



JSA Prism Regulatory (Communications)

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TRAI Recommendations on 'Auction of Spectrum in Frequency Bands Identified for IMT/5G'

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India ("TRAI") released its recommendations on '*Auction of Spectrum in Frequency Bands Identified for IMT / 5G*' dated April 11, 2022 ("**Recommendations**"). The Recommendations have been issued in response to the request from the Department of Telecommunications ("**DoT**"), dated September 13, 2021, to furnish recommendations on several aspects of the 5G spectrum auction such as the applicable reserve price, band plan, block size, quantum of spectrum to be auctioned, competitive / transparent method of allocation, and the quantum of spectrum / bands, if any, to be earmarked for private captive / isolated 5G networks.

Subsequently, on November 30, 2021, TRAI issued a consultation paper on '*Auction of Spectrum in Frequency Bands Identified For IMT/5G*' seeking inputs from the stakeholders. Based on the comments/inputs received from the stakeholders, TRAI has finalized its recommendations. The key highlights of the Recommendations are below:

- The spectrums available in existing bands 700 MHz, 800 MHz, 900 MHz, 1800 MHz, 2100 MHz, 2300 MHz, 2500 MHz and new spectrum bands 600 MHz, 3300-3670 MHz and 24.25-28.5 GHz, are to be auctioned.
- DoT to come out with a plan for reframing 526-582 MHz band to be utilized for international mobile telecommunications ("**IMT**") deployments
- DoT to carry out harmonization exercise in 800 MHz, 900 MHz and 1800 MHz bands immediately after conducting the auction so that frequencies assigned to the Telecom Service Providers ("**TSPs**") are in a contiguous manner.
- The reserve price for various spectrum bands for 20 years has been recommended. The reserve price of spectrum allocation in case of 30 years is to be equal to 1.5 times the reserve price of spectrum allocation for 20 years for the respective band.
- For the long-term growth and sustainability of the telecom sector, infusing liquidity and encouraging investment, the TSPs are to be given easy payment options including part payment with flexibility of moratorium.
- For deployment of 5G network in 3300-3670 MHz and 24.25-28.5 GHz bands, easy network deployment-based roll-out conditions have been recommended.
- To facilitate the new entrants, in respect of roll out obligations for 700 MHz, 800 MHz, 900 MHz and 1800 MHz bands, the time period of 1 year for meeting the minimum roll out obligations for metros license service areas ("**LSAs**") is to be enhanced to 2 years.
- Rationalisation of spectrum caps have been recommended.
- For ease of doing business, easy and transparent spectrum surrender guidelines with a spectrum surrender fee of INR 1 lakh per spectrum band per LSA has been recommended.

- DoT should prescribe the exclusion zone requirement for co-existence of for IMT as well as Satellite Earth Station Gateway (Earth to space) on coexistence basis and the frequency range 27.5-28.5 GHz should be used.
- Additional bands which have already been identified by the International Telecommunication Union for IMT, and additional bands under consideration in 'World Radiocommunication Conference- 2023' for IMT identification, be explored for possibility to make these bands available for IMT services at the earliest. Further, the DoT to come out with a spectrum roadmap for opening up of new bands for IMT to meet the future demand.
- For uptake of 5G use cases in different verticals, a 5G-dedicated Inter Ministerial Working Group, ("INWG") under the Chairmanship of Member (Technology), DoT to be formed. The INWG should comprise of officers from the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Department of Space, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Education, Department of Science & Technology, Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) and Niti Ayog.
- Telecom Innovation Centres to be formulated in alliance with different academic institutions and ministries, specialized for development of innovative solutions for 5G use cases and applications in different verticals / sectors.

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