

For Immediate Release

**Telecom Regulatory Authority of India**

**TRAI releases recommendations on 'Provision of Cellular backhaul connectivity via. Satellite through VSAT under Commercial VSAT CUG Service Authorization'**

**New Delhi, 28<sup>th</sup> July, 2020**– The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has today released recommendations on **"Provision of Cellular backhaul connectivity via. Satellite through VSAT under Commercial VSAT CUG Service Authorization"**.

2. Satellites provide telecommunication and broadcasting services, covering large geographical areas. Very Small Aperture Terminal (VSAT) is one of the satellite communication technologies which is very useful for remote and inaccessible locations such as rural areas, ships, coastal regions, hills, etc. where there is limited or no terrestrial connectivity. The main advantages of VSAT technology is its rapid deployment with minimum training, scalability, lower operational costs and reliability of communication, in remote locations even in adverse situations.

3. The National Digital Communications Policy (NDCP), 2018, released by the Government of India, has *inter-alia* envisaged the various steps such as revising licensing and regulatory conditions, simplifying compliance requirements and expanding the scope of permissible services for the effective utilisation of High Throughput Satellite system through appropriate licensing mechanism.

4. Department of Telecommunications (DoT), through its letter dated 13<sup>th</sup> August 2019 had requested TRAI to furnish recommendations under the terms of the clause (a) of subsection (1) of Section 11 of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India Act, 1997 (as amended) by TRAI Amendment Act, 2000 on terms and conditions of Unified License and Unified License VNO agreement for permitting backhaul links for mobile network via. satellite through VSAT.

5. Based on the reference received from DoT, the Authority issued Consultation Paper (CP) on 'Provision of Cellular backhaul connectivity via Satellite through VSAT under Commercial VSAT CUG Service Authorization' on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2020, seeking comments of the stakeholders. In the CP, apart from the issues referred to by DoT, other issues such as sharing of infrastructure by a licensee for provisioning of other services authorized under the license, migration from formula-based spectrum charging (for satellite-based services) to AGR-based SUC and associated matters of accounting separation were also raised for comments of the stakeholders.



6. Written comments and counter-comments on the CP were invited from the stakeholders by 11<sup>th</sup> March, 2020 and 25<sup>th</sup> March, 2020. The Authority received comments from 15 stakeholders whereas no counter-comments were received. These comments are available on TRAI's website [www.trai.gov.in](http://www.trai.gov.in). An Open House Discussion (OHD) was conducted through video conferencing on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2020 at New Delhi.

7. The salient features of these recommendations are: -

- (a) The Commercial VSAT CUG Service provider should be permitted to provide backhaul connectivity for cellular mobile services through satellite using VSAT to the Access Service providers. They may also be permitted to provide backhaul connectivity using VSAT to Access Service Providers for establishing Wi-Fi hotspots.
- (b) Enabling provisions should be made in stand-alone Commercial VSAT CUG Service license, Unified License, and Unified License (VNO) for provision of backhaul connectivity by Commercial VSAT CUG Service provider.
- (c) Sharing of VSAT Hub for the purpose of providing authorized services should be allowed to the entity having license / authorization for both Commercial VSAT CUG and NLD services.
- (d) Sharing of active and passive infrastructure owned by a licensee under any of the service authorizations should be permitted for providing other services authorized to licensee under other authorizations or stand-alone licenses.
- (e) Spectrum charging for VSAT services in NLD license/ authorization should be prescribed as a percentage of AGR. Replacing the existing formula-based mechanism, Spectrum usage charges for using satellite frequencies under the NLD service license/authorization should be prescribed as 1% of AGR excluding the revenue from the licensed services other than satellite-based services.
- (f) There should not be any barriers on the carrier speeds and, therefore, higher data rates, which are now possible in satellite communications with the use of latest technologies, should be permitted without any restrictions.

8. The recommendations on **“Provision of Cellular backhaul connectivity via. Satellite through VSAT under Commercial VSAT CUG Service Authorization”** have been placed on TRAI's website [www.trai.gov.in](http://www.trai.gov.in)

9. For clarification/ information, if any, Shri S. T. Abbas, Advisor (Network Spectrum & Licensing), TRAI may be contacted at Telephone Number +91-11-23210481 or email: [advmn@trai.gov.in](mailto:advmn@trai.gov.in)

  
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