

Information note to the Press (Press Release No. 67/2013)

For immediate release

TELECOM REGULATORY AUTHORITY OF INDIA

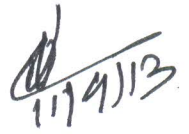
TRAI releases recommendations on Guidelines for Television Rating Agencies

New Delhi, 11th September 2013: The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India has today released its recommendations on Guidelines for Television Rating Agencies.

2. The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB) requested TRAI to provide its recommendations on issues related to guidelines/accreditation mechanism for accreditation of TRP rating agencies in India, under Section 11(1) (a) of TRAI Act, 1997. It has been further stated that in case the accreditation mechanism fails to address the maladies of the current system then there would be a need for entrusting the accreditation mechanism to TRAI under section 11(1) (d).

3. TRAI issued a Consultation Paper on "Guidelines/Accreditation Mechanism for Television Rating Agencies in India" on 17th April 2013, seeking comments/views of the stakeholders. Open House Discussions were also held on 1st July 2013. Based on comments received in the consultation process and its own analysis; the Authority has finalised its recommendations.

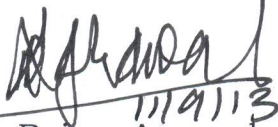
4. The salient features of the recommendations are:
- i. The Authority supports self-regulation of television ratings through an industry-led body like Broadcast Audience Research Council (BARC).
 - ii. To ensure that the shortcomings of the present system are addressed guidelines have been recommended.
 - iii. Any agency meeting the eligibility conditions can apply and get registered with MIB for doing the rating work.


11/9/13

- iv. MIB to notify the guidelines for regulating the television rating agencies based on TRAI's recommendations, within two months.
 - v. All rating agencies are required to comply with the guidelines.
 - vi. Guidelines to cover registration, eligibility norms, cross-holding, methodology, complaint redressal, sale & use of ratings, audit, disclosure, reporting requirements and penal provisions.
 - vii. The number of panel homes for collecting television viewership data will be a minimum of 20,000; to be set up within 6 months of the guidelines coming into force. Thereafter, the number of panel homes shall be increased by 10,000 every year until Panel Size reaches 50,000.
 - viii. The panel homes to be selected from a pool of households, selected through an establishment survey which shall be at least 10 times the number of panel homes for audience measurement.
 - ix. Voluntary code of conduct by the industry for maintaining secrecy and privacy of the panel homes.
 - x. Restrictions on 'substantial equity holding of 10% or more' between rating agencies and broadcasters/advertisers/ advertising agencies.
 - xi. The rating agency to set up an effective complaint redressal system.
 - xii. Data/reports generated by the rating agency to be made available, on paid basis, to all interested stakeholders in a transparent and equitable manner.
 - xiii. The rating agency to get its entire methodology/processes audited internally on quarterly basis and through an independent auditor annually. All audit reports to be put on the website of the rating agency.
 - xiv. Penal provisions for non-compliance of guidelines including financial penalty from Rs.10 lakh to Rs.1 crore and cancellation of registration.
 - xv. Six months time given to the existing rating agency to comply with the guidelines.
4. Since 2008, the Authority has been giving its recommendations/ clarifications on implementing a reliable and transparent television rating

system. For over four years little to no progress has been made by the industry and MIB, in implementing the Authority's recommendations aimed at institutionalizing a credible and transparent rating system. Since policy intent has not been translated into action for too long, the time frame for implementation has now become a critical factor. Guidelines are designed to correct the aberrations in the existing system and prevent it from deteriorating further. Early implementation of guidelines, therefore, has become a necessity. As sector regulator responsible for overall development of the sector, the Authority cannot be a mute spectator to continued inaction and may suo motu intervene in larger public interest.

5. Full text of the recommendations is available on TRAI's website: www.trai.gov.in.


11/9/13
Rajeev Agrawal,
Secretary, TRAI