TRAI releases Recommendations on ‘The Framework for Satellite Communication Network Provider Authorisation, and Assignment of Spectrum to Satellite Communication Network Providers'

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The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has today released its recommendations on **‘the Framework for Satellite Communication Network Provider Authorisation, and Assignment of Spectrum to Satellite Communication Network Providers’**.

Earlier, DoT conveyed to TRAI on 03.07.2025 that *"the Government proposes the introduction of a Satellite Communication Network (SCN) Authorisation under Section 3(1)(b) of the Telecommunications Act 2023”* and requested TRAI to *"provide terms and conditions for Satellite Communication Network (SCN) authorisation including provision of assignment of spectrum for both feeder link as well as user link under such authorisation”*.

In this regard, TRAI issued a consultation paper on ‘the Framework for Satellite Communication Network Authorisation, and Assignment of Spectrum to Satellite Communication Network Providers' on 08.04.2026. In response, comments from 31 stakeholders and counter-comments from 12 stakeholders were received and uploaded on the TRAI website. An Open House Discussion (OHD) on the consultation paper was held on 02.07.2026 through virtual mode.

After considering the comments and counter-comments received from stakeholders in the consultation process, and further analysis, TRAI has finalized its recommendations on ‘the Framework for Satellite Communication Network Provider Authorisation, and Assignment of Spectrum to Satellite Communication Network Providers’.

Key highlights of the TRAI's recommendations:

1. **Satellite Communication Network Provider Authorisation**
    - A new authorisation - namely “Satellite Communication Network Provider Authorisation” - should be introduced under Section 3(1)(b) of the Telecommunications Act, 2023.

- The Satellite Communication Network (SCN) provider authorised entities may provide Satellite Communication Network as a Service (SCNaaS) to eligible service providers.
- The Satellite Communication Network (SCN) provider authorised entities may not provide telecommunication services directly to users.
- The SCN provider authorisation should be for the national area, with a maximum duration of 20 years and provision for renewal for up to 20 years.
- Fixed Satellite Service (FSS), Mobile Satellite Service (MSS), Direct-to-Device (D2D) services via satellite using MSS, and D2D services via satellite using IMT spectrum should be permitted through the satellite communication networks of SCN provider authorised entities.
- The SCN provider authorised entities may seek appropriate satellite spectrum (FSS and MSS) from the Central Government and/ or utilize the spectrum assigned to partnering service providers - for providing satellite communication network as a service (SCNaaS) to eligible service providers.
- Any licensee or authorised entity that is permitted to provide satellite-based communication services or provide telecommunication services through satellite network should be eligible to seek SCNaaS from SCN provider authorised entity.
- Apart from SCN provider authorised entities, any entity holding any of the following licenses/ authorisations should also be permitted to provide SCNaaS to any authorised entity or licensee that is permitted to provide satellite-based communication services or provide telecommunication services through satellite network:

    (a) Unified service authorisation, access service authorisation, internet service authorisation and long distance service authorisation under the Telecommunications (Authorisation for Principal Telecom Services) Rules, 2026;

    (b) Access Service authorization, Internet Service authorization, NLD Service authorization, Commercial VSAT CUG Service authorization and GMPCS Service authorization under Unified License; and

    (c) License for Provision and Operation of Satellite Based Services Using Gateway Installed in India Under '*Sui-Generis*' Category:

  Provided that such entity fulfils the eligibility criteria for obtaining SCN provider authorisation and undertakes to abide by the technical and operating conditions, roll out obligations, and security conditions applicable to SCN provider authorisation.

2. **Assignment of spectrum to SCN provider authorised entities**

- SCN provider authorised entities should be permitted to seek the assignment of - (a) FSS spectrum for feeder link, and (b) FSS spectrum and/or MSS spectrum for user links - from the Government.
- The SCN provider authorised entity should be assigned FSS spectrum for deploying in the feeder link on an administrative basis. For seeking administrative assignment of FSS/ MSS spectrum for deploying in user links, SCN provider authorised entity should demonstrate that the intended service to be provided by

its partnering service provider(s) by using the spectrum falls in the First Schedule of the Telecommunications Act, 2023.

- Subject to alignment with the allocations in National Frequency Allocation Plan (NFAP) 2025, spectrum should be assigned to SCN provider authorised entities in the following frequency bands:

Type of Service	Type of Satellites	Frequency band for user link	Frequency band for feeder link
FSS	GSO	C band, Ku band, Ka band and Q/V band	
	NGSO	Ku band, Ka band, and Q/V band	
MSS	GSO	L band and S band	C band, Ku band, Ka band and Q/V band
	NGSO		

- FSS spectrum and MSS spectrum should be assigned to SCN provider authorised entities for a period of up to five years. However, considering the market conditions, the Government may extend it for a further period of up to two years.
- Terms and conditions, including pricing, for assignment of FSS spectrum and MSS spectrum to SCN provider authorised entities, should remain valid for a period of five years from the date of notification of the policy regime by the Central Government, further extendable by a period of upto two years.
- Any revision in the terms and conditions, including pricing, for assignment of FSS spectrum and MSS spectrum to SCN provider authorised entities, notified by the Central Government after a period of five years from the date of notification of the policy regime, should become applicable to all SCN provider authorised entities including the existing SCN provider authorised entities.
- The SCN provider authorised entity should be permitted to enter into an agreement with any eligible service authorised entity ("partnering entity") to utilise –

1. the FSS spectrum held by the partnering entity for using the spectrum in feeder links; and
2. the FSS/ MSS spectrum held by its partnering entity for using the spectrum in user links -

   for the limited purpose of providing satellite communication network as a service (SCNaaS) to the partnering entity, while the right to use of spectrum should remain with the partnering entity.

3. **MSS-based D2D Service**

   - MSS-based D2D services [i.e. direct-to-device (D2D) services via satellite by using the spectrum in L-band and S-band allocated for mobile satellite service (MSS)] should be permitted in India.
   - The entities authorised to provide access service should be permitted to seek SCNaaS from SCN provider authorised entities for providing MSS-based D2D

services.

- After acceptance of these recommendations, the Central Government should encourage smartphone handset manufacturers to include the necessary modules for supporting the applicable MSS bands in future smartphone handsets sold in India.

4. **IMT-based D2D Service**

- IMT-based D2D service [i.e. direct-to-device (D2D) services via satellite by using IMT spectrum should be permitted in the country on non-interference, non-protection basis under the provisions of Article 4.4 of ITU Radio Regulations - without waiting for the outcome of WRC-27.
- The decision taken by the Government of India, if any, on the matter of IMT-based D2D service after the conclusion of WRC-2027 should be made applicable to IMT-based D2D service at that stage.
- Any entity authorised to provide access service and holding IMT spectrum, should be permitted to provide the IMT-based D2D service by availing SCNaaS from any SCN provider authorised entity. Conversely, any SCN provider authorised entity should be permitted to provide SCNaaS to any entity, which is authorised to provide access service and holds IMT spectrum:

  Provided that the provision of IMT-based D2D service is permitted only if one or more entities authorised to provide access service – together holding the assignment of the relevant IMT frequency channel across all 22 licensed service areas of the country – agree to allow the usage of their IMT frequency channel by the SCN provider authorised entity for the purpose of providing SCNaaS to only such entity (ies).

- The IMT frequency bands under frequency division duplexing (FDD) arrangement viz. 600 MHz, 700 MHz, 800 MHz, 900 MHz, 1800 MHz, and 2100 MHz band should be permitted to be used for providing the IMT-based D2D service.
- The frequency allocation table of the National Frequency Allocation Plan (NFAP) should be amended to include Mobile Satellite Service (MSS) as a secondary service in the frequency bands identified for the IMT-based D2D service. An India-specific footnote should be introduced to clarify that the secondary MSS operations in such frequency bands will be limited to the IMT-based D2D service, which will operate on a non-interference and non-protection basis to both domestic and cross-border operations.
- For protecting the incumbent services operating in the country from any harmful interference arising from the IMT-based D2D service, limits on electric field strength of aggregate signal from all beams should be specified.

5. **Financial Conditions**

- In determining the applicable rate of Authorisation Fee, Spectrum Charges and financial conditions for SCN Provider Authorised Entities, including definition of GR/ ApGR/ AGR and other financial conditions, TRAI has followed the principle of maintaining regulatory parity between vertically integrated service model and an unbundled shared network model of providing satellite-based services.

1. **Definition of GR/ ApGR/ AGR & treatment of SCNaaS charges:**

- Gross Revenue (GR) shall include all revenues accruing to the SCN Provider Authorised Entity for provision of Satellite Communications Network-as-a-Service (SCNaaS) to eligible Service Authorised Entities for the provision of satellite based services to end users, and any other revenue from network-related activities, without any set-off for related items of expenditure.
- The SCNaaS Charges paid by eligible Service Authorised entity (including eligible VNOs) to an SCN provider authorised entity, under a commercial service agreement for provisioning of SCNaaS, which are reported as revenue by the SCN Provider Authorised entity, should be permitted as deduction from the ApGR of the Service Authorised entity, subject to proper documentation and verification.
- For determination of Applicable Gross Revenue (ApGR), non-telecom revenue should be excluded from Gross Revenue, in line with provisions under Telecommunications (Authorisation for Provision of Principal Telecommunication Services) Rules, 2026
- For determination of AGR, charges paid to another SCN Provider Authorised entity for utilization of satellite earth station gateway(s) should be allowed as deductions, along with GST paid to government (if applicable)

2. **Authorisation Fee:**

- Authorisation Fee for SCN Provider Authorised entities should be 8% of the Adjusted Gross Revenue. There should be no Minimum Authorisation Fee for the same.

3. **Spectrum Charges:**

- Spectrum Charges for an SCN provider authorised entity should be based on AGR, with a differential between urban and rural areas for NGSO based FSS (which can be a per subscriber additional charge for urban area) and should have the same charging rate and framework as that applicable for satellite based commercial communication services, as decided by DoT on basis of Recommendations dated 09.05.2025.
- Spectrum assigned to an SCN Provider Authorised entity should attract an annual Minimum Spectrum Charge of Rs. 3,500 per MHz, in case FSS/ MSS spectrum is assigned to such entity by the Central Government.
- In case MSS spectrum (L/S band) is used for providing D2D service, the spectrum charging framework should be the same as when used for providing conventional MSS on specialized devices.
- In case IMT Spectrum assigned to Service authorized entity is used for providing D2D service, no additional spectrum charges should be levied on the partnering Access Service provider for utilisation of their assigned IMT spectrum in user link for providing satellite-based D2D services. The existing spectrum charging framework applicable for the assigned IMT spectrum should continue to apply.
- Spectrum charges for providing satellite-based services by Service providers under existing Unified License or new Telecommunications (Authorisation for Provision of Principal Telecommunication Services) Rules 2026, should be levied only on that

portion of their AGR as derived from FSS & MSS (including MSS to normal & specialized phones).

- Spectrum charges for SCNaaS provided by eligible service providers should be levied only on that portion of their AGR as derived from provisioning of SCNaaS.

4. **Other Financial conditions:**

- Other Financial Conditions applicable for a SCN Provider Authorisation have been recommended as follows:

Other Financial Conditions for SCN Provider Authorisation

	Entry Fee (in Rs.)	Initial Guarantee (in Rs.)	Minimum Equity (in Rs.)	Minimum Net worth (in Rs.)	Application Processing Fee (in Rs.)
SCN Provider Authorisation	**37,50,000**	**45,00,000**	**60,00,000**	**60,00,000**	**10,000**

These recommendations of TRAI envision the development of a robust and competitive satellite communication ecosystem in India. The recommended framework for SCN provider authorisation would enable efficient utilisation of satellite network infrastructure and spectrum through SCNaaS and facilitate innovative satellite-based services, including D2D connectivity using MSS as well as IMT spectrum. This would provide greater flexibility to service providers in accessing satellite network resources and support the expansion of satellite-based connectivity across the country.

The recommendations have been placed on the TRAI's website (www.trai.gov.in). For any clarification/ information Shri Akhilesh Kumar Trivedi, Advisor (Networks, Spectrum and Licensing), TRAI may be contacted at Telephone Number +91-11-20907758.

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