

## DoT nod for full MNP, broadband network for panchayats by 2017

By PTI | 13 Jun, 2014, 07:25PM IST

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NEW DELHI: Inter-ministerial panel [Telecom Commission](#) today gave its approval to a slew of long-pending plans, including full [mobile number portability](#) that enables subscribers to retain numbers when they relocate to any part of the country.

The Commission gave its approval to a revised strategy for National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN) under which 2.5 lakh gram panchayats have access to broadband connectivity by March, 2017.

The long-delayed plan to set up mobile towers to provide telephone services in nine Naxal-affected states also got the approval. The proposal will now be placed before the Cabinet for its final approval.

Strengthening of telecom connectivity in the North-East region also got the green signal. This proposal will also be sent to the Cabinet.

"The TC (Telecom Commission) has given in-principle approval to full [MNP](#). Reference will be sent to Trai for additional information and clarification," a government source said.

Full mobile number portability allows a user to retain number when he/she relocate to any part in the country. At present, the portability allows a user to switch to a different operator within the circle only while retaining the phone number.

Under National Telecom Policy (NTP) 2012, the government had envisaged implementing full MNP.

Telecom regulator TRAI has asked [DoT](#) to give operators six months time from the date the full portability is approved for making suitable changes in their networks.

On the matter of setting up mobile towers in Naxal-hit areas, State-run BSNL has submitted a final estimate of Rs 3,241 crore to roll out this project against Rs 3,046 crore approved by Cabinet.

"TC approved the project for setting up of mobile towers in left wing extremism (LWE) areas," the source said.

The inter-ministerial panel also approved providing funds for the GUN (government user network) over NOFN project.

Under GUN project, government has plans to provide WiFi services at panchayat levels. There is an additional requirement of funds beyond around Rs 20,000 crore approved for the National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN) project.

On the issue of spectrum sharing, the TC decided to wait for the recommendations of Trai. "Trai has written to DoT that they are working on spectrum sharing guidelines. Trai has said it will send the recommendations shortly, so DoT has decided to wait for the guidelines," the source said.

As the revised strategy for NOFN, a target has been set to complete roll-out in 50,000 panchayats by March 2015, another one lakh by March 2016 and all the 2.5 lakh by March 2017.

The [UPA government](#) had approved Rs 20,000 crore for starting the NOFN project in 2011. At the conception stage, the UPA government had set a deadline of 2012 for completing the project.



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