Ministry of Communications

TRAI releases Recommendations on 'Authorisation Framework for Application-based Linear Television Distribution (ALTD) Services'

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The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has today released Recommendations on 'Authorisation Framework for Application-based Linear Television Distribution (ALTD) Services'.

In view of the evolving broadcasting landscape, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB) has sent a reference to TRAI, under Section 11(1)(a) of the TRAI Act 1997, on 15th December 2025, to examine and recommend a regulatory framework for Free Ad-Supported Streaming Television (FAST) Services ensuring parity, content accountability and consumer protection.

TRAI has examined such services and observed that several applications aggregate and distribute scheduled linear TV channels to consumers, either as pre-installed applications on TV sets and other devices; or as downloadable mobile/smart TV applications; or as web-based applications accessible through web browsers. Considering such wider scope of service provisioning through connected TVs, the services have been broadly referred to as 'Application-based Linear Television Distribution (ALTD) Services' including FAST Services.

Accordingly, the Authority on 6th April 2026, had issued a Consultation Paper titled 'Formulation of a Regulatory Framework for Application-based Linear Television Distribution (ALTD) Services (Including Free Ad-Supported Streaming Television (FAST) Services)' and solicited comments from stakeholders. In response, 207 comments and 11 counter-comments were received and uploaded on TRAI's website. As part of the consultation process, an Open House Discussion (OHD) was held on 10th June 2026, providing stakeholders an opportunity to present their views on the issues under consultation.

Based on the comments and counter-comments received from stakeholders, inputs gathered during the OHD, and its own analysis, the Authority has finalised its Recommendations on the 'Authorisation Framework for Application-based Linear Television Distribution (ALTD) Services'. The recommendations seek to establish a light-touch and future-ready policy framework for Internet-based distribution of linear television channels, while promoting innovation, ease of doing business, consumer

protection and regulatory certainty. These recommendations are built upon and complement the broader authorisation framework recommended by the Authority in its recommendations on 'Framework for Service Authorisations for provision of Broadcasting Services under the Telecommunications Act, 2023' issued on 21st February 2025.

Since 'ALTD Service' aggregates and distributes linear television channels over public Internet or other IP-based networks and provides consumers with a television viewing experience akin to conventional television distribution platforms across a variety of Internet-enabled devices, the Authority has recommended that 'ALTD Service' be introduced as a distinct sub-category under 'Television Channel Distribution Services' within the broadcasting authorisation framework under Section 3(1)(a) of the Telecommunications Act, 2023. The recommendations further prescribe an authorisation framework, specifying the terms and conditions governing both the grant of authorisation and the provisioning of 'ALTD Service'. The recommendations also provide obligations for key stakeholders like Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs), Operating System (OS) providers and the broadcasters/content owners of the TV channels; measures for consumer protection; and inclusion of ALTD viewership in the television audience measurement framework, thereby covering all aspects of a linear television distribution services.

The salient points of the Recommendations are given below:

- Introduction of 'ALTD Service' under Section 3(1)(a) of the Telecommunications Act, 2023.
- 'ALTD Service' is defined as aggregation of linear television channels that have been approved by the Central Government, including 'Internet-native linear television channels' (with approved name and logo), along with ALTD application provider's own platform service channels, and its distribution to the users, with or without value-added services including on-demand audio-visual content, over public Internet or other IP-based networks through applications, websites or any other similar consumer interface, accessed through Internet-enabled devices.
- Its scope covers development, deployment and management of such applications for users in India and excludes broadcaster-owned platforms distributing only their own channels or the channels of subsidiary/holding company; and live streams on social media intermediaries.
- The terms and conditions governing 'ALTD Service' authorisation should be notified as Rules under Section 56 of the Telecommunications Act, 2023, and the authorisation, channel registration and reporting processes should be enabled through an online portal.
- The Application Provider has been recommended as the primary entity responsible for obtaining authorisation for providing 'ALTD Service' and for complying with the applicable authorisation framework.

- A light-touch authorisation framework has been recommended, with a national service area, an initial validity of 20 years renewable for successive periods of 10 years, an application processing fees of ₹10,000 and a one-time entry fee of ₹1 lakh, with no authorisation fee, bank guarantee or security deposit.
- The detailed terms and conditions of grant of authorisation; and common and specific terms and conditions applicable to 'ALTD Service' have been recommended in alignment with TRAI's Recommendations on the authorisation framework for broadcasting services, with suitable modifications, to reflect the application-based and infrastructure-light nature of 'ALTD Service'.
- MIB should maintain a 'Master ALTD app repository'. The OEMs (including television manufacturers) and the OS providers should ensure that only authorised ALTD applications are made available through their devices and application stores. They will be required to submit an annual compliance report to MIB in prescribed format.
- In addition to existing permitted/authorised television channels, a framework has been recommended for simple registration of 'Internet-native linear television channels'.
- Authorised entity of 'ALTD Service' should distribute only the television channels holding valid permission/authorisation or registration from the Central Government.
- The Application Provider should serve as the primary point of contact for consumer complaints and grievance redressal relating to 'ALTD Service'.
- Viewership of television channels distributed through ALTD applications should be integrated into the television audience measurement framework, and authorised ALTD application providers should be permitted to publish anonymised periodic viewership data in accordance with the TV Ratings Policy, 2026.

The recommendations aim to facilitate orderly growth of Internet-based linear television distribution services by providing an enabling authorisation framework.

The Recommendations have been placed on the TRAI's website (www.trai.gov.in). For any clarification/information, Dr. Deepali Sharma, Advisor (Broadcasting & Cable Services), TRAI, may be contacted at Telephone Number +91-11-20907774.

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