

WANI (Wi-Fi Access Network Interface)

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Why in news?

- TRAI recently proposed the development of the Wi-Fi Access Network (WANI) architecture, capable of delineating access services from telecommunications infrastructure.
- The Plan—The cornerstone of India's New Digital Communications Strategy (2018-2022) is a single interoperable network for the provision of internet and Wi-Fi connectivity to all Indians.
- TRAI invites companies / entity leaders in the country to contribute to the development of a country-wide interoperable WiFi network, as PDOs, throughout the world.
- A partnership model will be applied to the new pilot project called Wi-Fi Access Network Interface (WANI).
- Small businessmen and shoppers can set up Wi-Fi hotspots (or PDO), acquire bandwidth, and resell bandwidth to end-users at a low price, from multiple internet service providers (ISPs).

Features

- It is open for the public
- One-time KYC for users
- Easy to access and quick redressal of complaints
- Single click connection facility
- It has good features like favorites and so on
- It comes with good connection speeds
- Multiple users or multiple profiles can be added or used

What the WANI pilot will look to establish

- **Easy entry of small operators:** Any entity should be able to easily deploy paid WiFi access points and open it for the public use. Entrepreneurs, small shop, and companies should be able to easily register, setup and operate a PDO with the least amount of maintenance possible.
- **One-click payments and easier connectivity:** Users should be able to easily discover WANI's WiFi hotspots (differentiated SSID), perform one-click payments and connect one or more devices
- **Cheap sachet-sized packs:** WiFi usage must be sold to users for consumption in small sachets in denominations of Rs 2 to Rs 20
- **Unbundling the last mile:** Providers including PDO providers, hardware & software providers, authentication and KYC providers will unbundle their services, allowing "multiple parties in the (telecom) ecosystem to come together and enable large scale adoption" of WiFi.
- **Dismantle Monopoly:** TRAI said that WANI will try to establish a multi-provider, interoperable, collaborative model, to increase innovation, dismantle monopolies, and pass benefits to the end user.
- **Payment integration:** TRAI suggested that WANI could be directly integrated with all kinds of payments providers including wallets, credit/debit cards, net banking, and UPI.

Who can be part of the WANI pilot?

- **Public Data Office Providers:** Small shops, bakeries, eateries, café outlets, cinema halls, museums, residential builders, are examples of Public Data Offices or PDOs. These PDOs have features of Public Call Offices (PCOs) but aggregates mobile data instead of providing cheap voice calls.
- **Public Data Office Aggregators (PDOAs)** are PDOs who aggregate WiFi hotspots, bandwidth. PDOAs can also independently operate their own WiFi hotspots and

provide it to the public using either free or paid model.

- **App Providers:** Any mobile app company that can provide and manage eKYC (via mobile no. or Aadhaar) as well as digital payment providers.
- **Hotspot providers:** Any domestic or foreign company manufacturing or providing WiFi/hotspot hardware, software services. Such providers will also unbundle their service/product to make it easier for PDOs to set up WiFi hotspots.