

6. National Centre for Communication Security – S & T

Union Minister Shri Jyotiraditya Scindia Announces Major Strategic Reforms to Strengthen India's Telecom Security Ecosystem for 2026. To bolster India's telecom security, the Department of Telecommunications has extended the Pro Tem Security Certification Scheme by two years and reduced application fees for testing laboratories by over 50%. Additionally, the certification process for Optical Network Terminator (ONT) devices has been simplified to lower compliance burdens and testing costs for manufacturers.

Context of Announcement

Announcement Date- December 2025.

Authority- Union Minister Jyotiraditya Madhavrao Scindia, Ministry of Communications.

Implementing Body- Department of Telecommunications (DoT) through the National Centre for Communication Security (NCCS).

Objective- To bolster and strengthen India's telecom security ecosystem through strategic reforms.

Core Initiative- The introduction of **three major reforms** aimed at easing compliance, reducing costs, and ensuring business continuity for telecom stakeholders.

Reform 1- Extension of Pro Tem Security Certification Scheme

This reform focuses on preventing market disruption for Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) while maintaining security standards.

Extension Period- The scheme has been extended for a period of two years, effective from January 1, 2026.

Original Timeline- The scheme was initially introduced in October 2024. It was originally valid until and due for review from December 31, 2025.

Primary Aim- To prevent business disruptions for OEMs. Specifically targets products that were mandatorily required to be security certified from October 01, 2024, such as Internet Protocol (IP) Routers and Wireless Fidelity (Wi-Fi) Customer Premises Equipment (CPE).

Mechanism of Certification

Declaration of Conformance- OEMs must submit a self-declaration stating that their equipment complies with the majority of security requirements outlined in the Indian Telecommunication Security Assurance Requirements (ITSAR).

Business Continuity- This mechanism allows OEMs to continue operations while full certification processes are formalized.

Scope Expansion- The NCCS has expanded the scheme to cover critical telecom components and new product categories, including

1. 5G Core Session Management Function (SMF)
2. Optical Line Terminals (OLT)
3. Optical Network Terminators (ONT)
4. New Product Launches

Current Impact- A total of 107 certificates has been issued by the DoT through NCCS to date, successfully facilitating uninterrupted business processes for OEMs.

Reform 2- Reduction of Application Fees for Testing Laboratories

This reform is aimed at encouraging the establishment of more testing facilities by reducing financial barriers for Telecom Security Testing Laboratories (TSTLs).

Primary Fee Reduction- The designation application fees for TSTLs have been reduced by more than 50%.

Role of TSTLs- These laboratories are designated to test telecom equipment in line with Indian Telecommunication Security Assurance Requirements (ITSAR). Test Schedule and Test Procedure (TSTP).

Current Infrastructure- Currently, NCCS has 9 designated TSTLs across India, covering 27 types of telecom equipment and network functions.

Structural Fee Changes

1. **Renewal Fees**– Lowered to reduce recurring costs.
2. **Scope Expansion**– Made more affordable to encourage labs to test a wider variety of equipment.
3. **SSR Additions**– No fees will be charged for adding Specific Security Requirements (SSR) if the lab already holds approval for Common Security Requirements (CSR).

Differentiation of Special Fee Concessions

The following table details the specific concessions provided to different entities to promote diversity and government participation in the testing ecosystem.

Beneficiary Category	Concession / Benefit
Startups & Small Enterprises	50% Fee Reduction for Indian startups, Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs).
Women Entrepreneurs	50% Fee Reduction for women-owned enterprises.
Government & Academic Bodies	Complete Fee Waiver (100%) for Central/State government testing agencies, government institutions, IITs, and autonomous bodies.

Reform 3– Simplification of Security Assurance for ONT Devices

This reform targets the specific certification process for Optical Network Terminator (ONT) devices to reduce redundancy and cost.

Target Device– Optical Network Terminators (ONT), which are critical devices deployed at customer premises for internet access.

New Certification Mechanism

Grouped Testing– Customized variants of ONTs will now be tested under a single certification procedure rather than individually.

Projected Impact

Reduction in Testing Volume– Expected to reduce the number of testing cases by nearly 10 times.

Financial Relief– This will ease the substantial financial burden associated with security testing for manufacturers.

Timeline of ITSAR for ONT

Notification Date– Originally notified on November 24, 2023.

Voluntary Certification– Came into effect from August 01, 2024.

Mandatory Certification– Effective from January 01, 2026.

Background on Implementing Agencies

About National Centre for Communication Security (NCCS)

Mandate– Responsible for conducting security testing under the ComSec (Communication Security) Scheme.

Parent Framework– The ComSec Scheme is part of the Mandatory Testing and Certification of Telecom Equipment (MTCTE) framework.

Regulatory History– The MTCTE framework was first notified in September 2017. It was subsequently replaced by the Telecommunications (Framework to Notify Standards, Conformity Assessment, and Certification) Rules, 2025.

About Ministry of Communications

Union Minister– Jyotiraditya M. Scindia– Constituency– Guna, Madhya Pradesh (MP).

Minister of State (MoS)– Chandra Sekhar Pemmasani

Constituency– Guntur, Andhra Pradesh (AP).

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