

Information Note to the Press (Press Release No. 48/2017)

For immediate release

TELECOM REGULATORY AUTHORITY OF INDIA

TRAI releases consultation paper on “Issues related to Digital Radio Broadcasting in India”

New Delhi, 10th July 2017- The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has today released a consultation paper on “Issues related to Digital Radio Broadcasting in India”.

2. At present, terrestrial radio coverage in India is available in Frequency Modulation (FM) mode and Amplitude Modulation (AM) mode (Short Wave and Medium Wave). AIR along with private sector radio broadcasters are providing terrestrial radio broadcast services throughout the country transmitting programs in AM and FM frequency bands. AIR has 420 radio stations (AM & FM) that cover almost 92% of the country by area and more than 99.20% of the country’s population. Private sector radio broadcasters are licensed to transmit programs in FM frequency band (88-108 MHz) only and presently operate through 293 radio stations.

3. Presently radio signals are largely transmitted in analog mode in radio broadcasting sector in the country. Analog terrestrial radio broadcasting when compared with digital mode is inefficient and suffers with operational restrictions. Digital Radio technologies can overcome problems faced in analog transmission with exciting new capabilities and promises fast growth. Apart from audio quality, Digital Radio broadcasting provides a number of advantages over analog radio broadcasting through utilization of advanced technologies. The biggest advantage is that in the digital radio it is possible to broadcast three to four programs (channels) on a single frequency and ensure

excellent quality of all the channels while analog mode broadcast only one program at one frequency.

4. All India Radio (AIR) has already initiated digitization of its MW and SW radio network in three phases. However, there appears to be no initiative in FM radio space to digitize either by public or private FM radio broadcasters. In a competitive environment digital radio broadcasting can provide exciting new opportunities to existing private FM radio broadcasters as well as a host of other value-added-services to the listeners. However, presently policy guidelines for Phase-III regime lacks clarity regarding provisioning of digital radio service in FM band. An ecosystem, which can encourage existing private FM broadcasters to move towards digital radio broadcasting, is also not available.

5. Accordingly, TRAI has, *suo-motu*, initiated this consultation process in order to seek stakeholders' comments on various issues relating to development of an eco-system for deployment of FM radio broadcasting by private FM radio broadcasters. The full text of the Consultation Paper is available on TRAI's website www.trai.gov.in.

5. Written comments on the consultation paper are invited from the stakeholders by 4th September, 2017. Counter comments, if any, may be submitted by 18th September, 2017. Comments and counter comments will be posted on TRAI's website www.trai.gov.in. The comments and counter comments may be sent, preferably in electronic form to, Shri S. K. Gupta, Pr. Advisor (B&CS), Telecom Regulatory Authority of India, on the e-mail: pradvbcs@traigov.in or vk.agarwal@traigov.in. For any clarification / information, Shri S. K. Gupta, Pr. Advisor (B&CS), may be contacted at Tel. No.: +91-11-23220018, Fax: +91-11-23220422.


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