11. आदेश, निदेश या दिशा-निर्देश जारी करने की शक्ति—केन्द्रीय सरकार इन नियमों को प्रभावी करने के प्रयोजनों के लिए ऐसे आदेश, निदेश या दिशानिर्देश जारी कर सकती है जो अधिनियम या इन नियमों से असंगत न हों।

12. डिजिटल कार्यान्वयन—केन्द्रीय सरकार अधिनियम की धारा 53 के अनुसरण में, इन नियमों के डिजिटल कार्यान्वयन के लिए एक या एक से अधिक पोर्टलों को अधिसूचित कर सकती है, जिसमें इन नियमों के अधीन विनिर्दिष्ट किए जाने वाले किसी भी प्ररूप, रीति, आदेश, निदेश या दिशानिर्देश प्रदान करना सम्मिलित है।

[फा. सं. 24-11/2024-यूबीबी]

देवेंद्र कुमार राय, संयुक्त सचिव

MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS

(Department of Telecommunications)

NOTIFICATION

New Delhi, the 21st October, 2026

G.S.R. 905(E).— Whereas a draft of the Telecommunications (Regulatory Sandbox) Rules, 2024 was published, as required under sub-section (1) of section 56 of the Telecommunications Act, 2023 (44 of 2023), in the Gazette of India, Extraordinary, Part II, section 3, sub-section (i), *vide* notification number G.S.R. 736(E), dated the 27th November, 2024, inviting objections and suggestions from all persons likely to be affected thereby, before the expiry of a period of thirty days from the date on which the copies of the Official Gazette containing the said notification were made available to the public:

And whereas copies of the said Official Gazette were made available to the public on the 28th November, 2024:

And whereas objections and suggestions received from the public in respect of the said draft rules have been duly considered by the Central Government:

Now, therefore, in exercise of the powers conferred by sub-section (1) and clause (y) of sub-section (2) of section 56 of the Telecommunications Act, 2023 (44 of 2023), the Central Government hereby makes the following rules, namely:—

1. Short title and commencement.—(1) These rules may be called the Telecommunications (Regulatory Sandbox) Rules, 2026.

(2) They shall come into force on the date of their publication in the Official Gazette.

2. Definitions.—(1) In these rules, unless the context otherwise requires,—

(a) "Act" means the Telecommunications Act, 2023 (44 of 2023);

(b) "applicant" means an authorised entity or company, society or partnership firm or a statutory body, duly incorporated, registered or constituted under any law for the time being in force in India, or an Indian national, or a research and development institution recognised by the Department of Science and Technology, Ministry of Science and Technology, Government of India, who has submitted a proposal under rule 4;

(c) "approved applicant" means an applicant approved by the Central Government or a person authorised by the Central Government in this behalf for the purposes of creation, operation and management of a regulatory sandbox;

(d) "participant" means a participant in a regulatory sandbox that satisfies the eligibility criteria specified pursuant to rule 5;

(e) "portal" means portal as referred to in rule 12;

(f) "test users" mean the limited set of users who voluntarily participate in a regulatory sandbox;

(g) "validity period" means the duration of the regulatory sandbox specified under sub-rule (2) of rule 5.

(2) Words and expressions used in these rules and not defined herein but defined in the Act or the rules made thereunder shall have the meanings respectively assigned to them in the Act or the said rules.

3. Application.—These rules provide for creation of one or more regulatory sandboxes and the terms and conditions applicable in respect thereof for the purposes of facilitating innovation and technological development in telecommunication.

4. Creation of regulatory sandbox.—(1) The Central Government may, by order, create and specify a regulatory sandbox on the portal,—

(a) *suo motu*, after assessing the need for the same; or

(b) upon acceptance under sub-rule (4) of a proposal submitted by an applicant under sub-rule (2) at his own initiative or in response to a request for proposals from the Central Government.

(2) An applicant may submit a proposal for a regulatory sandbox under clause (b) of sub-rule (1) in such form and manner and accompanied by such documents as specified on the portal, along with—

(a) copies of reports of the limited testing undertaken by the applicant in offline or laboratory environment in respect of the subject matter of the application;

(b) copies of reports of any other testing, including in experimental isolated networks;

(c) any other information or documents as may be specified by the Central Government;

(d) any exemptions from the requirements of authorisation or assignment or any other provision under the Act or rules made thereunder, or under the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India Act, 1997 (24 of 1997), as may be required for the purposes of such sandbox; and

(e) non-refundable processing fees of ten thousand rupees.

(3) On receipt of a proposal under sub-rule (2), the Central Government may make such inquiry as it deems fit, regarding the eligibility of such proposal and, for this purpose, require the applicant to furnish such information as it may call for.

(4) The Central Government may, pursuant to the inquiry as to eligibility of the proposal received under sub-rule (2), either accept or reject such proposal.

5. Terms and conditions of regulatory sandbox.—(1) For any regulatory sandbox created under rule 4, the Central Government may specify on the portal one or more of the following terms and conditions, namely:—

(a) The scope and objective of the regulatory sandbox;

(b) The name and details of one or more approved applicants responsible for operation and management of the regulatory sandbox and the obligations of such approved applicants;

(c) The eligibility criteria for participants in such regulatory sandbox and the obligations of such participants;

(d) The details of telecommunication services or telecommunication network or equipment or processes or technologies or products or business models that may be tested in such regulatory sandbox;

(e) The exemptions granted from the requirements of authorisation or assignment or any other provisions under the Act or the rules made thereunder, or under the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India Act, 1997 (24 of 1997) or the regulations made thereunder for the validity period of the regulatory sandbox:

Provided that any exemption from the applicability of any provisions of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India Act, 1997 (24 of 1997) shall be specified after prior consultation with the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India;

(f) The risk analysis and management required to ensure mitigation of any potential risks;

(g) The reporting requirements including those relating to the methodology of testing and steps to be taken to ensure compliance with the terms and conditions of the regulatory sandbox;

(h) The validity period of the regulatory sandbox;

(i) The details of the exit strategy for exiting the regulatory sandbox; and

(j) The details of any other matter that in the opinion of the Central Government is relevant and connected with or related to the participation in such regulatory sandbox.

(2) The validity period of a regulatory sandbox shall not exceed twenty-four months:

Provided that the Central Government may, if it considers necessary, extend the validity period for a further period not exceeding twelve months at a time, upon receipt of a request for extension from an approved applicant in such form and manner as specified on the portal, at least thirty days prior to the expiry of such validity period, accompanied by justification and purposes of such extension, or upon receipt of a continuation thereof under rule 8.

6. Obligations of approved applicant.—(1) Every approved applicant shall comply with the terms and conditions of a regulatory sandbox specified under rule 5 for undertaking testing by itself or through other participants, in the relevant regulatory sandbox.

(2) Without prejudice to the generality of sub-rule (1), every approved applicant shall—

(a) establish mechanisms for—

(i) onboarding of participants based on eligibility criteria;

(ii) adherence by each participant to the terms and conditions of the regulatory sandbox;

(iii) specifying the test parameters, control boundaries, testing sites and manner of maintenance of records of the test results by each participant; and

(iv) monitoring and evaluating the testing undertaken by participants within the specifications referred to in sub-clause (iii);

(b) ensure adherence, by itself and by every participant, with laws relating to data protection and security, and any other applicable law for the time being in force, when onboarding test users for testing within such regulatory sandbox;

(c) provide to the Central Government information of the participants in a regulatory sandbox as well as their exit from such sandbox;

(d) (i) inform such test users the purpose and scope of testing being undertaken;

(ii) obtain prior consent of the test users for being part of the test environment of the regulatory sandbox; and

(iii) ensure that test users are not charged for their participation in the test environment,

where the regulatory sandbox involves enrolment of test users for testing of telecommunication services, telecommunication network, equipment, processes, technologies, products or business models;

(e) ensure that the telecommunication services or technologies or products, processes or business models being tested in the regulatory sandbox are not commercially available in the market during the testing period;

(f) ensure storage of records relating to the testing, including work plans, methodologies, consent records of test users and other relevant data for a period not less than one year after expiry of validity period of the regulatory sandbox, and for such longer period or periods as may be determined by the Central Government;

(g) ensure destruction of data and records specified under clause (f) in a secure manner;

(h) keep the Central Government indemnified from any acts of omission or commission, breaches or any kind of culpability or liability arising out of or in relation to any testing in the regulatory sandbox by itself or by any participant; and

(i) ensure that confidentiality is maintained, by it and the participants, with regard to the regulatory sandbox, including testing and results thereof:

Provided that the Central Government may publish any relevant and generic information about the regulatory sandbox, including the approved applicants and participants, without revealing any proprietary information of such applicants or participants on the portal.

7. Monitoring and evaluation.—(1) The Central Government may monitor and evaluate the performance of a regulatory sandbox created under rule 4.

(2) For the purposes of sub-rule (1), the Central Government may—

(a) call for such reports, information, data or records from the approved applicant as it deems fit and, for this

purpose, require the approved applicant to furnish the same within such period of time as specified by the Central Government;

(b) specify the format, frequency and manner in which the information or reports called for under clause (a) shall be furnished; and

(c) issue such directions to the approved applicant as may be required for ensuring compliance with the terms and conditions of the regulatory sandbox and for protection of participants and test users.

(3) The approved applicant shall ensure physical or virtual access to the regulatory sandbox as the Central Government may require and shall comply with its directions within such period of time as specified by the Central Government.

(4) Within fifteen days of completion of testing, or at least thirty days prior to the expiry of the validity period of the regulatory sandbox, each approved applicant shall submit to the Central Government a comprehensive report in such form and manner as specified on the portal, which shall include—

(a) the results and outcomes of the testing;

(b) feedback from the test users, including complaints, concerns, security issues;

(c) challenges faced during testing period;

(d) measures taken to overcome security and other issues, consumer protection and risk mitigation measures deployed;

(e) details of closure of all activities under the regulatory sandbox, along with settlement of all contractual and financial obligations related to all stakeholders, including participants and test users; and

(f) any other data or information as may be specified by the Central Government.

(5) For the purposes of monitoring and evaluation under this rule, the Central Government may, where considered necessary, seek the advice or assistance of one or more external experts.

8. Continuation, modification, completion and commercialisation.—(1) On the basis of the information and reports furnished under rule 7, the Central Government may—

(a) permit continuation of the regulatory sandbox for such further period and on such modified or additional terms and conditions as specified on the portal; or

(b) direct completion and closure of the regulatory sandbox; or

(c) having regard to the results of the sandbox, permit such steps as may be considered necessary for enabling commercial deployment of the product, service or business model in accordance with the provisions of the Act and the rules made thereunder.

(2) Before taking any decision under sub-rule (1), the Central Government may seek such further information or clarifications as it considers necessary from the approved applicant.

9. Suspension or revocation of approval to operate and manage regulatory sandbox.—The Central Government may, by order and recording the reasons therefor, suspend or revoke the approval granted to an approved applicant to operate and manage a regulatory sandbox in the following circumstances, namely:—

(a) To address situations where such sandbox is interfering with the operations of a telecommunication network established by an authorised entity;

(b) Where an approved applicant has—

(i) furnished incorrect or false information to the Central Government; or

(ii) failed to comply with the terms and conditions based on which approval for testing was granted; or

(iii) failed to ensure compliance by participants in the relevant regulatory sandbox:

Provided that no decision for suspension or revocation under this clause shall be made without the approved applicant has been given an opportunity of being heard; or

(c) where, in the opinion of the Central Government, such suspension or revocation is necessary in the interest of national security or public interest; or

(d) where an approved applicant is subject to adjudication proceedings under the provisions of Chapter VIII

of the Act, who is held to be in breach or contravention of any rules pursuant to the adjudication proceedings.

10. No refund of fees.—There shall be no refund of fees or charges paid in respect of the approval to operate and manage a regulatory sandbox under these rules, if such approval is suspended, curtailed, revoked or varied.

11. Power to issue orders, directions or guidelines.—The Central Government may for the purposes of giving effect to these rules issue orders, directions or guidelines not inconsistent with the Act or these rules.

12. Digital implementation.—The Central Government may in furtherance of section 53 of the Act, notify one or more portals for digital implementation of these rules, including for providing any form, manner, order, direction or guidelines to be specified under these rules.

[F. No. 24-11/2024-UBB]

DEVENDRA KUMAR RAI, Jt. Secy.

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