

## **BIF lauds TRAI Directions on TCCPR 2018 as a technology solution to reduce spamming of telecom users**

*“A great example and direction for building a data-driven economy” –  
TV Ramachandran, President, Broadband India Forum*

**23<sup>rd</sup> June 2020, New Delhi:** Broadband India Forum (BIF), the leading independent Think-Tank and Policy Forum for Digital Communications in the country, lauded the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) for coming out with directions on the ‘Telecom Commercial Communications Customer Preference Regulations, 2018’ (TCCPR, 2018) on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2020, which mandates Telcos to deploy blockchain, or digital ledger technology (DLT) to ensure telemarketing messages are sent only to interested mobile users from registered entities; thereby helping address the spamming issue in India. BIF has been a strong advocate of this technology for the past one and a half years, when the blockchain technology became a little well known, around September 2018. Going by the severe issue of unwanted, high frequency, and often misleading commercial communications received by the Indian citizens on a regular basis, this measure could provide a practical and detailed mechanism to help curb the menace to a considerable extent.

The regulations are also commendable owing to the following reasons:

- It focuses on the single problem of commercial communication and addresses it in a holistic manner. There is clarity for all involved parties on what needs to be done
- It is simple to understand, detailed on execution, and provides technological and process guidelines on implementation, including technologies like blockchain, to keep the solution future-proof, scalable and cost-effective
- It protects citizens’ rights while maintaining business interests of trade and industry
- Allows for the ecosystem providers to define their ‘code of practices’ and self-regulate on the basis of ‘assumed compliance’
- The key concept of fairness of ‘consent’ is well-addressed

**Mr. TV Ramachandran, President, Broadband India Forum,** thus commented, *“This is a progressive move for the sector, and we are positive that this will help improve consumer protection as well as boost competition. By controlling and restricting the number of unwanted and unwarranted calls & messages (spam), it could well assist in making available other progressive digital information, facilities and utilities for the people that they genuinely need. This can be delivered using a framework for regulation of unsolicited commercial communications (UCC) in a manner which is balanced and facilitates other types of messaging including transactional and service messages which are a key part of consumer protection. This is a great example and direction for building a data-driven economy.”*

Despite the availability of processes like DND (Do Not Disturb, also known as the National Do Not Call Registry, or NDNC) which have had lakhs of users signed up, it has not provided respite as innumerable hapless consumers continue to get bombarded by unsolicited calls/messages on a daily basis. So much so that these calls have almost degenerated from nuisance to harassment. Unsolicited Commercial Communications (UCC), or pesky unwanted calls or SMS, in common parlance, have been plaguing Indian mobile users for many years now.

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**About Broadband India Forum**

Broadband India Forum (BIF) functions as a policy forum and think-tank that works for the development & enhancement of the entire broadband ecosystem in a holistic, technology-neutral and service-neutral manner. BIF has established itself as a thought leader and a credible and effective voice, to help propel the nation to achieve the country's ambitious vision of creating a Digital India. To achieve this, BIF works to promote the rapid development of policies, so as to facilitate affordable and high-speed ubiquitous broadband throughout the country.

Formed in October 2015, BIF is a dedicated forum with participation from all stakeholders, including Technology Providers, Telecom Operators, Internet Service Providers, Value-Added Service Providers, Satellite Operators and service providers, MSOs, startups and professional entities, as well as seasoned Industry professionals who are familiar with different technologies, operations, regulations and policies.

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