TRAI Telecommunication Regulations, 2026

Prelims: *Current events of national and international importance | Governance*

Why in News?

Recently, TRAI issued the Telecommunication (Broadcasting and Cable) Services Interconnection (Addressable Systems) (Seventh Amendment) Regulations, 2026.

- **Aim –** To enhance credibility, accountability and efficiency of the audit process in broadcasting and cable services.
- **Amendment to –** Telecommunication (Broadcasting and Cable) Services Interconnection (Addressable Systems) Regulations, 2017.
- **Under – *Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI).***
- **Objectives –**
  - Improve audit-related provisions.
  - Reduce repetitive audits of Distribution Platform Operators (DPOs).
  - Incorporate infrastructure sharing in the audit framework.
  - Strengthen the accountability and credibility of auditors.
- **Key Features –**

Aspects	Provisions
Audit Timeline	• Annual audit ***to be conducted on a financial year basis*** and audit report to be submitted by 30th September every year.
Audit Transparency	• Broadcasters allowed to depute representatives during audits.
Clarification Mechanism	• Broadcasters can seek clarifications on discrepancies through DPO. • Auditors must respond within a time limit.
Re-Audit Provision	• If unsatisfied, the broadcaster may conduct an audit at its own cost after TRAI approval.

Non-submission of Audit Report	• If the distributor fails to submit the report by 30th September, the broadcaster can cause an audit of the distributor.
Small Distributors	• Annual audit is ***optional for DPOs with less than 30,000 subscribers.*** • Here, the broadcasters may audit at their own cost.
Infrastructure Sharing	• Separate SMS and CAS/DRM instances are required for each distributor for entity-wise reconciliation.
Logo & Watermarking	• Infrastructure provider to insert network logo watermark at encoder end for all pay channels. • Seeker to provide logo via Set-Top Box (STB)/middleware; preferably, only two logos visible.
Audit Framework	• Revised Audit Manual to be issued in line with amended regulations.

- **Significance – Credibility –** Enhances credibility and accountability of the audit process by reducing repetitive and overlapping audits.
- **Ease of doing business –** *Lowers compliance costs for DPOs and broadcasters* by promoting ease of doing business in the broadcasting sector.
- **Timeliness** – Ensures time-bound completion of audits without compromising stakeholder trust.

Quick Facts

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI)
• It is a *statutory body established by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India Act, 1997.* • **Aim –** To regulate telecom services, including fixation/revision of tariffs for telecom services which were earlier vested in the Central Government. • The TRAI Act was amended in 2000 to establish the *Telecommunications Dispute Settlement and Appellate Tribunal (TDSAT).* • **TDSAT** – Adjudicates any dispute between, - A licensor and a licensee, - Two or more service providers, - A service provider and a group of consumers, - And hears and disposes of appeals against any direction, decision or order of TRAI.

References

PIB | TRAI Telecommunication Regulations, 2026



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