

Cabinet approves setting up of Public Wi-Fi Networks by Public Data Office Aggregators to provide public Wi-Fi service through Public Data Offices without levy of any License Fee

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The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi has given its approval for the proposal of DoT for setting up of Public Wi-Fi Networks by Public Data Office Aggregators (PDOAs) to provide public Wi-Fi service through Public Data Offices (PDOs) spread across length and breadth of the country to accelerate proliferation of Broadband Internet services through Public Wi-Fi network in the country. There shall be no license fee for providing Broadband Internet through these public Wi-Fi networks.

The proposal will promote the growth of Public Wi-Fi Networks in the country and, in turn, will help in proliferation of Broadband Internet, enhancement of income and employment and empowerment of people.

Salient Features:

This Public Wi-Fi Access Network Interface will be known as PM-WANI. PM-WANI ecosystem will be operated by different players as described herein under:

- Public Data Office (PDO): It will establish, maintain, and operate only WANI compliant Wi-Fi Access Points and deliver broadband services to subscribers.
- Public Data Office Aggregator (PDOA): It will be an aggregator of PDOs and perform the functions relating to Authorization and Accounting.
- App Provider: It will develop an App to register users and discover WANI compliant Wi-Fi hotspots in the nearby area and display the same within the App for accessing the internet service.
- Central Registry: It will maintain the details of App Providers, PDOAs, and PDOs. To begin with, the Central Registry will be maintained by C-DoT.

Objectives

While no registration would be required for PDOs, PDOAs and App Providers will get

themselves registered with DoT through online registration portal (SARALSANCHAR; <https://saralsanchar.gov.in>) of DoT, without paying any registration fee. Registration shall be granted within 7 days of the application.

This is expected to be more business friendly and in line with efforts for ease of doing business. COVID-19 pandemic has necessitated delivery of stable and high speed Broadband Internet (data) services to an increasingly large number of subscribers in the country including areas which do not have 4G mobile coverage. This can be achieved by deployment of Public Wi-Fi.

Further, the proliferation of public Wi-Fi will not only create employment but also enhance disposable incomes in the hands of small and medium entrepreneurs and boost the GDP of the country.

Proliferation of Broadband Services through public Wi-Fi is a step towards digital India and consequential benefit thereon.

No License Fee for providing broadband internet services using public Wi-Fi Hotspots will massively encourage its proliferation and penetration across the length and breadth of the country. Availability and use of Broadband will enhance incomes, employment, quality of life, ease of doing business etc.
