



UNIVERSAL SERVICE OBLIGATION FUND SUPPORTED SCHEME FOR WIRE LINE BROADBAND CONNECTIVITY IN RURAL AND REMOTE AREAS

The Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) came into being with the passing of the Indian Telegraph (Amendment) Act, 2003 by the Parliament in December 2003. Deemed to have come into force from 1st April, 2002, the Fund is to be utilized exclusively for meeting the Universal Service Obligation which in turn is defined as the obligation to provide telegraph [telecommunications] services to people in rural and remote areas at affordable and reasonable prices. The Fund is managed by the office of the Administrator (USOF) which is an attached office of the Department of Telecommunications. (For more information on the USOF schemes please visit www.dot.gov.in)

Recently USOF has been entered into an agreement with Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd (BSNL) for provision Wire Line Broadband connectivity in rural and remote areas of the country from the existing rural wire line exchanges of BSNL.

SALIENT FEATURES OF THE SCHEME:

- The objective of the scheme is to provide broadband connections to the rural and remote areas of the country through the existing rural wire line exchanges of BSNL.(About 28,000, as listed at <http://bsnl.co.in/service/uso1.htm>)
- The effective date of the Agreement is 20th January 2009.
- The Agreement shall remain valid for eight years from the effective date.
- Only connections provided in the rural areas will be subsidised by USOF.
- From each exchange a maximum of 32 connections (25 individual, 6 Government institutional connections (subject to demand) and one kiosk) shall be subsidised by USOF. BSNL shall, however, be free to provide connections beyond the 32 subsidised connections, without subsidy support, from these exchanges.
- Throughput of each connection provided under the Agreement shall be at least 512 Kbps always on.
- BSNL shall offer two special USOF tariff plans of Rs. 99/- and Rs. 150/- per month throughout the validity period of the Agreement as detailed below:

USOF TARIFF PLANS

Tariff Plan	Minimum Speed of the Broadband connection	Free Download	Rate per MB for extra usage (Rs)	Monthly charges (Rs)	Registration Security, and installation charges (Rs)	CPE rental (for Type I ADSL Modem) (Rs)
1	512 kbps	400MB	0.4	99/-	Nil	Nil
2	512 kbps	1GB	0.4	150/-	Nil	Nil

- In addition to these two packages, BSNL will be free to provide other tariff packages as well. However the USOF Tariff plans shall be made available by BSNL through out the validity of the Agreement.
- USOF shall also provide CPE subsidy up to Rs 850/- for individual/Government Institutional connections (Government Institute is defined as an institute wholly maintained out of state funds.) for the first 31 connections.
- Computer subsidy up to Rs 4500/- shall be provided for 31 connections for subscribers opting for any of the two special USOF tariff packages.
- BSNL shall not charge tariffs higher than the tariff as per TRAI Orders/Regulations/Directions issued with regard to such service in rural areas from time to time from the subscribers or the tariff charges by the USP for similar services in urban areas , whichever is lower.
- BSNL shall provide rebate if the broadband connection remains faulty beyond permissible limits as per TRAI guidelines.
- Complete details relating to USOF subsidy contributions, scheme details, status, grievance redressal and refund mechanism for all the rural wireline broadband connections registered/provided under the scheme shall be available in the public domain including BSNL's all India/circle/SSA website.
- BSNL shall highlight in the bills raised for such broadband connections the USOF subsidy contribution and the URL of the website where full scheme details are available.
- Subsidised CPEs and Computers provided under the scheme shall bear a stamp "USOF subsidised."
- At least one connection per rural exchange is to be given to a women's Self Help Group on preferential basis

Wire Line Broadband Kiosks:

- BSNL will provide one kiosk from each designated rural exchange, preferably on self-sustainable commercial/franchisee model.
- Each kiosk will have at least one workstation with facilities of internet browsing, taking printouts and scanning of documents.
- The kiosk should be able to support other broadband applications such as video chat, video conferencing, tele-medicine and tele-education.

- The hourly internet browsing charges at such Kiosks shall not exceed Rs 5/- per hour. Reasonable charges for other value added services will be levied.
- A Display Board should be compulsorily provided at each kiosk wherein the name of franchisee, availability of services, their rates and other associated information will be indicated.
- BSNL will ensure the upkeep and availability of services from the kiosks to general rural public preferably from 8 am to 4 pm.

For more details please visit our website <ccatn.gov.in> or you may contact the Principal Controller of Communication Accounts Office.