Telecom Regulatory Authority of India

Consultation Paper

Answers

On

Issues relating to blocking

Of

IMEI for lost /stolenmobile handsets

MSAI is an official reporting body of GSMA in India which allocates IMEI (GSM) and MEID (CDMA) numbers for mobile wireless devices to manufacturers and brand importers in India. It also supports the TERM Cell (DoT) and Customs (CBEC) along with national law enforcement and security agencies (MHA) with training / access / technical support with issues related to IMEI and MEID numbers.

MSAI also certifies the wireless devices prior to their launch in the market with standards derived from GCF, OMA, 3GPP , CE and FCC.

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(1) **In order to reduce/discourage mobile theft do you think the blocking of IMEI is an effective solution? Please give reasons.**

Yes, blocking is an effective <u>final</u> solution, only if it is done in a multi-prong approach divided into the following three steps:

Step 1
Removal of the Cloned IMEI numbers from the operators network across pan India circles.

Step 2
Creating a Grey List IMEI bank for monitoring the movement of the Stolen / Lost or Crime Infected IMEI numbers

Step 3
Finally blocking of the Lost/ Stolen IMEI numbers by creating the Black List with conditional scenarios

(2) **In case blocking of IMEI is implemented, to what extent load on the network will increase? Please give details.**

There is absolutely no increase in network load in case of blocking of IMEI is done. The IMEI number once blocked will show "Invalid SIM". The EIR is already in place with the operators. The EIR supports CSV files which allow the blocked IMEI numbers not to be registered with the operators through an external autonomous third party Lost IMEI database (LIDB)

(A detailed white paper can be submitted with all the internal workings if required)

(3) **In your opinion who should maintain the CEIR? Please give reasons.**

LIDB or Lost IMEI Database should be maintained by an Independent External Autonomous Third Party, which will ensure:-

- ✓ Coordination among all operators, allowing smooth flow of data
- ✓ Transparency with Regulators and Policy Implementers (TRAI & DoT)
- ✓ Centrally controlled database for Pan India Networks
- ✓ One Stop Point for all Audit and Accountability for all networks
- ✓ Zero Data Manipulation by Network Operators

**(4) Should the CEIR be maintained at national level or zonal level?
Provide details including the estimated data size.**

The CEIR or LIDB should be maintained at the national level which can then be populated to the zonal level to ensure compliance. The data size is minimal in size. Even on storing the deltas for whole year assuming 8 input files in a 24 hour window are submitted pan India to all operators, the size of the files will still be in double digit GBs (nn gigabytes) as in the case of the IMEI DB which is maintained in the .csv file which is the input file for the EIRs

(A detailed white paper can be submitted with all the internal workings the storage and in and out flow can be presented if required)

**(5)   Please comment on cost and funding aspects of Centralized EIR?
Please provide detailed cost estimates?**

The whole CEIR – LIDA Project exercise can be controlled in multiple lakhs only. A Detailed internal costing can be provided in separate Annexure.

The funding to start can be through PPP (Public Private Partnerships) plus a sizable cost can be recovered through charging the public for utilizing the LIDA (Lost IMEI Detecting Assistance) Service. The Additional funds can be poured back into further enhancing the service.

**(6)   Should blocking of IMEI/ESN be chargeable from customer?
If yes, what should be the charges?**

It is recommended to charge a nominal fee from customer in order to block / their lost IMEI handset. (Less than 10 rupees)

(7)   **Please give your views on bringing a legislation to prevent re-programming of mobile devices? In your opinion what are the aspects that need to be covered under such legislation?**

It's a good concept to bring about much needed legislation to prevent re-programming or tampering of IMEI / MEID / ESN numbers of wireless devices. This should be mandated and should be applicable to all the manufacturing units / brand Importers who are either manufacturing or importing these wireless devices into the country.
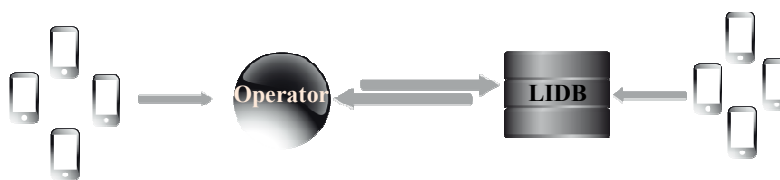
The Law should stipulate that

- ✓ Upon tampering of the IMEI / MEID/ ESN number of the wireless device. It should render it useless.
- ✓ It should be applicable only to the finished goods launched in the market.
- ✓ Any persons or end point mobile repair shops should not be allowed to tamper with the wireless device.
- ✓ The warehouse service units or the wireless test houses should be exempt from such law.
- ✓ It should be punishable with fines and prison terms to prevent malafide intentions.

Until and unlessthese provisions of Law are in place anyone with local support or through a little knowledge acquired over the internet today is able to re-program the numbers which defeats the sole purpose of curbing Lost IMEI project by allowing loopholes.

(8) What should be the procedure for blocking the IMEI?

The blocking of IMEI should be enforced by the Operator with inputs from both operator and LIDA team upon getting a request from the subscriber.

(A detailed white paper can be submitted with all the internal workingsif required)

(9) If lost mobile is found, should there be a facility of unblocking the IMEInumber? If yes, what should be the process for it? Should there be a time limit for Unblocking the IMEI number? Should it be chargeable?

Yes, the provision to unblock the IMEI should be there. The process entails due diligence and the inputs from the subscribers again through an SMS code. There should not be a time limit for unblocking the IMEI number provided they are able to SMS the code or provide satisfactory evidence for the ownership of the IMEI. It should be chargeable again less than ten rupees.

(A detailed white paper can be submitted with all the internal workingsif required)

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