

DRAFT NATIONAL TELECOM POLICY (2025) : NATIONAL

NEWS: Seven years on, govt puts out new telecom policy draft

WHAT'S IN THE NEWS?

The Draft National Telecom Policy 2025 aims to achieve universal 4G/5G coverage, boost domestic equipment manufacturing, and foster innovation in AI, 6G, and cybersecurity. It targets ₹1 trillion annual investment, 1 million new jobs, and doubling telecom exports while ensuring green and secure digital infrastructure.

Context

- The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has circulated the **Draft National Telecom Policy (NTP), 2025** for public consultation.
- It lays out India's strategic vision for the telecom sector between **2025 and 2030**.

Key Features of Draft NTP 2025

Universal and Meaningful Connectivity

- Target of **100% 4G population coverage** and **90% 5G coverage** by 2030.
- Fiberization of telecom towers to be increased from **46% to 80%** to boost internet speed and reliability.
- Plan to **deploy 1 million public Wi-Fi hotspots** across India.
- Aim to provide **fixed-line broadband to 100 million households**.
- Promote **satellite-based internet** services, especially in **remote and inaccessible regions**.

Domestic Equipment Manufacturing

- Encourage domestic production by **incentivizing the use of indigenously made telecom equipment**.
- Aim to **replace 50% of telecom imports**, supporting companies like **Tejas Networks** and **HFCL**.

R&D and Innovation

- Target to **double the national expenditure** on telecom Research & Development.
- Support for **500 tech startups**, especially those engaged in 6G, IoT, and AI.
- Aim to capture **10% of global 6G-related Intellectual Property**.
- Promote **fund-of-funds models and blended finance** to boost telecom innovation.

Employment and Skill Development

- Policy aims to **create 1 million new jobs** in the telecom sector.
- Plan to **upskill another 1 million workers** in **emerging technologies** like AI, 5G, cybersecurity, and quantum tech.

Investment and Export Promotion

- Seek to attract **₹1 trillion annual investment** in the telecom sector.
- Intend to **double exports of telecom equipment and services**.

Network Security

- Proposal to conduct **audits on telecom equipment** to remove **non-trusted hardware**.
- Strengthen cybersecurity infrastructure and promote **quantum-secure communication systems**.

Green Telecom Initiatives

- Aim to **reduce telecom sector's carbon footprint by 30%**.
- Promote use of **renewable energy sources** and ensure **sustainable tower deployment**.

Ease of Doing Business

- Streamline regulatory mechanisms to **improve access, reduce compliance burdens, and encourage digital inclusion**.

Significance of the Policy

- Aims to transform India into a **global telecom innovation hub**, with a sharp focus on **AI, 6G, IoT, and quantum technologies**.
- Enhances infrastructure, network coverage, and ecosystem reliability, aiming for **universal, high-speed, secure digital connectivity**.
- Creates a robust, self-reliant telecom industry while improving India's global telecom ranking.

Telecommunication Sector in India

- India is the **second-largest telecom market** globally with over **1.20 billion subscribers**.
- It is also the **second-largest internet user base** in the world.
- Telecom is the **4th largest sector for FDI**, contributing **6% of India's total FDI inflow**.

Challenges Faced by the Sector

Regulatory Framework

- Frequent changes in **spectrum pricing, licensing norms**, and regulatory policies hinder business predictability and investment planning.

Infrastructure Development

- Despite progress, **rural and remote areas** still lack adequate telecom infrastructure.

Competition and Pricing

- Intense competition among telecom providers has led to **price wars**, reducing consumer costs but hurting profitability of operators.

Quality of Service

- Urban congestion and increased data usage make it difficult to maintain **consistent network performance and service quality**.

Cybersecurity Threats

- With digital expansion, **cybersecurity risks** have increased, requiring robust data protection and secure networks.

Technological Advancements

- Rolling out technologies like **5G and 6G** demands **huge capital**, technical expertise, and quick adaptability by service providers.

Way Ahead

- Telecom operators are expected to **expand 5G infrastructure** rapidly.
- Growth in **smartphone penetration and digital platforms** will drive demand for new telecom-based services.
- Cybersecurity needs to be **strengthened in parallel with tech deployment**.
- Regulatory simplification and cost-effective technology adoption are critical to telecom sector's growth.

Source: <https://www.thehindu.com/business/seven-years-on-govt-puts-out-new-telecom-policy-draft/article69850486.ece>