

Proliferation of Broadband through Public Wi-Fi (PM-WANI)

Present Status and challenges

As on 31.10.2023 - there are 150739 PM WANI Hotspots in the country.

The main issue in proliferation of PM WANI hotspots is high back haul Internet bandwidth charges and financial viability.

Challenges

- PDOAs and PDOs in business have not been able to break-even till now mainly because of high cost of backhaul connectivity.

S.NO.	Name of ISP	Bandwidth	Fixed Charges	Annual Recurring charges
1.	Airtel	100 Mbps	Rs. 20000	Rs. 7,95,000
2.	RJIL	100 Mbps	Rs. 15000	Rs. 5,10,000
3.	RailTel	100 Mbps	NA	Rs. 7,999 (30days)
4.	BSNL	100 Mbps	NA	Rs. 4,00,000

- Greater 4G/5G Mobile coverage will make PM-WANI even less financially viable.

Present Status and challenges

- Ref. sent to TRAI on 4.11.22 for overall review including financial viability of PM WANI framework.
- TRAI reply dated 02.06.23
- Proposal to amend PM WANI Guidelines put up.
- **TRAI in its aforesaid reply has also intimated that authority is in process of reviewing the ceiling tariffs prescribed for internet leased circuits.**

Way Forward

➤ **PM-WANI can be promoted in following use cases:**

- It should be mandated for TSPs / ISPs to arrange for PM WANI hotspots / follow 2009 guidelines while providing backhaul at Study Centres / Hotels, etc.
- It should be impressed upon TRAI to expedite review of backhaul charges for PDO as committed by them on 02.06.2023.
- PM WANI should be promoted in places of high congestion where mobile signal is not sufficient to meet the requirement like Ganga Arti at Har ki Pauri.

Proposed Modifications in functions of PDO as under:

Present Clause:

“As per the WANI framework, PDOs will have commercial agreement with licensed Telecom Service Providers (TSP) or Internet Service Providers (ISP) for internet connectivity and with PDOA for Aggregation, Authorization, Accounting, and other related functions.”

Proposed Clause:

“As per the WANI framework, PDOs will avail internet connectivity from licensed Telecom Service Providers (TSP) or Internet Service Providers (ISP) and will have an agreement with PDOA for Aggregation, Authorization, Accounting, and other related functions. While availing Internet Connectivity, PDOs need to give prior intimation to ISP / TSP that they will be using it for PM WANI Hot spot.”

Proposed Modifications in functions of PDO as under:

New Clauses proposed

“5. A PDO is allowed to take internet connectivity at a single location to connect 100 access points. PDO can network up to 100 Access Points at a place/area using wireline or wireless links in unlicensed spectrum to create a single Wi-Fi hotspot.”

“6. In an Access Point, it is possible to configure SSIDs, one for private use and another for public use, subject to the prescribed guidelines. PDOs could use the existing Access Points working at homes or enterprises for establishing the public Wi-Fi hotspots by configuring 2nd SSID and integrating the same with the captive portal of registered PDOA, subject to prior intimation to ISP / TSP.”

“7. PDOs are allowed to perform the function of Mobile Data Offload (MDO).”

Proposed Modifications in Functions of PDOA:

Clause 6 of in the Annexure-B of the WANI framework and guidelines may be modified by adding the words "**either directly or via centralized platforms owned by PDOA(s)**" in the existing Clause as follows: It will be permissible for any two PDOAs to enter into a roaming agreement for permitting each other's subscribers to access Internet from any Wi-Fi Access Points associated with them, **either directly or via centralized platforms owned by PDOA(s)**.

New Clause proposed in Functions of PDOA

"8. PDOA(s) can push advertisements to the subscribers of PM-WANI subject to consent of subscriber and TRAI guidelines either directly or via centralized platforms owned by them."

New Clause proposed in Functions of App Provider

"5. App Provider(s) can push advertisements to the mobile users registering for PM-WANI subject to their consent and TRAI guidelines."

Way Forward

- **Become member of WBA and participate in their activities to deploy software / strategies on lines of UK and France etc.**
- **Matter taken up with NBM** - ROW permissions to Public Data Offices (PDOs) may be granted on same lines as that to TSP / ISP Licensees for using electrical/ telephone poles to host Wi-Fi Access Points.
- **Matter taken up with USOF** - Public Data Office Aggregators (PDOAs) may be made eligible to participate in the USOF schemes for proliferation of public Wi-Fi Access Points in rural areas.

Thank You