



TELECOM REGULATORY AUTHORITY OF INDIA

NEWS LETTER

Vol. III/2016

March 2016

This newsletter brings you the information and developments that have taken place during the month of March, 2016.

A) Recommendations:

- 1. TRAI on 23rd March 2016 responded to DoT's back-reference regarding TRAI's earlier Recommendations of July 2014 on Improving Telecom Services in Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep**

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) on 23rd March 2016 issued its response to the reference received from DoT regarding its earlier recommendations of July 2014 on **'Improving Telecom Services in Andaman & Nicobar Islands (ANI) and Lakshadweep'**.

Through its reference dated 7th January 2014, Department of Telecommunications (DoT) had requested TRAI to provide its recommendations on a Comprehensive Telecom Plan for Andaman and Nicobar Islands (ANI) and Lakshadweep after making a gap analysis and investment required for providing quality telecommunication services in these islands. The Authority after consultation with the relevant stakeholders had sent its recommendations on 'Improving Telecom Services in Andaman & Nicobar Islands (ANI) and Lakshadweep' on 22nd July 2014.

In its back references DoT has intimated that in accordance with the TRAI recommendations, Telecom Commission had accorded 'in principle' approval for Comprehensive Development Plan for A&N Island and Lakshadweep in its meeting held on 7th November 2014 and the work of augmentation of satellite bandwidth and the work of augmentation of Intra-Island OFC network in Andaman & Nicobar Islands was awarded to Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) on nomination basis. Accordingly, DoT, through its letter dated 8th February 2016 and 9th March 2016, forwarded a copy of the Detailed Cost Estimates of (a) augmentation of satellite bandwidth in Lakshadweep and (b) augmentation of Intra-Island OFC network in Andaman & Nicobar Islands. DoT requested TRAI to give its views regarding the technical requirements and detailed cost estimates, prepared by BSNL for these particular projects.

After examining the issues involved, TRAI has sent its reply to DoT on 23rd March, 2016 and reemphasized that:

- a. Providing sufficient bandwidth is the key element of the Comprehensive Telecom Plan of ANI and Lakshadweep. Providing connectivity through submarine cables is a primary and integral part of the TRAI's recommendations dated 22nd July 2014. As laying of submarine cable is a resource intensive and time-consuming task, augmentation of satellite bandwidth should be carried out as an immediate and short-term solution.
- b. Since providing telecom facilities in Union Territories of ANI and Lakshadweep is not a viable commercial proposition for the telecom service providers, it is necessary for the Government to step-in and utilize the Universal Services Obligation Fund (USOF) for augmentation and development of telecom infrastructure and connectivity in these islands on a priority basis.
- c. DoT has not spelt-out clearly whether it has approved the recommended Comprehensive Telecom Plan for ANI and Lakshadweep in its entirety. Keeping in view the strategic importance of these islands, entire Telecom Plan for ANI and Lakshadweep, must be implemented without any further delay.
- d. Decision about the BoQ (Bill of Quantity) based on factors such as the availability and suitability of existing telecom infrastructure, their residual life etc and the detailed cost implications can be taken by DoT keeping in view that the broad objectives outlined by the Authority in its recommendations on the Comprehensive Telecom Plan of ANI and Lakshadweep are fulfilled even if the estimated costs of the project(s) is somewhat more than the costs estimated by the Authority.

B. Consultation Papers:

1) Consultation Paper on the "Register of Interconnection Agreements (Broadcasting and Cable Services) Regulations, 2016"

TRAI, on 23.03.2016, released the Consultation Paper on the "Register of Interconnection Agreements (Broadcasting and Cable Services) Regulations, 2016. The primary objective of register of Interconnect regulations is to formulate the contours of a reporting system for the service providers so that they can report details of interconnection agreements including commercial details to the Authority. It would enable the Authority to maintain register of interconnection as per provisions of TRAI Act. The existing regulation mandates broadcasters of pay TV channels, DTH operators, HITS operators and IPTV operators to report to the Authority, annually, the information relating to the interconnection agreements signed among them. To simplify the process, avoid duplication of reports, and formulate its view on various issues such as accessibility of information of register, the Authority has come out with the consultation Paper. The key issues raised in the consultation are:-

- 1) Accessibility of information including commercial portion of register to any interested stakeholder

- 2) Issues in disclosure of commercial details and its role in ensuring of non-discrimination and transparency
- 3) How to ensure accuracy of reports
- 4) Suggestions on periodicity, authentication, formats and method of reporting

2) Consultation paper on “Issues related to Radio Audience Measurement and ratings in India

TRAI, on 15.03.2016, released the Consultation paper on “Issues related to Radio Audience Measurement and ratings in India” to seek the views of stakeholders. The objectives of current consultation are to (i) ensure growth of Radio broadcasting sector, (ii) ensure transparency in radio audience measurement & ratings and (iii) ensure diversity and better quality of content.

Major issues covered in the consultation paper are - Models for regulating radio rating system; Guidelines for accreditation of rating agency; Competition in rating services; Methodology for Audience Measurement; Privacy; Cross holding; Sale & use of ratings; Reporting requirements; Disclosure; and Quality & Audit.

C. Regulations:

Formats for interconnection agreement between Multi System Operator (MSO) and Local Cable Operator (LCO) for provisioning of cable TV services through Digital Addressable Systems (DAS)

TRAI, on 15.03.2016, issued the Telecommunication (Broadcasting and Cable Services) Interconnection (Digital Addressable Cable Television Systems) (Seventh Amendment) Regulations, 2016 (3 of 2016) prescribing formats of the Model Interconnection Agreement (MIA) and Standard Interconnection Agreement (SIA) to be signed between MSO and LCO for provisioning of cable TV services through Digital Addressable Systems (DAS). The Authority is of the view that the prescription of formats of MIA and SIA will pave the way for growth of the sector, result in reduction of disputes between the MSOs and LCOs, provide level playing field to the parties and increase healthy competition in the sector which ultimately will help in better quality of services to the subscribers.

D. Other Information :

i) Data relating to average duration per hour of advertisements (commercial & self promotional) during peak hours in News & pay Non-news Channels

Data relating to average duration per hour of advertisements (commercial & self promotional) during peak hours in News & pay Non-news Channels for the period 28th September 2015 to 27th December 2015 was published on TRAI's website on 03.03.2016.

ii) Telecom Subscription Data as on 31st January, 2016

| Particulars | No. of Wireless subscribers (in Millions) | No. of Wire-line Subscribers (in Millions) | No. of Total subscribers (Wireless + Wire-line) (in Millions) |
|------------------------------|--|---|--|
| Urban Subscription | 582.95 | 20.90 | 603.85 |
| Rural Subscription | 435.02 | 4.42 | 439.43 |
| Total Subscription | 1017.97 | 25.32 | 1043.29 |
| Urban Tele-density | 147.72 | 5.30 | 153.02 |
| Rural Tele-density | 49.83 | 0.51 | 50.33 |
| Overall Tele-density | 80.30 | 2.00 | 82.30 |
| Share of Urban Subscription | 57.27% | 82.56% | 57.88% |
| Share of Rural Subscription | 42.73% | 17.44% | 42.12% |
| No. of Broadband Subscribers | 123.47 | 16.63 | 140.10 |

- Mobile number Portability requests increased from 194.01 million subscribers at the end of December, 2015 to 199.62 million at the end of January, 2016. In the month of January, 2016 alone 7.31 million requests have been made for MNP.
- Active wireless subscribers on the date of Peak VLR in January, 2016 were 917.63 million.

iii) Consumer Outreach Programmes:

During March, 2016 TRAI organized five Consumer Outreach Programmes at the following places for the benefits of consumers (Name of Regional Office in bracket):

| | |
|---|------------|
| Amritsar (Punjab) | 11.03.2016 |
| Bijnor (UP) | 17.03.2016 |
| Bodhgaya (Bihar) | 18.03.2016 |
| Sikar (Rajasthan) | 29.03.2016 |
| Sivakasi, Virudhnagar District (Tamil Nadu) | 31.03.2016 |

Full details of the Directions/Orders, Recommendations, Consultation Paper, Subscription Data, etc as mentioned in this newsletter are available on our website

www.trai.gov.in

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