

Immediate Release

Telecom Regulatory Authority of India

“TRAI releases amendment to Interconnection Regulations of 2017 for Broadcasting and Cable Services”

New Delhi, 11 June 2021- The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI, also referred to as Authority), published a comprehensive regulatory framework for Digital Addressable System (DAS) on 3rd March, 2017, keeping in view the implementation of DAS and to enable the sector to realize its benefits, after due consultation process. This framework comprises of the Telecommunication (Broadcasting and Cable) Services Interconnection (Addressable Systems) Regulations, 2017 (hereinafter referred to as the “Interconnection Regulations, 2017”), the Telecommunication (Broadcasting and Cable) Services Standards of Quality of Service and Consumer Protection (Addressable Systems) Regulations, 2017 and the Telecommunication (Broadcasting and Cable) Services (Eighth) (Addressable Systems) Tariff Order, 2017. This New Regulatory Framework came into effect from 29th December, 2018.

2. However, even after implementation of the New Regulatory Framework and despite stipulations for transmission of encrypted content, as notified by the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, vide the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995, the Authority has received complaints on regular basis from various broadcasters and distribution platform operators (DPOs) about unauthorised distribution of signals. Complaints have also been received on issues related to support from Conditional Access System (CAS) / Subscriber Management System (SMS) providers, under-reporting of subscription, etc. The extant provisions have no prescribed minimum benchmark/criteria for CAS/SMS for appropriate encryption security and compliance mechanism. Sub-standard CAS and SMS also render the distribution network vulnerable to hacking and content piracy.

3. Further, the Authority also observed that in some cases, the distributors were unable to comply with the New Regulatory Framework within the prescribed time, owing to the constraints of their CAS and SMS systems.



4. To address these issues, TRAI issued a consultation paper on "Framework for Technical Compliance of Conditional Access System (CAS) and Subscriber Management Systems (SMS) for Broadcasting & Cable services" on 22nd April, 2020. The consultation paper sought comments and suggestions from all stakeholders on the pertinent issues related to deployment of sub-standard CAS and SMS systems and unauthorised distribution of signals/piracy. In response, the Authority received comments from 36 stakeholders from across all segments, such as broadcasters, distributors, technology providers including CAS and SMS vendors and also individual industry observers. Later, Open House Discussion (OHD) on the consultation paper was held on 25th June, 2020 through video conferencing, which was attended by around 220 participants representing wide range of stakeholders from across the country.

5. The comments of the stakeholders received by the Authority during the consultation process were analysed. In view of the technical nature of the matter, the Authority decided to form a committee comprising of members from CAS and SMS providers, direct to home (DTH) operators, multi-system operators (MSOs), Broadcasters, expert bodies and organizations like Telecom Engineering Centre (TEC), Standardisation Testing and Quality Certification (STQC), Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC), Broadcast Engineering Consultants India Limited (BECIL) and Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kanpur to examine the comments and suggestions and give its recommendations for a minimal framework that addresses the issues raised in the consultation paper. The committee, after extensive deliberations, recommended to introduce testing and certification regime for CAS and SMS to ensure better conformity to the standards and to improve the customer experience. The committee also recommended oversight mechanism to ensure compliance to the said framework.

6. The recommendations of the committee were further reviewed by the Authority, with the broad objectives of maintaining light touch regulation and keeping the requirements minimalistic. In furtherance of the same, the Authority today issued the Telecommunication (Broadcasting and Cable) Services Interconnection (Addressable Systems) (Third Amendment) Regulations, 2021 (1 of 2021), which provides for a



framework for technical compliance of CAS & SMS. The said framework is incorporated as Schedule IX in the Interconnection Regulations, 2017.

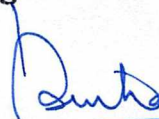
7. The operationalization and oversight of the framework shall be carried out through a Testing and Certification Agency, which shall be prescribed by the Authority later.

8. The framework is expected to bring several important benefits to the television broadcasting sector as well as the consumers. Some highlights are as under:

- i. The framework is the first step to define an indigenous set of specifications in the line of international standards.
- ii. A tightly synchronized working of CAS and SMS, as specified by the framework, will enable factual reporting of subscriber base etc. This will reduce the revenue loss to stakeholders on account of erroneous subscription reporting. Better assurance of due revenue, in turn, may encourage the stakeholders to invest for further improvement in quality of content and service thereby benefiting the end consumer.
- iii. The framework will usher-in better content security in the distribution value chain. This, in turn, shall give confidence to the global content developer community and will pave way for increased availability of better quality, high-definition content to Indian television viewers.
- iv. The framework will improve end-to-end compliance and reduce litigations among the service providers.

9. Full text of the amendments to the Regulations is available on the TRAI's website at **www.trai.gov.in**.

10. For any clarification/ information, please contact Shri Anil Kumar Bhardwaj, Advisor (B&CS) at Tel. No.: +91-11-23237922 or at email-id **advbcs-2@traigov.in**.


(Rajiv Sinha) 11/06/2024

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