

Experts back ex-Ante law for growth of India's travel, tourism tech sector

Participants at the roundtable held in Delhi also unanimously agreed on the necessity of facilitating consultations with a broader range of stakeholders, especially from the industry. They emphasised the need for a collaborative approach to ensure that regulatory efforts are aimed at promoting fairness, contestability, ease of compliance, and overall growth within India's travel and tourism segment of the digital economy

Online Bureau, ET Travel, November 10, 2023

In a move to promote the growth of India's travel and tourism technology sector, the CUTS Institute for Regulation and Competition (CIRC), in collaboration with the Asia Travel and Technology Industry Association (ATTIA), recently convened a policy roundtable discussion and unveiled a comprehensive policy paper titled 'Enabling the Tourism

The policy paper delves into the crucial role that the tourism sector plays in India's ambitious goal to become a USD 30 trillion economy by 2047. It emphasises the urgent need for a well-crafted ex-ante competition law that specifically targets 'systemically important digital intermediaries'

Matin Mohdari, Expedia Group's Head of Public Policy, Government and Corporate Affairs (Southeast and South Asia), shared insights on effectively navigating regulatory considerations within the travel tech sector. He stressed the importance of transparent and pragmatic regulations to ensure compliance and foster a trusted and competitive digital environment.

Avinash Agrawal, Amadeus's Regional Director for the Indian Subcontinent, underscored the value of collaboration within the Indian travel tech sector. He highlighted the active participation of industry members in ongoing discussion discussions, placing a strong emphasis on the role of innovation and a collaborative approach.

The policy paper also referenced a report by the World Travel & Tourism Country (WTTC), stating that domestic travelers are expected to spend more than INR 12.6 trillion INR 12.6 trillion, with international travellers potentially contributing close INR 2 trillion to the Indian economy. As India's economy and population continue to grow, the creation of quality jobs is a top policymaking priority, mentioned the report.

In line with this, Navneet Sharma, Director General of CIRC, pointed out that the total number of jobs in the tourism sector is predicted to increase

by up to 39 million, meaning 1 in 13 Indians could be employed in this sector.

Given the job-creation potential, the report also stresses the importance of conducting a thorough regulatory impact assessment before implementing various digital regulatory initiatives. Participants at the roundtable also unanimously agreed on the necessity of facilitating consultations with a broader range of stakeholders, especially from the industry.

They emphasised the need for a collaborative approach to ensure that regulatory efforts are aimed at promoting fairness, contestability, ease of compliance, and overall growth within India's travel and tourism segment of the digital economy. The event took place in New Delhi and garnered participation from representatives of the Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Electronics and IT, and the Competition Commission of India. It also drew in policy researchers and industry leaders from both India and other nations.

Read more at:

<https://travel.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/associations/experts-back-ex-ante-law-for-growth-of-indias-travel-tourism-tech-sector/105121112>

Well-crafted Ex-ante Law Required to Enable the Growth of Travel and Tourism Tech Sector in India, Industry Experts

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New Delhi : The CUTS Institute for Regulation and Competition, in association with the Asia Travel and Technology Industry Association, organised a policy roundtable discussion and launch of a **policy paper titled ‘Enabling the Tourism Tech Sector in India’ in New Delhi recently.**

The paper highlights the need for a well-crafted ex-ante competition law that targets only the ‘systemically important digital intermediaries’ digital platforms, in order to safeguard consumer choice and innovation in the tourism and digital economy. It also discusses the benefits of a principles-based regulatory approach that adapts to the rapid pace of digital innovation and recommends that the law be developed with further input from industry.

Key roundtable attendees included representatives from the Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Electronics and IT, Competition Commission of India, policy researchers, and industry leaders from India and other countries. ATTIA, representing global travel tech companies in the Asia-Pacific region, plays a vital role in promoting innovation and shaping policies that enable sustainable growth in the travel and tourism economy.

The roundtable comes in the wake of the proposed Digital Competition Bill, which would introduce ex-ante regulation in digital markets along the lines of jurisdictions like the European Union and the United Kingdom.

Government and industry stakeholders also exchange perspectives on the proposed Digital India Act which seeks to regulate the emerging digital economy, promote digital innovation, and enable the creation of an ‘open internet’. They also discussed the Digital Personal Data Protection Act (DPDPA) 2023, and the National Digital Tourism Mission, which both impact the sector.

Dr K.D. Singh, Director of the Competition Commission of India, apprised of the findings and recommendations of a key report by the Standing Committee on Finance of the Lok Sabha (‘Anti-competitive Practices by Big Tech Companies’). He also highlighted that the Commission had been actively engaging in public consultations, including those on the draft regulations on settlement, commitments, and leniency plus scheme.

Mr. Rakesh Maheshwari, a former civil servant known for his contribution to the DPDP Act 2023, discussed how that legislation and the proposed Digital Competition Bill could collectively enable an ‘open internet,’ including in the context of the travel and tourism technology sector. He also discussed why sectoral regulators would need to collaborate to ensure sound implementation of different legal regimes.

Mr. Rahul Rai, competition law partner at Axiom 5, said that the policy decision on the ex-ante regulatory regime should factor in consumer welfare. Members representing industry associations voiced their support for the proposed Digital

Competition Bill but stressed that the new law should target only those enterprises that truly pose a challenge to fairness and contestability.

Matin Mohdari, Expedia Group's Head of Public Policy, Government and Corporate Affairs (Southeast and South Asia), offered insights into effectively navigating regulatory considerations within the travel tech sector. He emphasized the significance of transparent and pragmatic regulations to ensure compliance and foster a trusted and competitive digital environment.

Avinash Agrawal, Amadeus's Regional Director for the Indian Subcontinent, underscored the value of collaboration within the Indian travel tech sector. He emphasized the active participation of industry members in ongoing discussions, emphasizing the role of innovation and a collaborative approach.

Dr Navneet Sharma, Director General, CIRC highlighted that the total number of jobs in the tourism sector was predicted to increase by up to 39 million, meaning 1 in 13 Indians would be employed in the sector. Given the job-creation potential of the sector, various digital regulatory initiatives should be implemented after carrying out a thorough regulatory impact assessment

Participants aligned that there was a need to facilitate consultation with a wider range of stakeholders, especially the industry. A "collaborative" approach is needed to ensure that regulatory endeavors are geared toward fairness, contestability, ease-of-compliance, and growth in the travel and tourism segment of India's digital economy.

<https://www.apnnews.com/well-crafted-ex-ante-law-required-to-enable-the-growth-of-travel-and-tourism-tech-sector-in-india-industry-experts/>

India's Travel Tech Sector Calls for Nuanced Regulation to Drive Growth

Industry highlights need for targeted regulation to promote innovation and consumer protection

[BY OUR BUREAU](#), Business Line

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A well-crafted ex-ante competition law that targets only the 'systemically important digital intermediaries' digital platforms is the need of the hour, suggests a new policy paper prepared by the CUTS Institute for Regulation and Competition (CIRC).

This is required to safeguard consumer choice and innovation in the [tourism](#) and digital economy, said the paper titled 'Enabling the Tourism Tech Sector in India'.

This policy paper, launched at a Round Table event in the capital, also discusses the benefits of a principles-based regulatory approach that adapts to the rapid pace of digital innovation and recommends that the law be developed with further input from the industry.

The Round Table was organised by the CIRC in association with Asia Travel and Technology Industry Association (ATTIA) in the capital. It saw government and industry stakeholders exchange perspectives on the proposed Digital Competition Bill.

This Bill is expected to introduce ex-ante regulation in digital markets along the lines of jurisdictions like the European Union and the United Kingdom.

Government and industry stakeholders also exchanged perspectives on the proposed Digital India Act which seeks to regulate the emerging digital economy, promote digital innovation, and enable the creation of an 'open internet'. They also discussed the Digital Personal Data Protection Act (DPDPA) 2023, and the National Digital Tourism Mission, which both impact the sector.

Rakesh Maheshwari, a former civil servant highlighted how the data protection law and the proposed Digital Competition Bill could collectively enable an 'open internet,' including in the context of the travel and tourism technology sector. He also discussed why sectoral regulators would need to collaborate to ensure sound implementation of different legal regimes.

K D Singh, Director at the Competition Commission of India, apprised of the recommendations of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Finance on 'Anti-competitive Practices by Big Tech Companies'. He also highlighted that CCI is engaging in public consultations on the drafts of various regulations to operationalize the Competition (Amendment) Act, 2023 including settlement, commitments, and leniency-plus frameworks.

Rahul Rai, competition law partner at Axiom 5, a law firm, said that the policy decision on the ex-ante regulatory regime should factor in consumer welfare. Members representing industry associations voiced their support for the proposed Digital Competition Bill but stressed that the new law should target only those enterprises that truly pose a challenge to fairness and contestability.

Navneet Sharma, Director General, CIRC highlighted that the total number of jobs in the tourism sector was predicted to increase by up to 39 million, meaning 1 in 13 Indians would be employed in the sector.

Given the job-creation potential of the sector, various digital regulatory initiatives should be implemented after carrying out a thorough regulatory impact assessment, it was felt.

The discussions centred on the need to facilitate consultation with a wider range of stakeholders. A collaborative approach was stressed to ensure that regulatory endeavors are geared toward fairness, contestability, ease-of-compliance, and growth in the travel and tourism segment of India's digital economy.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/indias-travel-tech-sector-calls-for-nuanced-regulation-to-drive-growth/article67515868.ece>