Question 1: Should the TSPs be allowed to have differential pricing for data usage for accessing different websites, applications or platforms?

No. The Internet is already an open platform. Allowing the TSPs to offer differential pricing for data usage for specific websites, applications or platforms is

- **limiting functionality:** There are millions of publicly accessible websites. Erecting an artificial barrier that allows only a few while restricting most is like saying only bicycles are permitted on the Mumbai-Pune expressway.
- **irrational:** The TSP would have to put up infrastructure to prohibit access to other websites, the cost of which would be indirectly passed on to other paying consumers.
- **anti-competitive:** It surreptitiously diverts the consumer from other websites, applications and platforms by erecting a pay-wall barrier.
- **against net neutrality:** The Internet functions on the basis of free flow of packets. Prioritizing one set of websites, applications or platforms will interfere with the basic foundational principle of the Internet.
- **stifles innovation:** New startups and innovation would be killed even before they launch as the cartel of TSPs and their partners offering differential pricing can impose costs on any startup or innovation that they deem to be competition.
- **creating an uneven playing field:** Today, the Internet allows anyone to create a web presence for themselves. Differential pricing for content based access would distort the field and cut-off large swathes of the Internet from access.
- **predatory and misleading:** Due to the way the Internet works, it is very easy to create content that sits behind a paywall that a user might be charged for accessing accidentally (or even without their knowledge and consent) for eg: content from an advertising network site embedded in a “free” website. Consumer is not charged for the “free” website, but is charged for the embedded data from the advertising network site. Differential pricing methods would require a technology layer to prevent this basic consumer protection (which will become hidden costs passed on to other paying customers)

Question 2: If differential pricing for data usage is permitted, what measures should be adopted to ensure that the principles of nondiscrimination, transparency, affordable internet access, competition and market entry and innovation are addressed?

- **Non-discrimination:** There should be no restrictions on websites, applications or platforms accessed between different classes of subscribers
- **Transparency:** The TSPs must not throttle traffic for any subset of websites, applications or platforms
- **Affordability:** TSPs and their partners may be asked to use their Corporate Social Responsibility budgets towards providing universally affordable access to the entire Internet
- **Competition:** There cannot be any throttling of websites, applications or platforms between different classes of subscribers (other than what a consumer has signed up) based on the content accessed

- **Market entry:** There should not be any cartelization and fees for participating in a differential pricing access plan (for commercial or other establishments, individuals etc.,) for market entrants/participants.
- **Innovation:** The Internet is constantly evolving. Keeping the Internet open and without any artificial restrictions is the best possible way to promote the innovation economy.

Question 3. Are there alternative methods/technologies/business models, other than differentiated tariff plans, available to achieve the objective of providing free internet access to the consumers? If yes, please suggest/describe these methods/technologies/business models. Also, describe the potential benefits and disadvantages associated with such methods/technologies/business models?

Yes, there are.

#	Name	Type	Description	Example	Benefits	Disadvantages
1	Universal Internet Access	Business model	Providing Internet Access as a utility	https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Municipal_wireless_network	• Universal access	• Erosion of customer base
2	Mobile ad hoc network (MANET)	Technology	MANETs are a self-forming, self-healing, peer-to-peer mesh network	https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mobile_ad_hoc_network	• Uses smartphone Wi-Fi and Bluetooth to build a dynamic overlay mesh network	• Technology maturity and adoption
3	Subsidized Community Internet Access	Business model	Companies contribute from their Corporate Social Responsibility budgets to fund subsidized / free community Internet access		• Scalable over the long run	• Competes with other development priorities and goals

Question-4: Is there any other issue that should be considered in the present consultation on differential pricing for data services?

No