TRAI releases “The Telecommunication Interconnection (Port Charges) (Third Amendment) Regulations, 2026”

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The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) today released **“The Telecommunication Interconnection (Port Charges) (Third Amendment) Regulations, 2026”**. These amendments introduce a framework for port charges for IP-based interconnection, supplementing the existing provisions applicable to ports for E1/TDM-based interconnection. These regulations will take effect from 1st January 2027.

Interconnection in telecommunications refers to the technical, operational, and commercial arrangements that connect two or more telecom networks, allowing telecommunications traffic to flow between them and enabling users of different service providers to communicate seamlessly. Section 11(1)(b) of the TRAI Act, 1997, *inter alia*, empowers TRAI to prescribe the terms and conditions of interconnection between service providers, and to ensure technical compatibility and effective interconnection between different service providers.

The Telecommunication Interconnection (Port Charges) Regulation, 2001 prescribes the charges payable by an interconnection seeker to an interconnection provider for terminating interconnection links at its point of interconnection. The extant regulations were based on legacy E1/TDM-based port technologies, and the charges prescribed therein were last revised in 2012.

To ensure that the existing regulatory framework governing interconnection matters remains relevant, transparent, and conducive to efficient interconnection between service providers, TRAI initiated a review of the regulatory framework through a Pre-Consultation Paper on the “Review of the existing TRAI Regulations on Interconnection matters”, dated 03.04.2025. Through this Pre-Consultation Paper, stakeholders’ comments were sought, *inter alia*, to review the Telecommunication Interconnection (Port Charges) Regulation, 2001.

Subsequently, a Consultation Paper on the “Review of the existing TRAI Regulations on Interconnection matters”, providing the background information and taking into account the stakeholders’ comments received during the pre-consultation process, was issued on

10.11.2025. Through the Consultation Paper, stakeholders' comments were sought, *inter alia*, to review the Telecommunication Interconnection (Port Charges) Regulation, 2001. After extension, the last dates for furnishing written comments and counter-comments were 15.12.2025 and 29.12.2025, respectively.

In response to the issues raised in the Consultation Paper, seventeen stakeholders submitted their comments, while nine stakeholders submitted counter-comments. As part of the consultation process, an Open House Discussion (OHD) on the Consultation Paper was held on 28.01.2026. Based on the comments received from stakeholders during the consultation process, and its own analysis, TRAI has finalised the Telecommunication Interconnection (Port Charges) (Third Amendment) Regulations, 2026.

The salient points of the amendment regulations are given below:

1. Recognition of IP ports: The definition of "Port" has been revised to include both legacy E1 ports (2.048 Mbps) and IP ports, with bandwidth expressed in Mbps or Gbps.
2. Ceiling on annual IP-port charges: Annual ceilings on IP-port charges have been prescribed at ₹5.6 lakh per 1 Gbps IP port and ₹42.3 lakh per 10 Gbps IP port.
3. Flexibility in interconnection arrangements: Interconnection providers and seekers may mutually agree to charges below the prescribed ceilings. They may also mutually agree to IP-port capacities other than 1 Gbps and 10 Gbps, with charges determined transparently using the same methodology as for 1 Gbps and 10 Gbps ports.
4. Uniformity across services: IP-port charges apply uniformly across fixed-line, mobile, national long-distance and international long-distance services. The charges prescribed earlier shall continue to apply only to E1 ports.
5. Graded framework for financial disincentives: For effective implementation of the regulations, a graded financial disincentive framework with a ceiling of ₹15 lakh per Service Area for each instance of contravention has been prescribed for contravention of specified provisions of these regulations.

The amendment regulations align the regulatory provisions with technological advancements and sectoral developments. They are expected to strengthen the interconnection framework and facilitate seamless communication across telecom networks. The regulatory framework aims to provide greater regulatory certainty to service providers while upholding the principles of effective interconnection, transparency, non-discrimination, and fair competition.

The full text of "The Telecommunication Interconnection (Port Charges) (Third Amendment) Regulations, 2026", along with the Explanatory Memorandum, is available on TRAI's website www.trai.gov.in.

For any clarification/ information, Shri Sameer Gupta, Advisor (Networks, Spectrum & Licensing-I), TRAI may be contacted at email ID: adv-nsl1@trai.gov.in or telephone number +91-11-20907752.

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