

Information Note to the Press (Press Release No. 52/2021)

For immediate release

TELECOM REGULATORY AUTHORITY OF INDIA

TRAI releases draft Telecommunication Tariff (66th Amendment) Order, 2021 on "Regulatory framework for USSD-based tariff"

New Delhi, 24th November, 2021: The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has today released a draft Telecommunication Tariff (66th Amendment) Order, 2021 on "Regulatory framework for USSD-based tariff".

2. TRAI had earlier issued the Telecommunication Tariff (56th Amendment) Order dated 22nd November 2013 prescribing a ceiling tariff of Rs. 1.50 per USSD session for USSD-based mobile banking service. Subsequently, in November 2016, the Authority revised USSD-based tariff ceiling for banking and payment services through the Telecommunication Tariff (61st Amendment) Order, 2016 from Rs. 1.50 to Rs. 0.50 per session.

3. With a view to encourage digitalization of payments and enhancing financial inclusion through digitalization, the Reserve Bank of India constituted a High-Level Committee on Deepening of Digital Payments (CDDP), which suggested further rationalization of USSD charges to enable better adoption. The recommendations made by the High-Level Committee on CDDP are supported by the Department of Financial Services (DFS).

4. Following a request from the DFS to the Department of Telecommunications in this regard, the Authority analyzed the issue from various aspects and is of the view that in order to protect the interests of the USSD users and to promote digital financial inclusion, rationalization of USSD charges is required. Accordingly, the Authority proposes to revise the framework for USSD based mobile banking and payment services by prescribing a "Nil" charge per USSD session for mobile banking and payment service, while keeping the remaining items of USSD unchanged.

5. The draft Amendment Order has been placed on TRAI's website (www.traigov.in). The stakeholders are requested to send their written comments on the same to Shri Amit Sharma, Advisor (Finance & Economic Analysis), TRAI, preferably in electronic form at e-mail id: advfea2@traigov.in **latest by 8th December, 2021.**

6. For any clarification/information, Shri Amit Sharma, Advisor (F&EA) may be contacted at Tel No. +91-11-23234367/23235249(Fax).

(V. Raghunandan)
Secretary, TRAI