

TRAI Releases Second Consultation Paper on Unified Licensing Regime

On March 13, the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India released a second Consultation Paper on the adoption of a Unified Licensing Regime (ULR). Following the implementation of a Unified Access Licensing scheme, in November 2003 TRAI issued a preliminary consultation paper on a ULR. The stakeholders' responses to the November 2003 consultation paper defined the main licensing, regulatory and level playing field issues to be resolved and the models to be considered for the transition to a ULR. The second Consultation Paper on the adoption of a ULR provides the platform for discussing those issues and models.

Upon TRAI's recommendation, the Government of India intends to adopt a ULR for all services covering all geographical areas using any technology. According to TRAI, the key objective of this regime is "to encourage free growth of new applications and services leveraging on the technological developments in the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) area." Other main objectives of this new regime include: i) simplifying the licensing procedure; ii) ensuring flexibility and efficient utilisation of resources; iii) encouraging efficient, small operators to cover rural, remote and less developed areas; and iv) ensuring a level playing field and easy entry.

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The text of the Consultation Paper on Unified Licensing Regime is available on the website of TRAI:
<http://www.trai.gov.in>