

# New Draft Rules for Miscellaneous Telecommunication Services – Old Wine in New Bottle?

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The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has issued the Draft Telecommunication (Authorisation for Provision of Miscellaneous Telecommunication Services) Rules, 2025 (Draft Rules) under the Telecommunications Act, 2023 for public consultation till 8 October 2025. The Draft Rules come in quick succession after [the Draft Telecommunication \(Authorisation for Provision of Main Telecommunication Services\) Rules, 2025](#).

The Draft Rules will apply specifically to authorisations for '*miscellaneous*' telecom services, which were earlier classified as '*auxiliary*' telecom services by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) in its recommendations. In a nutshell, this refers to services that are not delivered to the public at large and have a light-touch regulatory oversight under the present framework. While the Draft Rules retain the essence of the existing framework, we seek to explore the standout features that will impact niche service areas and dictate the regulatory fabric for times to come.

## Key takeaways

- (1) **Introduction of the 'enterprise communication' service authorisation:** The introduction of a new service authorisation catering to audio conferencing, audiotex, voicemail and cloud-based EPABX services brings a tectonic shift in the voice ecosystem for businesses. Cloud-based service providers will have to grapple with the new construct of delivering EPABX services in India, including the requirement to ensure that systems of their telecom network are located within India and pay an annual authorisation fee as a percentage of their adjusted gross revenue. In terms of the mode of connecting a user to the cloud-based EPABX, DoT has prescribed internet – which is a departure from TRAI's previous recommendations. This space will have to be closely monitored by entities classified as 'other service providers' as it may unlock the prospect of using internet for connecting to cloud-based EPABX, which has thus far been a grey area.
- (2) **New look authorisation for 'Machine-to-Machine' (M2M) services:** DoT seems to have paid heed to TRAI's recommendations and merged the existing M2M service authorisation under the Unified License (UL) framework with the guidelines for registration of M2M service providers. Streamlined compliances and removal of authorisation fee requirements will also aid in attracting participation in this segment that is brimming with endless possibilities.
- (3) **Possible take-off for Inflight and Maritime Connectivity (IFMC):** Despite being introduced in 2019, the IFMC service has been unable to reach its potential due to myriad regulatory, operational and technical challenges. With a negligible annual authorisation fee and growing demands, there may be increased investment and interest in this domain. However, this may require navigating through new security conditions.
- (4) **Simplified regime for re-sale of foreign SIMs:** As an extension of the current 'no-objection certificate' based framework for provisioning of international SIMs to travellers for foreign use, the Draft Rules bring in a simplified set of compliances and removal of penalties, to allow this rapidly growing market to prosper.

In addition to the above service authorisations, there are also authorisations for public mobile radio trunking service (PMRTS), aeronautical data communication services and Prime Minister's broadband through public wi-fi hotspot scheme.

Following a similar approach from the draft rules for 'main telecommunication services', all authorisation holders will need to comply with general conditions and service-specific requirements.

## Conclusion

The Draft Rules seek to re-package and organise niche services in a palatable form for attracting investor interest. While the majority of the provisions seem to be in sync with the current licensing and regulatory requirements, it will have to be seen how the distinctive elements are adopted by the industry in due course. The consultation window will provide a useful opportunity to raise concerns, so that the final form of the rules can be implemented in a seamless fashion.

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