



Response to TRAI's
Consultation Paper on
“Ease of Doing Business in
Telecom and Broadcasting
Sector

HATHWAY DIGITAL LIMITED
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Foreword:

At the outset, we would like to put on record our sincere appreciation for the regular endeavors and measures which the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), has been taking in the recent past, to set processes in the Telecom and Broadcasting sectors by periodically introducing diverse regulations in involvement with the stakeholders of the concerned eco system.

The subject Consultation Paper (CP) on “Ease of Doing Business in Telecom and Broadcasting Sector” is a welcome step further towards simplifying the process for grant of statutory permissions and accordingly to ensure that the unnecessary processes and complex procedures are eradicated for setting up a business friendly environment.

The prospect of growth of economies across the world are adjudged on the basis of ease of doing business in the subject Country. A high ease of doing business ranking means the regulatory environment in that country is more conducive for starting and operation/conduct of a particular business.

The rankings are determined by sorting the aggregate scores on 10 parameters each consisting of several indicators, with equal weightage to each parameter.

India has been aspiring to be a leading nation in terms of Ease of Doing Business (EoDB) for attracting foreign investments thereby easing/removing the practice of requiring excessive paperwork and tedious procedures in the country.

India has been ranked at 63rd position in the World Bank’s annual Doing Business Report (DBR) 2020 as against 77th rank in the DBR 2019 thereby registering an upward jump of 14 ranks. The ease of doing business index is meant to measure regulations directly affecting business and a nation’s rank is based on the average of 10 parameters viz. starting a business, dealing with construction permits, getting electricity, registering property, getting credit, protecting minority investors, paying taxes, trading across border, enforcing contracts and resolving insolvency.

The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) is the Nodal Department for formulation of policy of the Government on Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). With a view to attract higher levels of FDI, Government has put in place a liberal policy on FDI, under which FDI, up to 100%, has been allowed in majority of sectors/activities. Significant changes have been made in the FDI policy/regime in recent times, to ensure that India remains an increasingly attractive investment destination. DPIIT plays an active role in the liberalization and rationalization of the FDI policy and to achieve the same, it has been constructively engaged in extensive stakeholder consultations on various aspects of the FDI Policy.

In order to improve the business environment in the country, DPIIT has taken up a series of measures to simplify and rationalize the regulatory processes (registration and inspection processes) and introduce ‘information technology’ as enabler to make governance more efficient. States too have been brought on board in the process to expand the coverage of these efforts. DPIIT has been closely working with the state Governments and Union Territory (UT) Administrations to help them identify the constraints in doing business and improving the overall business environment.

Telecommunication has been recognized across the globe as a powerful tool of overall development including businesses and empowerment of masses. The telecom sector has exhibited strong growth over the last few years on the back of strong consumer demand and has turned as a strong revenue source for the Government. Though the law makers has tried to ease

out the policies with respect to the Telecommunication sector but the same still needs to be looked into for further expansion of the sector.

We are thankful to TRAI for coming out with the captioned CP to identify the various bottlenecks and new process requirements, if any, and suggest measures for the reforms required in the regulatory processes, policies, practices, and procedures in the Telecom and Broadcasting sectors in creating a conducive business environment.

Though Government through DPIIT has been trying to ease out the processes for start and conduct of business there are further requirement to make the existing process, end-to-end online and paperless and make various compliances and reports submissions, including generations of Management Information System (MIS), etc., through electronic and trackable means of communications. Further, there is a requirement for implementation of a single window system, wherein an investor/entrepreneur/stakeholder can easily approach and apply for all the required and applicable licenses/approvals without any further need to submit physical copies of the application and visit any department physically and separately. We need to adopt new technologies and systems for the issues mentioned/raised under the captioned CP towards ease of doing business in these sectors to provide a hassle free, easy start, smooth running, healthy and competitive environment to all the stakeholders.

We would like to submit our response to the Consultation Paper only on those issues which are relevant to our business/sector i.e. Cable Television Services and Internet services. Our detailed submissions on the issues raises vide the CP are mentioned below:

**Thanking You,
Yours Faithfully
For Hathway Digital Limited**



**(Ajay Singh)
Non -Executive Director**

ISSUES FOR CONSULTATION

Q1. Whether the present system of licenses/permissions/registrations mentioned in para no. 2.40 or any other permissions granted by MIB, requires improvement in any respect from the point of view of Ease of Doing Business (EoDB)? If yes, what steps are required to be taken in terms of:

- a. Simple, online and well-defined processes**
- b. Simple application format with a need to review of archaic fields, information, and online submission of documents if any**
- c. Precise and well-documented timelines along with the possibility of deemed approval**
- d. Well-defined and time bound query system in place**
- e. Seamless integration and approvals across various ministries/departments with the end-to-end online system**
- f. Procedure, timelines and online system of notice/appeal for rejection/cancellation of license/permission/registration**

Give your suggestions with justification for each license/permission/ registration separately with detailed reasons along with examples of best practices if any.

Response:

Existing System for Filing of Application for Registration as MSO:

We would like to draw the attention of TRAI that although Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB) is playing a pivotal role of nodal ministry for issuance of licenses/permission/ registration applicable for the Broadcasting and Cable Sector, there is a requirement/need to change/channelize the existing processes. It may be noted that the current processes need to be improved for making the process for grant of permissions more streamlined. We acclaim that MIB has developed 'BroadcastSeva' portal with URL <http://broadcastseva.gov.in/> for submitting applications online by the stakeholders and applicants for various permissions, registrations, and licenses issued by MIB for broadcast-related activities. But thereafter the applicant is required to send the hard copy of the application along with the documents to MIB within 15 days of online submission of the application. Then the details of speed post are required to be updated over the portal. Payment of processing fees of Rs.1.00 lakh is required to be made online and thereafter, the details of challan has to be updated over the portal.

As mentioned above, after filling of application online on the BroadcastSeva, the further processes require submission of physical documents post which MIB acts on the application/request. Hence, it is suggested that the time consumed in sending physical copies to MIB post which they act on the request, should be done away with.

The process involving other various other Ministries such as Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) for Security Clearances is also a time-consuming process, where the applicant is required to approach the concerned Ministries for getting the requisite clearance. It is suggested that the procedure of

security clearances shall be simplified and rationalized in the context of ease of doing business. It may be noted that presently, ministries like Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) do not have a timeline for response. This results in delays and hectic/tiring follow ups by the applicant running from pillar to post for getting all the clearances for obtaining the License/registrations/permission. Therefore, a strict timeline should be prescribed for such clearance and in the event, such clearance is not received within the aforesaid prescribed timeline, the same shall be construed as deemed approval towards security clearances and the applicant shall be granted the final license for the provisioning and re-transmission of cable television services.

It is further suggested that in the event any applicant is denied the permission of security clearances on account of some past antecedents of any of the directors/promoters, in such case, any entity that has such directors or the 'Related Party'/'Relative' (as defined under the Companies Act, 2013) of such directors/promoters, on its Board; should be denied permission from the Ministry and shall not be allowed to engage in the business of cable television and distribution services.

AMENDMENT SOUGHT IN THE MIB REGISTRATION GRANTED:

Another suggestion that is made to the Authority in the context of provisioning Ease of Doing Business is that in the event any duly registered MSO undergoes a name change or a change in its directorship, after the grant of due registration and license from MIB, a provision should be made in terms of which such license is duly and automatically reflected in the name of the new entity after providing due intimation and submission of 'Name Change Certificate' issued by the Registrar of Companies along with Form DIR 12 filed with Registrar of Companies to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

DEVELOPMENT OF SINGLE WINDOW SYSTEM:

From the point of view of Ease of Doing Business (EoDB), if MIB designs such a portal/process similar to **National Single Window System (NSWS) of Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)** which provides the investors with information on pre-operations approvals required by any investor, both foreign and domestic. Such a portal would considerably reduce the time and effort of the applicant as well as the concerned Ministry for processing the application of the applicant for obtaining the license/registration/ permission for enabling the conduct/start of business. Once an applicant makes the application for license/registration/permission online with all the relevant documents, the further processing of the application should be routed within the concerned Ministries online and paperless to a large extent. In case there is any further requirement to be fulfilled by the applicant the same should be communicated to the applicant through the portal, via e-mail or on registered mobile number through text message. The applicant would then comply with the additional requirement online. Further the applicant should be able to track the status of his application till the final stage. This single window would reduce the timeline of the applicant in getting the license/registration/ permission. MIB should look into the aspect of reducing the timeline and prescribe the same at each stage of the online process. If in case any Ministry for any reason whatsoever is not able to grant the license/registration/permission in case the application is completed in all respect, then there should be a provision of deemed approval and the Applicant should be issued final registration/license for the purpose of provisioning of cable television and redistribution services.

Further online query and resolution of the query raised by the applicant should also be designed by introduction of a Chatbot mechanism or Virtual Assistant.

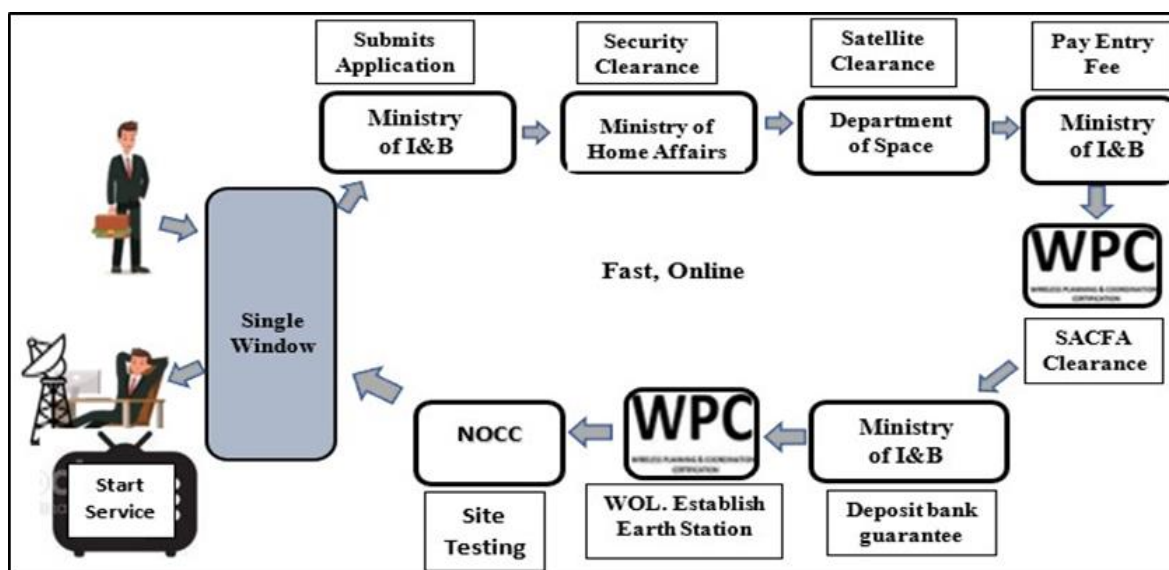
MIB is in the process of deploying a website “Digital India MIB” with the URL <https://digitalindiamib.com>, which is under construction. The aforesaid suggestions may be taken into account while designing the platform for online single window submission of application by the stakeholders for securing license/registration/ permission.

PROCESS FOR REGISTRATION OF LOCAL CABLE OPERATOR:

Further, the current process for Registration of Local Cable Operator (LCO); also needs to be modified. LCOs are obligated to use offline mode for submission of application form to its respective head post office for getting postal license certificate. All the connected activities i.e. mode of depositing fee, intimation of status of application etc. are offline. There are no actual verification facilities for these postal certificates. The Authority would acknowledge and agree that on account of existence of varied set of rules for obtaining postal registration across various districts and states in the country, the process of obtaining registration becomes cumbersome for the LCOs who intend to operationalize their business. Hence, with a view to streamline, bring complete uniformity in the registration process of such LCOs across the entire country and to ensure that such LCOs have ease in provisioning their services, we suggest that a central registering authority with centralized web portal (Single Window System) (SWS) be notified under the Cable Television Networks (CTN) Act for hassle-free registration of such LCOs. It is suggested that such LCOs may be permitted to register themselves with MIB using an automated platform with Aadhar verification and an undertaking be obtained from the LCO to comply with all relevant provisions of the CTN Act.

TRAI may implement a single window clearance system for MSOs and LCOs which will manage all the procedures i.e. from filing application through online mode till issuing license/permission/registration or and intimation of rejection/objection. This will be a landmark in the direction of ease of doing business and will be hugely beneficial for the stakeholders of the industry.

Kindly refer to the CP: Figure 2.2: wherein TRAI itself has suggested possible single window clearance system



It is further suggested that license issuing authority may ponder regarding enacting provisions/regulations for deemed approval of the license in certain cases, if the applicant fulfills the prescribed and requisite obligations and submits declaration of authenticity in certain cases wherein the prescribed timeline at any stage of the application has exceeded.

SIMPLIFYING THE PROCESS FOR REGISTRATION UNDER TAX LAWS FOR LOCAL CABLE OPERATORS:

We also take this opportunity to highlight and put to the Authority that although after the implementation of Goods and Services Tax (GST) in 2017, all form of taxes including entertainment tax as well as other local body taxes were to be subsumed under GST; however, several local bodies, in a number of states have continued to levy disparate level of local body taxes on media and entertainment industry. Such conduct of tweaking taxes by various states not only results in disparity but also defeats the objective of GST that aimed at bringing uniformity, and has also disrupted the entire tax environment. We therefore, urge to the Authority that for facilitating ease of business, all such additional local body taxes should be done away with to avoid subsistence of any parallel taxation scenario.

We have already established vide numerous representations to the Authority that all liabilities with respect to GST and the past dues of Entertainment Tax are to be borne by the LCOs as the cable television network is controlled, managed and serviced by the LCO and all payment charges towards the same are collected by the LCOs from the subscribers. Hence under all instances, these liabilities should be discharged by the LCOs. However, the Authority would be aware that in most circumstances, the LCOs are not able to undergo the complex process of GST registration and hence are left unregistered. Therefore, it is suggested that the GST registration process be simplified for such LCOs and a provision should be made on the web-based centralized portal vide which the LCOs, while making an application for LCO registration can also be simultaneously registered under the GST law and a GST number be assigned to such LCOs along with the license number. This will simplify the GST registration process for the LCOs, thereby ensuring that the applicable authorities are able to collect GST from LCOs that fall within the purview of taxation slab, without any hassle.

While the Authority has vide its Recommendations dated 31.08.2021, has duly acknowledged and recommended setting up of a single window clearance mechanism for obtaining the Right of Way (RoW) permissions, however the timeline that has been prescribed for the same, is that of a year. It is therefore suggested, that the such process of developing a single window clearance and uniform prices should be expedited for facilitating ease of business

GRANT OF POSTAL LICENSE TO LOCAL CABLE OPERATORS TO BE SIMPLIFIED AND AUTOMATED:

It may be noted that MIB has registered 1747 MSOs as on 02.12.2021 whereas an estimated 1,50,000 cable operators are operational in our country but neither we have specific details/database of the LCOs nor we have information regarding the Head Post Office which has granted the Postal License Certificate to a particular LCO. Under the current practice , LCO's are required to run from pillar to post to get the postal license , with most of the Head post offices seeking various NOC from various state authorities , which is not required under the Cable Television Act or Rules. As a results, more than 50% of the LCO's do not have the postal License. Hence it is requested to implement the process for LCO registration through online mode and establish a centralized repository system to issue certificates and maintain the database of LCOs for Pan India. We would like to suggest that validity of postal license certificate issued to LCOs should be enhanced from one year to five years. This long period will encourage both the MSOs and LCOs to enter into a long-term business relationship and refrain from execution/renewal of Model interconnection agreements due to the expiry of term of postal license certificates every year.

Q2. Whether the present system of licenses/permissions/ registrations mentioned in para no. 3.81 or any other permission granted by DoT requires improvement in any respect from the point of view of Ease of Doing Business (EoDB)? If yes, what steps are required to be taken in terms of:

a. Simple, online and well-defined processes

b. Simple application format with a need to review of archaic fields, information, and online submission of documents if any

c. Precise and well-documented timelines along with the possibility of deemed approval

d. Well-defined and time bound query system in place

e. Seamless integration and approvals across various ministries/ departments with the end-to-end online system

f. Procedure, timelines and online system of notice/appeal for rejection/cancellation of license/permission/registration

Give your suggestions with justification for each license/permission/ registration separately with detailed reasons along with examples of best practices if any.

Response:

The Authority would agree and acknowledge that the networks of MSOs and the LCOs have formidable capacity to provision broadband and internet connectivity services on account of the last mile connectivity. Recently, basis the recommendation of Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, DoT has finally adopted corrective measures and has issued an amendment in the definition of AGR, directing exclusion of revenues of non-licensed activities in the computation of AGR, thereby excluding revenues from cable television business from the computation of AGR on, i.e. with effect from 1.10.2021. While this reform will encourage many MSOs to develop infrastructure for promoting and provisioning of broadband services, however, the apprehension regarding the illegitimate/illegal demand on their Cable Television business already raised by the Department of Telecommunication, still continue to subsist amongst the MSOs and several litigations still stand pending before various forums regarding the same. We suggest that the Authority may co-ordinate with DoT for issuance of a similar clarification note for the said illegitimate/illegal demand on their Cable Television business already raised by the Department of Telecommunication, as well on the same ground, i.e. the DoT. shall ensure that it withjdrwas all such illegitimate /illegal demands raised on MSO's /LCO's, which will enable the MSOs and LCO's to channel their available resources towards further proliferation and growth of broadband services.

TRAI may also take note that while working on the ease of doing business modules the policy of Atmanirbhar Bharat i.e. Self-Reliant India and Make in India should also be kept in view i.e. foreign players should not be allowed at the cost of Indian Companies

It may be noted by TRAI that for any business to survive the financial incentive is most important factor and accordingly financial policies related to Licenses Fee and other charges should be as such that it does not put impractical burden on the Companies at the cost of its survival.

Q.12 What measures should be taken to ensure that there is no duplicity in standards or in testing at BIS, WPC, NCCS, and TEC? Which agency is more appropriate for carrying out various testing approvals? Provide your reply with justification.

Response: TRAI has vide Order dated 20.09.2021 has already designated the Telecommunication Engineering Centre (TEC) as a testing and certification agency for carrying out overall administration, co-ordination and execution of testing and certification of Conditional Access System (CAS) and Subscriber Management System (SMS). The TEC has been enshrined with the powers to provide requisite certifications and to empanel/declare the list of accredited testing labs that fulfill the requirements for carrying out testing as per the defined Test Schedules and Test Procedures. We therefore suggest that the said TEC shall also provide certification to the set top boxes (STBs) of the DPOs that are deployed and used for the purpose of retransmission of cable television signals. As such, TEC will operate as the uniform body for the purpose of providing certifications and approvals to all equipment that is used for the purpose of retransmission of cable television services. It is also suggested that the CAS and SMS vendors that are allowed to remain operative in India should strictly be incorporated and registered under the Companies Act, 2013 so that they can be subjected to the provisions of Indian laws in the event of any requirement/support. Further Not just TEC certification but all one-time exercise for recertification of old equipment should be carried out in a time bound manner say that all DPOs should be mandated to get their old equipment deployed in their network certified within next one year and all those equipments that fail the test or MSO's who do not get their equipment certified within 1 year , those equipment should be declared illegal and respective MSO should be called to replace them in next six months. In case they do not replace their equipment, which are not as per TEC standards, their MSO license should be revoked. Similarly MSO license should also be revoked for those MSO's who do not get their old equipments certified within the timeline as prescribed .

Q16. What are the issues being faced by various service providers in seeking stable and committed quality power supply connections from power DISCOMS? For state-wide operations whether it is feasible to get power supply in time bound manner for various locations from a single-window contact or has to be made region-wise. What measures do you suggest to improve the same?

Response: Electricity and Power supply is an essential element for any business operation. Hence, there has to be a continuous power supply available for running the operations of any business in a smooth manner. Also, as we have observed in the forewords in the beginning of this response above that one of the parameter out of the 10 parameters of World Bank's annual Doing Business Report 2020 for assessing the ranking in terms of EoDB is "Electricity" i.e. Power. Hence, the availability of continuous power supply is a key factor for smooth running of any business and creating a viable environment for setting up a business. However, inspite of various initiatives of Government for provision of uninterrupted power supply we are still way behind other developed countries leading to dependency on alternative supply of power like D.G. Set at the cost of our finances and environment.

We would like to submit that the following issues are being faced by service providers which are as under:

Interrupted Power Supply: The service providers are encountered with interrupted power supply/ power cut from time to time which affects the continuous functioning of Headend for CATV business and Switch in respect of ISP business leading to disruption in service to the end user which is beyond the control of service provider.

Continuous power supply is, therefore, essential for the Headend location in Cable TV Business as well as for switch location for ISP Services. In order to ensure continuous power supply, the electricity board must consider provision of "Hotline" i.e. dedicated supply to the Telecom and Broadcasting sector in the manner it is supplied to railways, metro, hospitals, Doordarshan, crematorium etc. It may be pointed out that Telecom and Broadcasting also comes under the

purview of “Essential Services”.

Since electricity is a must for operation of Headend, control room, STM in CATV business and Switch, MDN in ISP business, so an operator (MSO, ISP) must receive required supply within a specific timeframe after making an Application to the Board.

All processes related to the application, payment of fees etc. should be made online through a single body i.e the Central Electricity Board, which in turn will percolate the request to the respective State Electricity Board for providing the electricity supply/connection in a time bound manner.

We submit that the role of the Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (CERC) and State Electricity Regulatory Commissions (SERC) is extremely crucial as SERC needs to come up with detailed policies for the respective States within the framework provided by these rules for some of the policy steps enshrined in the Electricity (Rights of Consumers) Rules, 2020. In addition, they can ensure compliance with the various aspects of Electricity Rules, 2020 by DISCOMs.

To conclude there should be a single mechanism in place for the continuous and uninterrupted power supply and at the same time the quality of power supply provided by DISCOMS should not be compromised in view of the suggestions given above.

Q17. Whether the extant mechanism of reporting and filing at the SARAS portal and the offices of Controller of Communication Accounts (CCA) simple and user-friendly? If not, what measures are required to make it simple, transparent, and robust? Justify your comments.

Response: We state that the extant mechanism of reporting and filing at the SARAS portal and the offices of Controller of Communication Accounts (CCA) needs improvement keeping in mind the EoDB. As suggested in our earlier responses, the portal should be equipped in such a manner that multiple Bank Guarantees which are submitted by the single operator for different licensed service areas may be consolidated and furnished at a single point. In short, License Fee (LF)/Spectrum Usage Charge (SUC) payments, Bank Guarantee related submissions, receipt and response to various notifications and notice, including deduction verification related Show Cause Notice, LF/SUC demand notices, BG related notices as well as submission and response to representation and grievances must be centralised at one portal with hyperlinked to related sites for post license financial activities.

Q20. What measures are required to be taken to simplify the various submissions/filings made by teleport operators, DTH operators, MSOs, and other stakeholders at MIB? Provide your detailed reply with justifications.

And

Q21. TRAI seeks multiple reports through its multiple divisions at predefined frequency intervals. Reports submitted by operators are examined and for non-compliances, show cause notices are issued and financial disincentives are imposed, wherever applicable. Do you think there is a need to improve reporting and compliance system in TRAI? Please elaborate your response with justifications.

Response: In the context of a MSO we are clubbing the response to questions 20 and 21. There are various reports which are required to be submitted to TRAI at periodic intervals. The reports almost captures the entire functioning of a MSO. These reports are given on monthly, quarterly and yearly basis. Though compliance and audit is crucial for maintaining regulatory check over the service providers TRAI must reconsider the over/undesired interference into the functioning of a MSO. It becomes cumbersome when repeated information is required to be furnished during filing of each report. In our opinion, if these reports are integrated together in such a way that the service provider is relieved from the task of submitting the data on repetitive basis which can

simplify the task of the MSO on one hand and on the other hand the TRAI could get the desired information in a single report itself. Say for example if reports pertaining to the financial operations and subscriber related data is integrated in a single report it would be easier for the MSO to furnish the information at a single go and also TRAI does not have to go through series of reports. Further, the report filing interval may be reduced from monthly to quarterly only. Thirdly, as the government has undertaken so many initiatives towards “ease of doing business” and our country has excelled in the ranking from 130th position in 2016 to 63rd position in 2020, which itself proves that if the processes are simplified, the service providers will be able to concentrate more towards their basic functioning. Hence, online filing of reports should be mechanized in such a way that TRAI could be able to access the individual service provider reports and while also ensuring that data privacy and secrecy is maintained. Hence, if the processes for making submissions and filing of reports to the government are simplified, the non-compliance related to these filing would be reduced to a considerable extent, which in effect would reduce the financial disincentive that may be imposed on the MSOs.

We seek to bring to the kind attention of the Authority that lately, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has been seeking various information through Prasar Bharti, that are already part of the Monthly Performance Monitoring Report (M-PMR) and the Quarterly Performance Monitoring Report (Q-PMR) which are submitted by the DPOs to the Authority on monthly and quarterly basis respectively. We suggest that the Authority should devise a centralised portal for submission of such reports and till such time, the concerned department of the Ministry may directly co-ordinate with the Authority for procuring such relevant data. This will save considerable time for both the DPOs as well as the applicable authorities as the concerned departments can directly obtain access of such reports from TRAI and will not have to await for such data from the DPOs.

It is also suggested to the Authority that all players in the Television Distribution Market should be mandated to share the aforesaid information in terms of monthly and quarterly reports, without any exception so that the Authority has an overall and accurate insight into the television distribution market. Besides that, any DPO that fails to share its monthly and quarterly reports for a period of six months should be mandatorily subjected to the termination and/or suspension of license, as and what the Authority may deem fit. This will ensure that only serious and compliant DPOs continue to sustain and are allowed to continue operationalizing their business.

To conclude on this issue, since we are moving towards “Digital India”, where telecommunication and broadcasting sectors have emerged as key drivers of economic and social development and investors are looking towards these sectors as an opportunity, the processes should be made simpler and consolidated.

Q22. Identify those redundant items which require deletions and at the same time the items that need to be included in the reporting and regulatory compliance systems due to the technological advancements. Suggest such changes with due justifications.

And

Q23. What kind of IT-based reports and compliance submission processes do you suggest in TRAI? Provide your comments.

Response: In respect of ISP Business, the Service Provider has to file multiple reports, with multiple information to Department of Telecommunications(DoT) and also to each CCA separately.

Reports are filed pertaining to financial aspects, technical related, network set up, customer care related etc. Due to the technological advancement, various sectors have simplified their processes by moving towards online submissions and filing/reporting of the compliance desired by their regulators which is an effective step towards EoDB. Hence, for our sector it is high time to simplify our processes for reporting compliance. Following are the suggestions made as a step forward towards EoDB:

i. Currently reports are filed in almost all the Regional Office apart from DoT – HO;

It is suggested that applying the concept of single window reporting, methodology for submission of a single exhaustive and comprehensive report with DoT-HO may be adopted rather than sending reports at individual regional offices of DoT. Also mechanism to retrieve the reports filed in DoT-HO by the Regional HO should be put in place.

ii. Formats of the reports are not standardised and are often region specific as different region requests for different information;

Reporting formats needs to be standardised for all offices of DOT including Regional Offices and circulated to all the stakeholders and ISP Operators with directives to follow the same.

iii. It is noticed that there are certain information asked for are irrelevant;

Information such as details of job creation, OFC Count, Physical Audit of Broadband Enterprise customers, Copies of invoices issued of past 6 months etc. directly has no bearing to the protection of customer interest or development of business /industry. Hence, such information should be kept out of the reporting parameters.

iv. Reports are sent monthly, quarterly, half-yearly as well as yearly;

Frequency of sending reports needs to be reduced, as reiterated in our earlier response, these frequency may be brought down to quarterly reporting for the reasons enumerated therein in our response to question no. 20 and 21.

In respect of CATV Business – reporting and compliance requirements as per the Regulations and Tariff Orders viz (1) the Telecommunication (Broadcasting and Cable) Services (Eighth) (Addressable Systems) Tariff Order, 2017, (2) the Telecommunication (Broadcasting and Cable) Services Interconnection (Addressable Systems) Regulations, 2017, The Telecommunication (Broadcasting and Cable) Services Register of Interconnection Agreements and all such other matters Regulations, 2019 and the Telecommunication (Broadcasting and Cable) Services Standards of Quality of Service and Consumer Protection (Addressable Systems) Regulations, 2017 we state that;

- At present there are more than 1,50,000 LCOs associated with 1747 MSOs and 357 broadcasters.
- So huge number of interconnect agreements are executed and details of execution of such agreements including accepted Reference Interconnect Offer (RIO) are reported to TRAI. Amongst them a large number of agreements are in Standard Format viz: Model Interconnect Agreement (MIA), Standard Interconnect Agreements (SIA)
- These agreements mostly have a period of validity of only one (1) year and hence renewed every year.
- Submission of copies of agreements, RIOs and along with renewals between such huge number of LCOs and MSOs apart from other reports pertaining to change in bouquet, its pricing etc. needless to say, is an herculean task.
- TRAI may consider to waive off submission of copies in case of Standard Agreements and simply adopt /install an online mechanism where both the parties i.e. distributors and LCOs confirm to TRAI through online mode about the execution and existence of agreements of Standard Format prescribed by TRAI with each other and also confirm the details and particulars of agreements already reported by the MSO.
- There is requirement of some mechanism to report to the TRAI about hurdles and issues faced by the MSO so that TRAI may intervene and work out redressal of the issues such as STB

