

ASSOCHAM Suggestions **TRAI CP on NTP 2018**

Background:

India, with a subscriber base of nearly 1.19 billion is the second largest telecommunications market in the world growing at Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 19.16 per cent during FY07- FY17. Indian telecom sector's revenue doubled itself from USD19.6 billion in FY06 to USD39.2 billion in FY16. Collaborative efforts by numerous players in the market - Telecom Services Providers (TSPs), Infrastructure Providers (IP-1s), regulatory bodies and the government have nurtured the Indian telecom market which is expected to contribute 8.2 per cent of GDP by year 2020.

India has made substantial progress in the implementation of telecom technologies such as 3G and 4G, while also targeting the implementation of 5G ecosystem to be at par with global economies. Indian telecom sector has seen substantial increase in FDI from USD1.3 billion in 2015-16 to USD5.56 billion in 2016-17 and continues to attract more investment. Advancement in technologies and increasing demand for telecom services requires huge investment to build a robust high level ICT infrastructure, which can help enhance the internet connectivity across the country and propel the country's economic growth.

At present with over 400 million internet subscribers in India, broadband penetration stands at around 25 per cent as compared to 65 to 80 per cent in developed countries. The government through its 'Digital India' initiative aims to increase the digital reach, thus contributing towards faster economic growth, better employment opportunities and significantly improving lives of all the sections of society. It also aims to boost start-ups and thereby increase employment opportunities in the economy. As of now, the telecom sector is one of the key employment generators in the Indian economy and has created around 4 million direct and indirect jobs as on FY16.

The National Telecom Policy (NTP) is formalised by the government to help ensure that the Indian telecommunication sector emerges as a key driver for socio-economic growth. Sectors such as banking, power, transportation, and e-commerce are riding on the telecom network to run their daily operations. The telecom sector plays a critical role in nation-building, thus there is a need to create policies that would strengthen the sector. Telecom sector should be treated as an essential sector to further enhance financial and socio-economic viability of the economy.

The telecom sector in India is currently reeling under unprecedented financial stress (approximately INR4.6 trillion of debt) owing to declining revenue and various challenges such as high spectrum procurement cost in the successive spectrum auctions, disruptive pricing strategy, intensive market competition, revision of taxes imposed post GST implementation and high contribution towards Universal Service Obligation Funds (USOF).

Given sector's current financial and technological dynamics, a new revised policy framework needs to be devised in order to deal with the aforementioned challenges. The NTP-2018 is anticipated to address these challenges and provide an enabling ecosystem for telecom players. Furthermore, in view of rapid technological advancements and emergence of new technologies, such as IoT, 5G, M2M, etc., the policy may also focus on facilitation of these emerging technologies, cyber security framework and protection of interests of consumers to benefit end users as well.

As per the recent World Bank report released in October 2017 on ease of doing business, India jumped 30 ranks and found its place in the top hundred countries after implementation of reforms in areas such as starting a business, getting credit, paying taxes and resolving insolvency. These steps would further strengthen India's appeal as a preferred place to do business globally. Similarly, reforms and enabling ease of doing business for the telecom sector in general would have a cascading effect on the economy as telecommunication services are utilised by all the other sectors in India. Thus the new telecom policy is an important initiative to capture key areas of improvement in the telecom sector.

We thank the TRAI and Government of India for providing this opportunity to provide comments on the National Telecom Policy, 2018. The Policy presents an opportunity for the Government, private sector, and public to come together to provide fresh impetus to the Indian telecommunications sector. The sector has been flourishing resulting in significant gains in development and penetration in ICT. The need of this hour is to develop a holistic new policy that will place India at the forefronts till the next policy is released. In this regard, at the outset, we request that the policy be provided a validity period of 5 years for the implementation of the suggested. After such period has elapsed, the policy may be reviewed to bring the same into line with current developments in technology. We request the Government that the objectives should be set in a technology neutral manner – not separate for fixed/mobile/satellite, etc. Current License Structure under ITA + Licenses are for Services.

A. Licensing & Regulatory Framework

Regulatory predictability and certainty is the founding ground for instilling confidence in the players in the sector who have made huge investments in building the telecom infrastructure. With technological developments, it is possible to provide the telecom services through myriad of technologies. For example, Internet service can be provided through fixed line and cellular networks. Therefore, the policy would aim/encourage that all the players/operators who are providing telecom services should obtain/migrate to unified license for level playing field.

- Predictability & stability /conducive licensing framework a key pre-requisite for attracting investment
- Effect of recognizing Telecom as a core infrastructure – should be enunciated in the policy
- Technology neutral approach should be adopted

- Consistent application – license required even for use of unlicensed spectrum
- Use of unlicensed spectrum cannot mean provision of an unlicensed service
- Liberalise the licensing framework for the telecom service providers in line with Information Technology Act that governs internet and OTT services.
- If review of licensing framework, there must be a migration path for existing licensees
- WiFi hotspots and other telecom activities should be in consonance with licensing framework – if licensing framework is re-structured proper migration path for existing licensees
- One Nation – One License – an option not a mandate [not to exclude smaller/regional players]
- Examine whether the long pending issues such as interpretation of definition of AGR can be resolved expeditiously to create an investor friendly climate. To ensure that the submission and assessment of GR and AGR happens at “central” and not “circle” level.
- Sharing of infrastructure (active, core, passive, transmission) to be promoted to optimize resources
- Spectrum Sharing and Trading to be simplified further in line with broad policy – conditions to be harmonized across guidelines
- Telecom services should be liberalised and regulated in lesser burdensome manner like internet is governed under Information Technology Act. This will unshackle the telecom industry to use the power of cloud and unrestricted cross border flow of data.
- The policy should ensure that any reselling of telecom services continues to happen through UL-VNO route with compliance to already laid down conditions.
- In line with the requirement of having simplified and clear policy around VNO, the area of operation for all the Authorizations within UL-VNO will be same as that of area of operation of the Network Service Operators (NSOs).
- To continue with the approach that the Access Network to Subscriber of UASL/CMTS/UL (Access Authorization) has to be given by that UASL/CMTS/UL (Access Authorization) only. Even a licensee which is not giving such access network to its subscriber (last mile), cannot provide voice service
- TERM office more for creating telecom/IOT awareness, supporting right of way issues
- MW to be allotted to only NW licensees and allocation based on quantum of access spectrum holdings with no additional costs
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B. Regulatory Levies

- Subsume license fee & SUC into GST
- SUC, if separate – fixed charge to cover costs of administration & Regulation, at most, uniform 1% (of AGR) across all Spectrum Bands
- License fee, if separate – reduce to 3%;

- Simple, non-controversial base for application of License fee
- Rationalizing the USOF levy – Reduction to 3% now and do away in next 2-3 years. In future, USO to come from auction proceeds
- Telecom being a core infrastructure, GST to be reduced to 5%
- Reduce Compliance costs – rationalize penalties - only for substantive violations – not for non-substantive discrepancies; request removal of biennial self-certification
- No license fee/SUC on Trading proceeds
- No property tax on towers – Towers to be treated as infrastructure /equipment, not building
- Electricity on priority basis & at industrial rates
- Entrusting one agency which should be responsible for assessing viability of the sector and making recommendations in a timely manner.
- Making telecom/ telecom infrastructure industry to be made eligible for access to long term low cost debt for infrastructure projects to be provided by Infrastructure Debt Funds (IDFs).
- To review the policy on payments for allocated spectrum; since deployment and scale-up of network takes time; considering the same, alignment of payment schedule for spectrum debt to match time-period of spectrum usage of 20 years (5 years moratorium and 15 years payment). The policy would further look at reducing the interest rate charged on the deferred spectrum payments to 6.5%.
- With the operators entering into active sharing arrangements, as result of previous policy initiatives taken, to synergize their efficiencies, many of the active equipment being used has become redundant. Therefore, WPC may look at allowing exporting of such active equipment as it would pave the way for flow of funds for investments in the new technologies and supporting infrastructure.
- The policy would look at allowing Telecom/ telecom infrastructure industry, which have been granted infrastructure industry status, to issue tax free bonds which would reduce the overall cost of capital and mobilize cheaper funds for growth of the telecom/ telecom infrastructure sector at large thereby help achieve the national vision of a connected India.
- NTP-2018 would continue to work in the direction of creating a Telecom Finance Corporation (as envisaged in NTP-2012) as a vehicle to mobilize and channelize financing for telecom projects in order to facilitate investment in the telecom sector to provide loans at preferred rates to Telecom Companies.

C. Ease of Doing Business

- Automate SACFA – one approval /location – height & distance from airport only criteria
- Simplify & Rationalize ROW permissions – only restoration costs to be recovered, development of central portal, TRAI to lead engagements with State/local bodies
- Common service duct – to be included in definition of road – TRAI to engage with MoRTH

- Telecom Ready Buildings – a pre-requisite for getting building approvals
- Mapping of telecom infrastructure assets
- Simplify & rationalize regulatory reporting
- TRAI to develop online portal for industry MIS data
- EMF standards in line with recommendation of WHO
- No multiple audits
- Remove need for import license on RF equipment.
- Introduce online reporting of data for service providers, online payment of fees, and introduction of LFDS.
- In line with the Digital initiatives, the Government would look at the issue of introducing E-acquisition of Enterprise Business Customers and acceptance of optical/digital signatures.
- Speeding up clearances by Government Departments such as The Wireless Planning & Coordination (WPC) wing of Ministry of Communication.

D. Spectrum

Spectrum is scarce natural resource which is used for running a wireless network. A robust policy on spectrum is necessary for its efficient management and allocation. Further, in the context of future networks running on technologies like 5G, which would serve diverse applications, new spectrum requirements would emerge. Therefore, a policy on spectrum needs to address the following components: 1) A long term roadmap for spectrum assignment 2) Avoid measures which increase risks for operators (To ensure that investments done by TSPs in acquiring the spectrum are protected) 3) License spectrum as soon as it is needed and avoid artificial scarcity.

- All access spectrum to be auctioned
- All available spectrum should be put to auction – regular auctions should be conducted for certainty - indicative timelines may be given for auction of new bands
- Revenue maximization deleted as an auction objective – instead direct indirect socio economic benefits to be a stated objective
- Reserve prices should be set at levels to deter non serious bidders; reserve prices should not be based on earlier auction discovered prices
- Spectrum harmonization plan should be put in place by the Government in consultation with telecom service providers and equipment vendors (OEMs) to identify the requirements of harmonization of different spectrum bands (existing as well as new) to support full range of future technologies including M2M & IOT services.
- With the advent of high data rate technologies, the requirement for high capacity backhaul spectrum has gone up; the future policy would envisage availability of backhaul spectrum to the licensed operators having sizable customer base.
- No unlicensed spectrum below 5GHz
- Unlicensed spectrum – not safeguarded against interference, identified judiciously
- Globally harmonized band plans

- Audit is required to ascertain use of spectrum allocated to Government organizations – use of spectrum by commercial organizations easily ascertainable from reports file with TRAI
- Any spectrum allocated for experimental/trial purposes – for time bound period, with clear restrictions on scope of use
- Spectrum availability & allocation details to be made transparently available in the public domain
- For the operation of cellular technologies, spectrum bands such as 700 MHz, 800 MHz, 900 MHz, 1800 MHz, 2.1 GHz, 2.3 GHz and 2.5 GHz have already been put to auction. Except 700 MHz, spectrum in other bands has been bought by operators for deployment. However, technologies such as 5G, would require more access spectrum, therefore Government would look to release spectrum bands for upcoming technologies such as 5G as soon as they are identified to be used by IMT.
- To ensure that there is no delicensing or free allocation of spectrum within the band which has already been identified for use for IMT or is being considered to be used for IMT.
- To release E and V bands for wireless backhaul

E. Consumer

- All India Fixed number portability
- Grievance redressal – avoid multiple layers – existing appellate system vs proposed Ombudsman approach – need to align & streamline
- Ombudsman will require amendment in the Act
- Overlap, duplication & multiple layers can be avoided if bifurcation can be done basis quantum of dispute
- Freedom of choice – review differential tariff regulation
- Support the enhancing the consumer awareness about services, tariffs, and QoS through use of social media by all stakeholders, including the Govt.

F. Rural Teledensity

- Despite odds, coverage is now over 95% ; Teledensity – supply as well as demand side initiatives required
- Business is not feasible given the reduction in MTC – there has to be a business case
- Incentive based approach desirable
- Active infrastructure sharing can be encouraged by – allowing free movement of equipment across service areas, import licenses to be disbanded, import not tied to frequency allocation, rollout allowed to be met through sharing as well as ICR
- BBNL – objectives, status, plans, etc
- Spectrum aspects to be dealt with in Section above – for consistent approach
- Technology neutral approach – satellite, fixed wireless – all technologies to be permitted – no technology to be incentivized /promoted at the cost of another

G. Wireline / WiFi

- Strategy /objectives to be technology neutral
- Not clear what is meant by Open access Networks & facilitating their development – should not form part of policy till there is proper deliberation on the issue
- Incentivizing /promoting one technology over another – a deviation from clearly stated technology neutral approach of Government – will lead to a regime of cross subsidization & non level playing field
- Incentivizing fixed line broadband as a policy strategy needs careful examination from implementation and cost point of view And balancing it with mobile technologies
- Upgradation of cable TV networks may be permitted – with defined licensing & regulatory framework

H. M2M

- M2M already permitted under existing licensing regime – on licensed /unlicensed spectrum
- Differential approach for M2M offered through different technologies not desirable- can lead to non level playing field
- Not desirable to earmark separate ‘licensed spectrum’ for IOT
- Simplified KYC norms for M2M may be a stated policy objective
- Global M2M SIMs to be permitted in India & vice versa
- Collaboration with sector specific council for specific use cases desirable – but within framework of common enunciated principles

I. Global hub

- Cross border data flows to be permitted
- Data protection, privacy, net neutrality to be in the form of a horizontal regulation – not restricted only to telecoms – National ‘telecom’ policy
- In NTP – we can state that data protection etc as applicable across sectors
- The concept of a interconnect exchange for data services – is not understood – not to be included in NTP- till its concept, rationale etc is well understood

J. International trade

- Any spectrum allocated for demonstration/experimental purposes – for time bound period, with clear restrictions on scope of use
- USOF to come from auction proceeds
- Development of own test labs & infrastructure will result in duplication – will impact ease of doing business – India can set up a global certification lab

K. Broadband

- Government would look into carving out partnerships with Service Providers for the provisioning of access network for the fiber already deployed under Bharat Net. This would propel the spread of broadband in rural areas. TRAI recommendations given on this subject should be considered.
- Ensure availability of infrastructure under BharatNet to all access service providers on equal terms & conditions at minimal cost / Free of cost.
- Encourage Fibre-To-The-Home (FTTH) with enabling guidelines and policies, for facilitating fast transformation of cities and towns into Always Connected society.
- form a policy for making provisions to connect places such as educational institutes, hospitals etc. with broadband connectivity
- Explore newer technologies such as Satellite Communication for the spread of internet services in far flung areas.

L. Telecom Infrastructure/RoW Issues:

Telecom infrastructure is a lifeline of the telecom networks; however, it is also true that one of the biggest challenges faced by operators in the country is related to establishment of telecom infrastructure which includes challenges faced in the installation of towers at various places, RoW permission and charges, in-building access etc. These challenges have largely stem from fragmented and non-uniform policy adopted by various states and local bodies. RoW gazette issued by Government was one such effort to bring out uniform approach for granting RoW permissions. There is an urgent need for a timely implementation of RoW policy and to further actuate efforts towards establishment of uniform rules around telecom towers.

- To bring out a uniform policy around establishment of telecom towers; covering permissions and approval processes.
- To devise a fast track streamlined approval process which can help reduce execution challenges with respect to RoW permissions as the current process of RoW approval requires multiple approvals from at each municipality level making it operationally challenging. Further, the present rules doesn't allow fiber to be laid using electric poles due to various restrictions imposed by local bodies like Municipal corporations etc. on the Discoms. Discoms are not allowed to generate commercial revenues using this infrastructure (that includes even commercial hoardings etc.).
- Further to also put in place a PAN India provision to allow TSPs and their partners to lay Fiber using the existing electric poles.
- DoT would look to collaborate with Ministry of Urban Development to come out with a policy for various new Public Buildings to facilitate the installation of In-Building telecom infrastructure to further improve the

telecom services inside public buildings. The importance of In-Building telecom infrastructure in providing indoor coverage has been realized world over; however, installation of in-building infrastructure is often hampered due to restrictions imposed by builders and due to lack of ICT infrastructure inside various buildings.

- DoT would look into the aspect of a policy intervention to support the telecom infrastructure requirement for Smart City mission as Government has already announced list of 100 smart cities; which would require telecom services for connecting city infrastructure.

M. Research and Development, Manufacturing and Skill Development:

Government in NTP-2012, had recognized the importance of local manufacturing of telecom equipment in the country not only to become self-sufficient but to look to become net exporter as well. The New Telecom Policy would further work in this direction by taking pragmatic steps such development of manufacturing ecosystem. India's contribution to research and development and skill development would be equally important as the supportive ecosystem for the same.

- To build an ecosystem for setting up of FAB unit to support local electronic manufacturing. Presently, India does not have any FAB unit to support the manufacturing and supply of silicon components for domestic consumption. The local FAB unit can supply to meet domestic needs as well as to export to rest of the world as a HUB for meeting the global requirements.
- To facilitate easy availability to quality components and Raw Materials by incentivizing global raw material suppliers to manufacture domestically. This will accelerate manufacturing and build widespread manufacturing capability.
- To simplify paperwork around import and export as the same will lead to cost effective and efficient delivery of products from a Make in India plant.
- Towards building a complete ecosystem of manufacturing and logistics: setting up of Logistics/ warehousing/ global distribution hubs, 24X7 customs clearances, fast track clearances for manufacturing, easy and free movement of new and used capital goods/ test equipment in and out of the country, raw material import and re-export of unused/excess/obsolete (subject to strictly adhering to WEEE take back guidelines and audit by authorities at regular intervals), high tech faulty products for Repair and Return business targeting global volume, fast track and incentivize material hub concept (Free trade warehousing zones).
- To develop additional training institutes under Department of Telecommunications and its organizations as national level telecom schools of

excellence for imparting training to Government/ PSU officials and other stakeholders.

- To promote and augment vocational and non-formal training institutes in urban and rural areas to cater to the skill and training needs of telecom sector.
- To encourage collaboration with premier educational institutes like IITs and telecom research organizations of excellence for directing research and development to field problems.

N. Future Technologies:

- To put in place, a policy framework for all technologies ensuring harmonized policy and regulatory treatment for competing communication services.
- Licensing and regulatory approach to be light touch to encourage innovation and growth.
- To put in place a balanced policy approach to encourage the development of upcoming technologies such as Satellite telecommunication.
- To look into the issue of device certification such as smartphones etc. to ensure quality of services to consumers.
- Net neutrality to be defined as allowing unrestricted access to all content, except that which is prohibited by law.
- To facilitate the ecosystem for non-terrestrial access and backhaul technologies like Satellites and High-Altitude Platform Stations which may prove vital for disaster recovery communications when terrestrial networks are down.

O. Security

- To address the issues related to security of citizens in the cyber space by simplifying security conditions in the unified license agreement.
- To bring consonance between the security conditions laid down in license conditions and Indian IT Act for simplification.
- For further simplification, explore the possibility of self-certification by operators with regard to the various security requirements.
- To encourage the security by design by adoption of best international practices in the field of M2M/IoT, fix line and cellular networks.
- To encourage the adoption of security measures and standards in the complete ecosystem, devices, networks and platforms.
- To develop a rational criterion for sharing of costs beyond a threshold limit between Government and the service providers in implementing security measures.

Suggestions related to Fiber Industry

Q.1 Stakeholders are requested to give their comments on structure and contents of the proposed inputs for National Telecom Policy, 2018, clearly outlining the specifics along with justification.

Below are the Comments on structure & contents of proposed inputs for National Telecom Policy:

1. **Part D-Point b-** 'Making available finance for communication infra projects at par with other infra sectors'.
Comment: A '**telecom Infrastructure fund**' should be set up to ensure capex intensive wireline Networks are deployed with speed. Given that '**Optical fibre**' is a lifeline for high speed broadband and new technologies like M2M and 5G, TSPs should also be incentivised to roll out Wireline infrastructure.
2. **Part D. Point N** For ensuring non-discriminatory time bound RoW permissions - a nation-wide common portal for application and approval
Comment: Other than ROW nodal agency, mandate utility corridors in new roads and infrastructure to reduce time and cost involved in ROW. Classify types of Cities and specify the levies/fees for each type of city.
3. **Part I-Point k** 'Making TEC and TSDSI responsible for development of standards for telecom products and services'.
Comment: This will support futureproofed resilient NW roll outs. The standards authority TEC must be strengthened.

Q.2 Stakeholders may also suggest any other issue related to Policy Framework which stakeholders feel is important for growth of telecom sector, along with justification.

Below are the Issues and Recommendations related to policy framework for the growth of telecom sector:

1. **Implementation is key:** The NTP must focus on timebound implementation of the Policy given the risks if the telecom ecosystem doesn't function well.
2. **Union Budget:** The BB infrastructure fund must reflect in the Union budget similar to that of roads, power, railways etc
3. **Ease of doing business for Govt deployments:** Simplify approvals and permissions in govt. deployments by reducing number of approvals and permissions in relation ROW, execution, documentation and cash flow.
 - a. A single window clearance for permissions
 - b. Deemed approval on all relevant Govt. land

- c. ROW nodal agency that manages all permissions will reduce time, effort and cost.
- d. Govt. focus on transforming accounting practices and bringing cross ministerial synergies who are like department to the same Govt.
- e. Stringent vendor selection criteria with Focus on operating standards and strong SLAs
- f. Efficient utilisation of technology and surveillance for approvals
- g. Strong audit and penalties to ensure quality is adhered to
- h. A framework to synergise execution, documentation and payments to ensure optimisation of time, effectiveness and resource.

Justification: Increasing operational ease in execution, documentation and payment process will create faster roll outs and reduce the entry barriers in Govt. deployment leading to a sustainable ecosystem. The added advantage of leveraging digitization, expanding penetration of valued employment and skilling will bring impetus to the Country's other strategic programs. India's experience and talent base, program managing skills and project efficiency can become a benchmark to new world projects.

4. **Security:** Given that the infrastructure is a national asset.
 - a. Tampering with the BB network must be considered as an offense and adequate legal action must be taken to ensure fibre cuts or damage to towers is avoided.
 - b. A 'call before you dig' number should be mandated and all utilities must have GIS maps so that damage due to ROW digging can be avoided.
5. **Strengthen the wireline NW:** Telecom products like optical fibre which offer better specifications than the recommended specs in standards should be given due weightage accordingly. TEC optical fibre approval process to be simplified. It will improve supply process and on time infrastructure deployment will be there.
6. **BB infrastructure must become a part of Building Codes** to speed up FTTH deployment in cities and towns. This will ensure high quality access with high speed.
7. **Incentivise Optical Fiber Manufacturing:** India has the opportunity and the capability of becoming a Fiber manufacturing Capital to the world. Brand India can reach every country with the quality manufacturing of Optical Fiber - a critical element of future NW. Currently India cater to 100 Plus countries. Government could create an **Optical Fibre Market Development Fund** to include a) Product development b) Market development towards setting up a supply chain ecosystem including warehousing and logistics networks to counter local incumbents in overseas markets. c) Patents
Justification: Indian fibre faces challenges from local incumbents in other countries (due to lower lead times and logistics costs) and from China (due to very favourable export incentives policies).

8. Creation of **Fibre Action Task Force (FATF)** Given the importance of Fiber demand and roll out, Fibre Action Task Force (FATF), with cross ministry and industry involvement (HFCL, Sterlite tech, L&T, etc), must be initiated. This will ensure standards for the creation, procurement, deployment and management of fibre. This will speed up fibre roll out and also ensure India is propelled to become the fibre hub of the world.

Additional Inputs

A. Deployment and other 5G related issues

1. It is widely recognized that the new paradigm in telecommunication is the 5th Generation of ICT (5G). India must be prepared for the emergence of 5G and this requires a conducive policy environment which:
 - a. Considers the upgrading of backhaul networks to support 5G technology.
 - b. Ensures that the policy framework is aligned with global standards and policy in all respects including in relation to spectrum bands on which 5G is to be deployed.
 - c. Supports the deployment of 5G networks over V and E bands.
2. At the same time, policy on emerging issues including 5G must be formulated in a technology-neutral manner.

B. Operationalization of new technologies

- The new policy must also account for the development and operationalisation of new technology and innovative solutions to existing models while ensuring that consumer interest is enshrined.
- A key strategy to achieve this balance is by ensuring transparency in all offerings of services. The policy must enshrine the need to provide full disclosures through labelling and simple language disclosures relating to key information such as service information and metrics.
- The Policy must also promote innovation and the deployment of emerging ICT solutions.
- A key element of promoting innovation is for the regulatory authorities to facilitate testing or experimental technologies (for time bound and limited purposes). Imports must be enabled through a simple registration / intimation system to ensure that cutting-edge solutions may be tested within Indian conditions, and contributed to local R&D activities.
- However, priorities under the policy must not only relate to hardware and device manufacturers, the development of OTT applications, services, and software must be encouraged in the light of the massive value they add to the Indian digital economy. Such services as essential to realise the true potential of technology and must be encouraged. The NTP should:
 - Facilitate cross-border data flows and transfers of information.
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In addition to the above, we offer the following specific comments in relation to the current draft of the policy:

Policy in TRAI Draft	Comment	Suggested
[Common Strategies] (d) <i>By restructuring of legal, licensing and regulatory frameworks for reaping the benefits of convergence;”</i>	Instead of a generic statement to restructure the framework, we recommend an unequivocal affirmation of the need to ease compliance and promote the ease of doing business.	NA
[Common Strategies] (k) <i>Restructuring of TRAI as converged regulator for ICT and Broadcasting sector</i>	As TRAI does not have the jurisdiction (under the Allocation of Business Rules) to address internet related issues, we request that this provision be deleted. As TRAI itself has noted the skillsets required for regulation of different sectors is unique and convergence would not provide any advantages.	NA
[Strategies to enable access for connecting to 10 billion IoT/M2M devices] <i>(a) By prescribing licensing and regulatory framework for IoT/ M2M service providers</i>	As opposed to adopting a stance based on barriers to entry of new players and innovation, the policy must emphasis on light-touch regulation aimed at encouraging innovative forces for entire sector.	<i>(a) By removing regulatory and licensing barriers to the deployment of IoT/ M2M services;</i>
[Strategies to establish India as a Global Hub for data communication systems] <i>(a) By prescribing licensing and regulatory framework for cloud service providers;</i> <i>(c) By prescribing a policy for cross-border data flow</i>	As opposed to adopting a stance based on barriers to entry of new players and innovation, the policy must emphasis on light-touch regulation aimed at encouraging innovative forces.	<i>(a) By facilitating the deployment of flexible cloud service solutions to expand storage capacity and enable access to a wider number and range of services;</i> <i>(c) By continuing to facilitate cross-border data transfer;</i>

Apart from the recommendations, we would also like to offer the following general comments:

- **Further the Ease of doing Business:** The Policy must aim strengthen India's position globally as a leading investment and innovation destination. Outdated legal and regulatory frameworks should be reformed to underpin a future legislative framework for regulation of services in information and communication technologies.

- **Improving Inclusiveness of Technology:** At present, innovation is aimed at the educated masses of India. However, to truly realise the country's potential, it is important that innovation be available to all sections of society regardless of gender, language, disability, and geography. The policy must enshrine this objective as a key priority going forward.