Part(1)

Dated: #ApprovedDate#

16-05-2025

To

Director(P&M-ERU)
DoT, New Delhi.
Email: dirpmeru-dot@gov.in

Subject: Regarding inclusion of 5G FWA subscriptions in wireless/ wireline category.

Please refer to your email dated 02.05.2025, addressed to the Secretary TRAI, which points out to a classification issue in 5G Fixed Wireless Access (FWA) data reporting in the recently published monthly telecom subscription reports for January and February 2025, where TRAI has categorised 5G Fixed Wireless Access (FWA) under wireless telephone subscriptions. In contrast, they continued to be reported under wireline telephone connections to the ERU. ERU DoT references the ITU definition to classify 5G FWA as a wireline subscription (i112) in its email. The ERU requested to know the considerations behind TRAI's changed reporting format.

2. TRAI's classification of 5G FWA as wireless telephone subscriptions is guided by the *ITU Handbook for the Collection of Administrative Data on Telecommunications/ICT (2020 edition)*. Relevant excerpts from the handbook are summarised below:

Indicator 1.3: Fixed-telephone subscriptions (i112) (Pg#25):

Fixed-telephone subscriptions refers to the sum of all active i) analogue fixed-telephone lines, ii) voice-over-IP (VoIP) subscriptions, iii) fixed wireless local loop (WLL) subscriptions, iv) ISDN voice-channel equivalents, v) fixed public payphones and vi) satellite-based subscriptions provided to fixed locations that allow for a voice communication.

Methodological issues (Pg.#26):

The inclusion of fixed wireless subscriptions is premised on a regulatory distinction and on the final use to be made of the connection rather than on physical topology, since the network architecture of most fixed wireless services is the same as a mobile-cellular network. In areas where fixed telephony is provided in the last segment to reach the end user via a terrestrial wireless link (e.g., Wi-Fi, WiMAX antenna) but the service is provided to a "fixed location" in the sense that it does not allow for mobility then it is "fixed wireless access" and included in the "fixed telephony" total.

Thus, according to the ITU handbook (as mentioned above and cited by ERU, telephone subscriptions through 5G FWA should be classified as 'Wireless' Fixed-Telephone subscriptions, not as wireline, as erroneously interpreted by ERU,

which stated that 5G FWA should be counted under 'Wireline' telephone connections/subscriptions.

3. Additionally, your attention is invited to the following excerpts from the ITU handbook regarding **Fixed Broadband subscriptions**, which further clarify the wireline networks and categorisation of 5G FWA broadband services;

Indicator 3.4b: Fixed-broadband subscriptions (i4213tffb) [Pg.#78]

Fixed-broadband subscriptions refers to fixed subscriptions to high-speed access to the public Internet (a TCP/IP connection), at downstream speeds equal to, or greater than, 256 kbit/s. This includes cable modem, DSL, fibre-to-the-home/building, other fixed (wired)-broadband subscriptions, satellite broadband and terrestrial fixed wireless broadband... This total is measured irrespective of the method of payment. It excludes subscriptions that have access to data communications (including the Internet) via mobile-cellular networks. It should include fixed WiMAX and any other fixed wireless technologies...

Pg.#80 for wireline networks, para 101;

*101. ... Fixed broadband consists of technologies providing Internet access over **wireline networks** such as copper wire telephone lines, coaxial cable television, optical fibre cable, in-building ethernet cable and electrical power lines....*

4. Based on the above, 5G FWA, although a fixed connection, is delivered wirelessly (via mobile cellular network) and is therefore classified as 'Fixed Wireless Access' for telephone subscriptions and 'Fixed Wireless Broadband' for broadband subscriptions under the wireless category.

5. Accordingly, TRAI has separately reported 5G FWA subscription counts under *Para B* in the "Telecom Subscription Reports" for January and February 2025, clearly distinguishing them from 'mobile wireless subscriptions' reported under *Para A*.

6. It is essential to clearly understand that 'fixed line' and 'wireline' are not interchangeable terms. While all the wirelines are fixed, not all fixed lines are wireline in telecommunication parlance.

This has the approval of the competent Authority.



(Shishir Kansal)
Jt. Advisor (BB&PA)

Copy to :

- i) Sr. PPS to Secretary TRAI
- ii) Economic Advisor, DoT
- iii) PPS to Pr. Advisor (NSL)
- iv) PS to Advisor (BB&PA)