



COAI

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I-DIGEST

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LT. GEN DR. SP KOCHHAR (RETD.)

Director General, COAI

From DG's Desk

In the contemporary age of advanced 5G technology, the convergence of technology presents both unique opportunities and challenges for India. This convergence holds the potential to drive innovation, enhance productivity, and stimulate economic growth. However, it also brings forth new security implications. It is of paramount importance for India to devise comprehensive strategies to address these security concerns. By addressing and emphasizing these security challenges, India can pave the way for a secure and prosperous digital future in this age of technological convergence.

5G technology holds significant promise in the realm of disaster management. 5G's near-instantaneous communication and data sharing capabilities would be crucial for successful disaster response efforts. 5G's capacity for Massive Machine Type Communication (mMTC) allows for seamless integration of thousands of devices and systems, ensuring that every response unit, whether on ground or in a control room, receives real-time updates. In rescue operations, drones, equipped with thermal imaging and connected through 5G, can efficiently survey vast areas transmitting real-time images and data back to the rescue teams, expediting the tracking of location of survivors. By leveraging 5G's high-speed and low-latency network, remote experts can provide real-time guidance to on-ground teams. The key now lies in making this technology accessible and integrated into our disaster response systems.

We applaud the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) for introducing the amended RoW rules, which are designed to expedite the 5G rollout across the nation. The latest amendment will enable rapid network reinstatement in the event of underground telecom infrastructure damage, expedite 5G rollout by utilizing the state's existing infrastructure, simplify application procedures for multiple small cell sites and allocate Central government areas for small cell deployment at no cost. These measures will collectively enhance ease of doing business within the sector, while aiding in expansive network deployments for ubiquitous connectivity across the country. The real benefits of these measures, however, would depend upon their effective implementation by local authorities in letter and spirit. The industry looks forward to working with state governments and different agencies to bring these changes on ground and speed up as well as smoothen the network deployments across India.

We have urged the government to clearly define Over-The-Top (OTT) services within the telecom sector and to bring them under regulatory oversight. It is essential to delineate OTT Communication services in the upcoming Telecom Bill to eliminate regulatory disparities, ensure clarity and prevent potential ambiguities, to promote fair competition



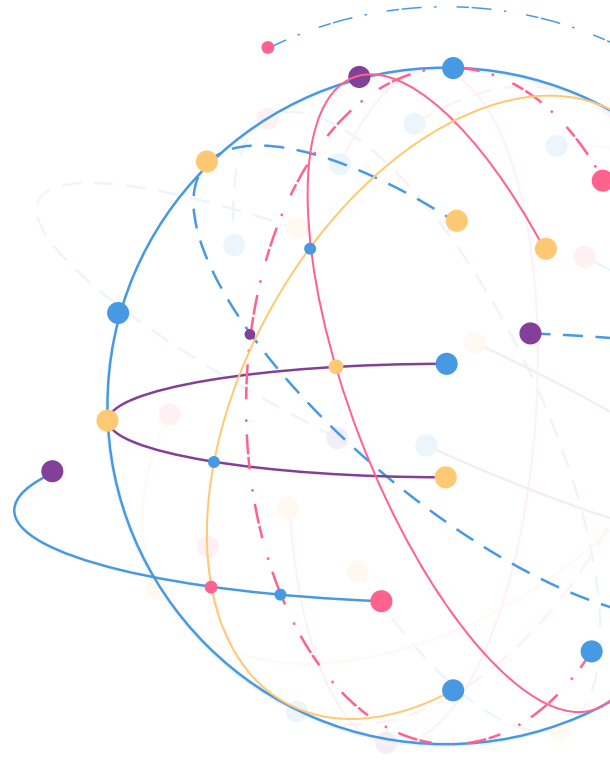
and establish an equitable landscape. The telecom industry, which is already heavily burdened by the highest taxation, regulatory costs, license fees, high costs of spectrum, telecom equipment and security apparatus, besides the continued investments to maintain and upgrade the networks to cater to the ever-increasing data demands of the users, should be fairly compensated by the OTTs which exploit the TSPs' networks to provide profitable services to their users. This would be imperative for the growth and sustainability of this essential infrastructure sector, which continues to play a vital role in the socio-economic development and prosperity of the nation.

– **LT. GEN DR. SP KOCHHAR (RETD.)**
Director General, COAI



COAI

Latest Updates:



Review of various Regulations, Directions, and reporting requirements for Ease of Doing business

We submitted a letter to TRAI on 10th August 2023 where we re-iterated our stance on the need to make certain changes in the extant regulatory provisions under various regulations, directions and reporting requirements.

TRAI Draft Telecommunication Consumer Education and Protection Fund (Sixth Amendment) Regulations, 2023

We submitted our response to TRAI on 14th August 2023 covering Membership of CUTCEF, Utilization of TCEPF, Workshops held by TSPs, Banking procedure be adopted for depositing amount collected by TSPs and exemption of service SMS charges.

Simplification of Verification Process for Deductions from Gross Revenue for Access Services

We have submitted a letter to DoT on 18th August 2023 requesting that deductions for Access Services be permitted based on audit certificates, following the same approach as NLD and ILD services. However, in case DoT still believes that the same is not feasible, it may kindly consider the sample base verification process as recommended by TRAI in Recommendations dated 02.05.2023 on EoDB.

Conducting of "Consumer Education Workshops (CEWs)" via digital/online mode

We have submitted a letter to TRAI on 7th August 2023 to continue to allow the TSPs to conduct at least 50% of the CEWs via online mode and extend the same for one year i.e. till 30th September 2024.

TRAI Consultation Paper on Review of Quality-of-Service Standards for Access Services (Wireless and Wireline) and Broadband (Wireless and Wireline) Services

TRAI released the Consultation Paper on 18th August 2023 with the last date for submission of Response on 20th September 2023. The Consultation Paper proposes to

review the present QoS standards for Wireless and Wireline Services comprehensively and will have far reaching implications on the sector.

Open House Discussion

Open House Discussion was held on 24th August 2023 on the TRAI Consultation Paper on Definition of International Traffic. We submitted before the Authority that there is no need to define what International Traffic, but it is to clarify that SMS originated from international servers/entities and masqueraded as domestic SMS by introducing a proxy server in India, would classify as International Message as per existing licensing norms.

Submission to Chairperson, Tamil Nadu Electricity Regulatory Commission Requesting to put Telecom Services in Industrial Tariff Category, 2nd August 2023

We requested to categorize Telecom under Industrial tariff slab. At present the charges are in commercial rates. It was also highlighted in said letter that Himachal Pradesh has also recently made this change. Further, the additional recommendations of the working group to the Forum of Indian Regulators (FOIR) on 'Cross Sector Collaborative Regulation Between Telecom Regulators and Electricity Regulators' has stated that "Telecom sites should be provided electricity connection under Utility /Industrial tariff. SERCs may be requested to incorporate the same in their tariff orders".

In-person meeting With NBM Team

A meeting along with representatives of members was held to discuss the online portal concerns and issues, especially related to Ministry of Defence, it was done on 02nd August 2023 with Director Shri Ganesh Bokade and the NBM IT team.

Submission to Chief Secretary, Karnataka

A letter to chief secretary, Govt of Karnataka on 04th August 2023, submitting issues raised during 4th SBC. Important industry concerns, like Adoption of Central Government RoW amendments by the State, Facilitative and Business enabling policy by Urban Local Bodies,

stopping of coercive action by Civic authority in Mysore, Permission for Aerial OFC, recent order by PWD on formulation of SoP etc. were highlighted.

Submission to Chief Secretary, Telangana

A reminder letter to Chief Secretary, Govt of Telangana was written on 07th August 2023 requesting early implementation of amendments in State RoW Policy which shall support in creating a robust Telecom/Digital Infrastructure and set benchmark of digital prowess and progress for all states.

Submission to Principal Secretary, IT & DS, Government of Tamil Nadu

A letter to Principal Secretary, IT&DS was written on 09 August 2023, requesting inclusion of Telecom in Tamil Nadu IT Policy 2023. The state should include "Telecommunications" under the definition of IT/ITeS companies and all incentives should automatically be extended. It is pertinent to note that IT/ITeS policy of many states like Rajasthan, Bihar and Andhra Pradesh have already done this and such an action will support State of Tamil Nadu in achieving the objective of 'Investment Promotion' of the policy, while strengthening the digital progress and advancement of the State.

Internal Meeting with M&G CCC members

An Internal meeting with the members of M&G area was conducted on 14th August 2023 to discuss RoW Policy and other related issues including EMF concerns in Goa.

Submission to Deputy Chief Minister, Karnataka

A letter to Deputy Chief Minister, Karnataka has been written on 23rd August 2023 requesting for Industry Meeting. Objective is to get the policy amendment notified immediately and create facilitative business environment for the industry for deploying robust telecom infra in the state.

Submission and meeting with Additional Chief Secretary UDD, Karnataka

A letter to Sh. Rakesh Kumar Singh, ACS, UDD, Karnataka was written on 23rd August 2023 requesting for Industry Meeting. The industry meeting led by COAI, was held on 28th August 2023 and all industry concerns were highlighted and discussed in detail. The ACS patiently heard and conveyed that actions are already underway for early resolution on most of the industry concerns.

8th SBC of the State of Rajasthan on 22nd August 2023 & subsequent submission

8th SBC meeting of Rajasthan was organised on 22nd August 2023. The meeting was chaired by the Chief Secretary, Ms. Usha Sharma, IAS. COAI raised important industry concerns - Additional Charges for Multicable on poles, Adoption of State RoW Policy by various Civic Authorities, Fixing rentals for use of common Duct, Delay in new Electricity connection due to shortfall of Transformer etc. A formal submission is also made on all points to Chief Secretary, post the meeting.

4th SBC of UT of Lakshadweep on 24th August 2023

4th SBC meeting of Lakshadweep UT was organised on 24th August 2023. The meeting was chaired by advisor to Administrator. The chair wanted COAI to carry message to all private TSPs that they should invest in the UT as the Undersea cable is providing very good bandwidth and tourism will pick, thereby giving business viability to private players.

Meeting by Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority (CMDA)

A hybrid meeting on inputs for Broadband Coverage and Infrastructure in the next Chennai Master Plan of 20 years, was held by CMDA on 25th August 2023. COAI participated virtually and member representatives participated in-person. Constructive inputs were provided during the meeting, some documents will be provided to CMDA in due course of time.

Session organised by the Govt of Madhya Pradesh on 28th August 2023

An introductory session was organised by the State of Madhya Pradesh on the amendment made in the state RoW policy. COAI participated in-person and shared a presentation on industry readiness etc, the session also saw the 5G use cases examples and discussion around 5G deployment status, related challenges etc.

Submission to Chief Secretary, Govt of Karnataka

A letter to Chief Secretary, Govt of Karnataka requesting for an Industry meeting, along with concerned departmental Secretaries, for a detailed discussion on challenges being faced by the industry and possible resolution for faster and robust deployment of telecom infra in the state.

Submission to Managing Director, ELCOT

A letter to Managing Director, ELCOT to apprise regarding damages to telecom infrastructure due to maintenance or laying new conduits by various Government agencies. Further, requesting for a coordination meeting be arranged urgently between the TSPs and the concerned Government agencies, to ensure the security of telecom infrastructure assets of our members and prevent disruptions in the services to the citizens.

Submission to Managing Director, BESCO

A letter is written to MD BESCO on dated 29th August 2023, to sum up the points discussed during the meeting with Industry and MD on 25th August 2023. This letter emphasized to stop the coercive action resulting in damage to members overhead cables.

Submission to DG, Ministry of Environment Forests & Climate Change (MoEF&CC)

A letter was submitted to DG (MoEF&CC) on "Seeking clarity on streamlining the process of approval under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 for laying OFC in the RoW of roads".

Certain directions issued by the Ministry has given ambiguous interpretation in the field.

Letter to Joint Electricity Regulatory Commission for Goa and UTs (JERC)

Separate letters were submitted for J&K and Ladakh to Chairman (JERC) with a request that Telecom Industry electricity tariff may kindly be placed under Industrial rates rather than the commercial rates.

Positive direction on Safety and Security of Telecom Infra by Deputy Commissioner, East Delhi

An order issued by Office of Deputy Commissioner (East Delhi) directing concerned officials to facilitate telecom infrastructure in their jurisdiction and for safety and security of Telecom infrastructure. Also, a nodal officer, ACP rank has been appointed for East Delhi to mitigate any issue faced by TSPs/IPs.

Submission post Gujarat 5th State Broadband Committee (SBC) meeting

A submission was made to Chief Secretary on 3rd August, highlighting industry challenges and support required from Govt. of Gujarat post Gujarat 5th SBC meeting held on 20th July 2023 under the chairmanship of Shri Raj Kumar, IAS (CS, Gujarat).

Ladakh 3rd UT Broadband Committee meeting

Ladakh 3rd UT BC meeting was held on 07th August 2023 under the chairmanship of Shri Pawan Kotwal, IAS (Advisor to Hon'ble Lt. Governor). COAI highlighted industry request for support regarding priority EB connection, EB at Industrial tariff and Green Energy.

Industry Meeting with CEO Noida Authority

An Industry meeting was held with Dr Lokesh M, IAS (CEO, Noida Authority) to create robust telecom infrastructure in the city and taking steps to resolve the industry issues. A written submission posts our meeting was also made on 18th August 2023.

Uttar Pradesh State Broadband Committee meeting

UP SBC meeting was held on 10th August 2023 under the chairmanship of Shri Durga Shanker Mishra, IAS (CS, UP). COAI highlighted industry requests for support regarding priority Policy Alignment, High Restoration Charges, EB connection, EB at Industrial tariff and Green Energy.

Letter to Govt. of Uttar Pradesh for EB related Support

Telecom being an Essential service, submission was made on 21st August 2023 to Principal Secretary (IT) to consider Telecom services under the IT/ITES Category and Chairman (UPERC) and Secretary (Energy) to direct DISCOMs to align Pole charges with UPROW Amendment Policy, 2023.

Submission to Himachal Pradesh Electricity Regulatory Commission (HPERC)

Submission dated 22nd August 2023, requesting Chairman HPERC to adopt the Ministry of Power, Government of India Electricity (Promoting Renewable Energy Through Green Energy Open Access) (Second Amendment) Rules 2023, thereby allowing 100 kW aggregation.

Joint Submission to Secretary (Telecom) on CAQM directions on use of DG sets in Delhi NCR

To ensure continuity of communication network services to the citizens across Delhi NCR once GRAP is implemented, the industry submitted a Joint letter (with DIPA) to Secretary (T) to seek an urgent meeting to discuss crucial issue in detail.

Submission to Gujarat Electricity Regulatory Commission (GERC)

Submission dated 27th August 2023 made to Chairman, requesting GERC to adopt the Ministry of Power, Government of India Electricity (Promoting Renewable Energy Through Green Energy Open Access) (Second Amendment) Rules 2023.

Submission to Odisha Electricity Regulatory Commission (OERC)

COAI submitted its objections to Odisha State Electricity Commission on the draft Green Open Access regulations released by the commission on 28th August 2023.

4th SBC Tripura

The 4th SBC of Tripura was held on 1st August 2023 under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary. COAI Highlighted the Industry issues.

2nd SBC Nagaland

The 2nd SBC of Tripura was held on 4th August 2023 under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary. COAI Highlighted the Industry issues.

6th SBC Arunachal Pradesh

The 6th SBC of Arunachal Pradesh was held on 17th August 2023 under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary. COAI Highlighted the Industry issues.

5th SBC Mizoram

The 5th SBC of Mizoram was held on 17th August 2023 under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary. COAI Highlighted the Industry issues.

Submission to Commissioner Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation

A submission was made to Commissioner regarding Industry concern on RoW Permissions, requesting for Clarity of jurisdiction between BMC and Bhubaneswar

TRAI CP on "Encouraging Innovative Technologies, Services, Use Cases, and Business Models through Regulatory Sandbox in Digital Communication Sector"

TRAI CP on "Encouraging Innovative Technologies, Services, Use Cases, and Business Models through Regulatory Sandbox in Digital Communication Sector"

This is with reference to the TRAI Consultation Paper on "Encouraging Innovative Technologies, Services, Use Cases, and Business Models through Regulatory Sandbox in Digital Communication Sector" released on June 19, 2023.

In this regard, COAI submitted its counter comments to TRAI on 02.08.2023.

COAI Letter - IP Messaging

This is in furtherance to COAI letter dated 6th June 2023 and presentation dated 4th July 2023 on 'IP messages by Handset Manufactures/OEMs' (hereinafter mentioned as IP messages).

In this regard, COAI Letter was submitted to TRAI on 09.08.2023 highlighting the Urgent action required on IP - Messaging Services masqueraded as SMS.

E-waste (Management) Rules, 2022- Implementation for Telecom Equipment

COAI submitted a letter on 10.08.2023 to MoEFCC highlighting various Industry's request for consideration.

Introduction of E-SIM in handsets

COAI submitted a letter on 23.08.2023 reiterating our earlier submission- Issue necessary instructions recommending to Handset manufacturers in the country to introduce E-SIMS (in addition to the physical SIM slot) in all smartphone handsets costing Rs. 10,000/- and above on the subject cited above.

Facilitating CERT-In for installation activities at IP Flow Information Export (IPFIX) sites placed by DoT

This is with reference to the O.M issued by DoT dated 3rd April 2023 on "Sharing of traffic metadata from TSOC with NCCC-reg". In this regard, COAI submitted a Letter on 31.08.2023 on the subject requesting DoT to keep in abeyance the said requirements till clarifications are provided.

Represent on Demand Notices for SUC Assessment

It is a general practice that when SUC assessments are carried out by assessing officers in the Offices of Controller of Communication Accounts (CCAs) in circles, an opportunity is extended to the TSPs to respond to the issued demand notices. With this, TSPs were allowed to address any concerns raised by the assessing officers.

After the issue of the O.M. No. 1000/11/2022-WR dated 17/11/2022, which pertains to the decentralization of Assessment of Spectrum Usage Charges (SUC) and Redressal of grievances. TSPs, who previously had the opportunity to represent their cases against demand notices before the assessing officers, are now being instructed to directly approach the Appellate Authority in many cases.

This shift has raised concerns as it deprives TSPs of the valuable chance to address issues and seek resolution before the final decision is made.

In this regard, we have made representation to DoT requesting.

- That assessing officers be asked to continue the opportunity for Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) to represent their cases regarding demand notices in the first place.
- In case of rejection of submission, the reason for the same be duly recorded and intimated to the TSPs before the final decision is taken by the assessing officer.
- In case, a Show Cause cum Demand notice is issued, and the matter is referred to the Appellate Authority, the matter to be timely resolved by allowing a proper opportunity of being heard to the TSPs, for addressing their grievances.

Representation to NITI AAYOG tax related issues pertaining telecom equipment & services exports

On August 22, 2023, a meeting was called by Sr Adviser, Niti Aayog. Following issues were discussed:

- Denial of ITC on telecom equipment and accessories installed on towers
- Exemption from GST on Spectrum payment, License fees, Spectrum usage charge
- Refund of Accumulated balance in Input Tax Credit
- Compliances related issues.

6GHz

COAI submitted a letter to DoT dated 10.08.2023 on utilization of 6 GHz Frequency Band in IMT/5G for national benefit request DoT/WPC to continue supporting the upper part of the 6 GHz band i.e., 6425-7125 MHz for IMT in the APG-2023 (Agenda item 1.2) and during the WRC-2023.

E-waste (Management) Rules, 2022- Implementation for Telecom Equipment:

COAI submitted a letter on 10.08.2023 to MoEFCC highlighting various Industry's requests for consideration. A meeting with Shri Anand Kumar, Director and Head of WM-III Division, CPCB was held on 24th August 2023. MoM w.r.t meeting held at CPCB was circulated for members

approval and further submission. A letter requesting the CPCB to give extension on release of imported consignment of Producers of 106 EEE items from Customs, as the last circular is on deadline of 31st August 2023.

DOT's Stakeholder discussion on creation of new HS code/product identifiers for telecom networking products:

COAI and members attended the DoT's stakeholder discussion on 25th August 2023, chaired by Shri R K Pathak, DDG (IC), DoT. MoM of this meeting was circulated among members. An internal meeting with Members was also called on 29th August 2023 to decide on further action by industry.

TEC's G20 deliberation on Circular Economy in Telecommunication Sector:

COAI being part of the Committee and Sub-Committee for Circular Economy in Telecommunication Sector's Draft

Policy and Action Plan documents. In August 2023, two meetings were held in this regard and a recommendation document has been formulated for consideration and comments of industry members.

New Member Joining - ACES India Private Limited has joined COAI as a New Associate Member

ACES is Neutral Host Operator in Saudi Arabia with Wholesale infrastructure license from CITC and in India with UL/VNO Category B license from DoT. The company services demand for IBS infrastructure (In-Building Solutions) from telecom operators along with offering cost effective IBS networks capable of accommodating several mobile operators, thus improving the quality of service along with reducing the investment costs of telecom operators. In addition, the Neutral host business also targets small cells, Smart parking, Fiber OSP, IoT, Wi-Fi & Integrated Security Systems.

Can technology help in disasters, emergencies and rescue operation?

Natural calamities, disasters and accidents are some of the greatest challenges we confront. Recent events like devastating railway accident and cyclone Biparjoy are examples of where we have had to contend with emergencies. What possibly can be done to minimise damage and losses to lives and property?

[Read more](#)



Emerging security implications in the era of technology convergence

Convergence can amplify the attack surface through a troika of increased digital access, rapid digitalization and amalgamation of technologies.

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COAI asks DoT to back 6 GHz band for 5G, 6G at key APAC telecom meet

India's top telcos have urged the DoT to bat for deploying the upper portion of the 6 GHz spectrum band for 5G services in India.

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Jio, Airtel differ on use of USO Fund for tower fiberisation

India's top two telecom operators- Reliance Jio and Bharti Airtel- have divergent views on the use of the Universal service obligation Fund (USOF).

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COAI lauds the government's Right of Way rules amendments

The COAI, India's telecom industry representative body, praised the DoT for the introduction of "The Indian Telegraph Right of Way (Amendment) Rules, 2023."

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India's Digital Future: Navigating Regulatory Landscape| Digital India Vision 8.0: Techade of Youth

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Fibre rollout pace jumps 6- fold since 5G launch; still trail targets, global markets

Despite this, fibre penetration to telecom towers, which is critical for 5G services in India.

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