

TRAI RELEASES CONSULTATION PAPER ON IN-FLIGHT WI-FI AND CALLS

Telecom Regulatory Authority of India has released [a consultation paper](#) (Consultation Paper No. 14/2017) on in-flight Wi-Fi and calling, seeking views from citizens about whether or not in-flight connectivity should be allowed in India, and the government licensing framework for this. Answers may be sent to Syed Tausfic Abbas, Advisor (Networks, Spectrum and Licensing) at TRAI, at advmn@traigov.in by October 27th 2017, and counter comments by 3rd November 2017.

In the said consultation paper, TRAI is asking the following:

- Whether Internet or calling should be allowed on Indian flights, or both.
- Should international airlines flying over multiple jurisdictions be allowed to provide in-flight connectivity over Indian airspace?
- What restrictions and regulations should be applicable to in-flight connectivity providers?
- Should the standards for offering these services be the same as global standards? How do you ensure that in-flight connectivity doesn't interfere with terrestrial connectivity? Should it be technology neutral, or restricted to the same frequency bands as in the EU? Should it only be allowed via INSAT?
- Should connectivity be in-flight only or can it be gate-to-gate?
- Should any Unified License holder (Category A) be allowed to provide In-Flight connectivity, or should there be a separate category of license?
- Can an In-flight connectivity provider tie-up with an existing licensee with authorization provide services on airlines registered in India? Should this require a separate permission?
- How should IFC providers be charged in case of foreign registered airlines and Indian registered airlines?

The TRAI has stated in the consultation paper that it has already decided that security agencies should be able to monitor traffic to and from user terminal in Indian airspace. It has placed the following four options for deciding how interception may be possible, and you have to pick one:

- a. The use of Indian Satellite System while travelling over Indian airspace can be mandated, but there are two challenges here: firstly that the domestic satellite capacity may be limited, and secondly, foreign airlines may not switch to the Indian Satellite System
- b. Permit the use of Indian or foreign satellites through the department of space. Under this, "airborne IFC equipment should get connected to Ground Earth Stations located in India."
- c. Traffic to and from user terminals in Indian airspace may be sent to a node owned and operated by an Indian entity to address the requirement of lawful interception directly or in mirror mode.
- d. Not put any such restriction on international flights.