November 5, 2026

TRAI

TRAI recommends new satellite network provider authorization

TRAI has recommended a new satellite communication network provider authorization, with spectrum for feeder and user links and an 8% fee on AGR.

THE TELECOM REGULATORY Authority of India (TRAI) released its "Recommendations on the Framework for Satellite Communication Network Provider Authorisation, and Assignment of Spectrum to Satellite Communication Network Providers", dated November 5, 2026. It sent them to the Secretary, Department of Telecommunications (DoT), with letter No. R-1/7/(2)/2026-NSL-II of the same date, signed by Pushpendra Kumar Singh, Secretary (Incharge). DoT had written on July 3, 2025 that the Government proposed a Satellite Communication Network (SCN) authorization under section 3(1)(b) of the Telecommunications Act, 2023. TRAI issued a consultation paper on April 8, 2026, received comments from 31 stakeholders and counter-comments from 12, and held an open house discussion on July 2, 2026. These are recommendations: they say what the Central Government "should" do.

KEY FACTS

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The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) released its "Recommendations on the Framework for Satellite Communication Network Provider Authorisation, and Assignment of Spectrum to Satellite Communication Network Providers", dated November 5, 2026. It sent them to the Secretary, Department of Telecommunications (DoT), with letter No. R-1/7/(2)/2026-NSL-II of the same date, signed by Pushpendra Kumar Singh, Secretary (Incharge). DoT had written on July 3, 2025 that the Government proposed a Satellite Communication Network (SCN) authorization under section 3(1)(b) of the Telecommunications Act, 2023. TRAI issued a consultation paper on April 8, 2026, received comments from 31 stakeholders and counter-comments from 12, and held an open house discussion on July 2, 2026. These are recommendations: they say what the Central Government "should" do.

TRAI recommends a new "satellite communication network provider authorisation". An applicant must also be a company with satellite or space segment capacity authorized by the Department of Space (or a designated agency), a subsidiary of one, or a company with an agreement with one to run a satellite earth station gateway in India. The authorization would cover the national area, last up to 20 years and be renewable for up to 20 years. The holder may set up gateway earth stations and baseband systems and provide satellite communication network as a service (SCNaaS) to licensed or authorized operators that may offer satellite-based services, but may not provide telecommunication services directly to users. It may use spectrum assigned to it, or spectrum held by a partnering operator for that partner only.

Spectrum would be assigned administratively: FSS spectrum for feeder links, and FSS or MSS spectrum for user links, for up to five years, extendable by up to two. TRAI names C, Ku, Ka and Q/V bands for FSS on GSO satellites, Ku, Ka and Q/V bands for NGSO satellites, and L and S bands for MSS user links. It asks the Government to grant spectrum within 30 days of an application, where any needed clearances are in place. Roll-out obligations would require an operational feeder link within 12 months and a user link within 6 months of assignment, and gateways within 12 months of permission. All traffic of partner operators' user terminals in India must pass through a gateway in India, with no routing or mirroring abroad.

TRAI also recommends direct-to-device (D2D) satellite service. MSS-based D2D using standards such as 3GPP NTN should be allowed. D2D using IMT spectrum should be allowed now on a non-interference, non-protection basis, without waiting for WRC-27, in the 600, 700, 800, 900, 1800 and 2100 MHz bands, where access providers together holding the same channel in all 22 licensed service areas agree. The access provider pays no extra spectrum charge for that use.

On money, TRAI recommends an authorization fee of 8% of adjusted gross revenue (AGR) with no minimum, an entry fee of Rs 37,50,000 charged only at grant, an application processing fee of Rs 10,000, an initial bank guarantee of Rs 45,00,000, and minimum equity and net worth of Rs 60 lakh each. Spectrum charges would be AGR-based, at the same rate as satellite-based

commercial communication services, with an annual minimum spectrum charge of Rs 3,500 per MHz. Operators buying SCNaaS could deduct those charges from their own revenue when computing AGR.

Issued by	Telecom Regulatory Authority of India
Document	Recommendations on the Framework for Satellite Communication Network Provider Authorisation, and Assignment of Spectrum to Satellite Communication Network Providers
Dated	November 5, 2026
Sent to	Secretary, Department of Telecommunications, letter No. R-1/7/(2)/2026-NSL-II, November 5, 2026
Status	Recommendations to the Central Government
Proposed authorization	Satellite communication network provider authorisation, under section 3(1)(b) of the Telecommunications Act, 2023
Area and term	National area; up to 20 years, renewable for up to 20 years
Scope	Gateways, baseband and satellite communication network as a service to eligible operators; no direct service to users
Spectrum	Administrative assignment of FSS (feeder and user links) and MSS (user links), up to five years plus up to two
Roll-out	Feeder link within 12 months, user link within 6 months of assignment; gateways within 12 months of permission
Direct-to-device	MSS-based and IMT-based D2D allowed; IMT-based on a non-interference, non-protection basis before WRC-27
Authorization fee	8% of AGR, no minimum
Entry fee	Rs 37,50,000, at grant only
Minimum spectrum charge	Rs 3,500 per MHz a year
Consultation	Paper of April 8, 2026; 31 comments, 12 counter-comments; open house July 2, 2026

Entry conditions and charges recommended (paras 4.28 to 4.33)

Item	Recommended
Authorization fee	8% of Adjusted Gross Revenue; no minimum
Entry fee	Rs 37,50,000, at grant and not at renewal

Application processing fee	Rs 10,000
Initial bank guarantee	Rs 45,00,000
Minimum equity	Rs 60 lakh
Minimum net worth	Rs 60 lakh
Spectrum charges	AGR-based, same rate and framework as satellite-based commercial communication services
Minimum spectrum charge	Rs 3,500 per MHz a year, paid in advance

The recommendations (PDF, 5.7 MB)

Source: TRAI's own copy.

Checked against the official copy on November 12, 2026.

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Read online: indusdesk.com/trai/insights/trai-recommends-new-satellite-network-provider-authorization/