

With the aim of working towards the implementation of the One Nation-Free Roaming regime, as mandated in the National Telecom Policy, 2012, the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) initiated the process of reviewing national roaming tariffs earlier this year. TRAI has, however, stated that mandating a fully free roaming regime is currently impractical.

The regulator has reduced the existing ceiling on national roaming calls and text messages. Further, it has provided operators the flexibility to customise tariff packages through special tariff and combo vouchers for subscribers availing of national roaming services. These changes will be effective from July 1, 2013 onwards.

In 2007, TRAI had fixed the ceiling tariffs for calls made while roaming within the country at Re 1.40 per minute for outgoing local calls and Rs 2.40 per minute for outgoing STD calls. These tariffs have been reduced to Re 1 per minute and Re 1.50 per minute respectively. Further, the price of incoming calls while on roaming has been reduced to Re 0.75 per minute from Rs 1.75 per minute earlier.

Tariffs for outgoing text messages while on national roaming, which were previously under forbearance, have now been capped. Local text messages are now priced at Re 1 per message while outgoing STD text messages are priced at Re 1.50 per message.

The regulator has also mandated two categories of free national roaming plans to be provided by all operators. Telecom service providers can either offer partially free roaming services or completely free roaming services (in lieu of paying fixed charges).

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