



COAI

ISSUE
JULY 2023

I-DIGEST

Connecting the World

News for you,
information that matters



www.coai.in

CONTENT

- 3 From DG's Desk
- 4 COAI Latest Updates
- 8 News Wires
- 9 COAI Events





LT. GEN DR. SP KOCHHAR (RETD.)

Director General, COAI

From DG's Desk

The world is going into digital transformation and by the end of 2023, the digital transformation will be well underway. In recent years, general trends such as 5G, artificial intelligence, cloud computing, and the Internet of Things have seen a big transformation in the industry.

India now has the second largest 5G network in the world on the back of the fastest 5G rollout with 300,000 sites set up in 10 months. The advancement in 5G technology paved its way across various socioeconomic sectors including education, agriculture, urban management, logistics, tourism, E-governance etc. In addition to 5G, telecom companies are also working on upgrading their core networks which will provide foundation for future digital services such as cloud computing and the Internet of Things.

Artificial intelligence is another major trend of 2023 that will pave way for chatbots and virtual customer assistants. Field and service operations account for 60 to 70 percent of most telcos' operating budgets, so applying AI can offer real and rapid benefits.

On the other hand, TRAI has initiated a Consultation process regarding regulation of OTT Communication apps, which addresses some crucial concerns raised by the telecom industry. This proactive approach by the Regulator demonstrates their commitment to establishing a progressive and adaptable regulatory framework, capable of catering to the evolving technology landscape. We also believe that this is an acknowledgement of the merit that the Government has found in our submissions. We look forward to participating in the consultation process to provide our inputs and are hopeful that the industry's concerns will be met rationally."

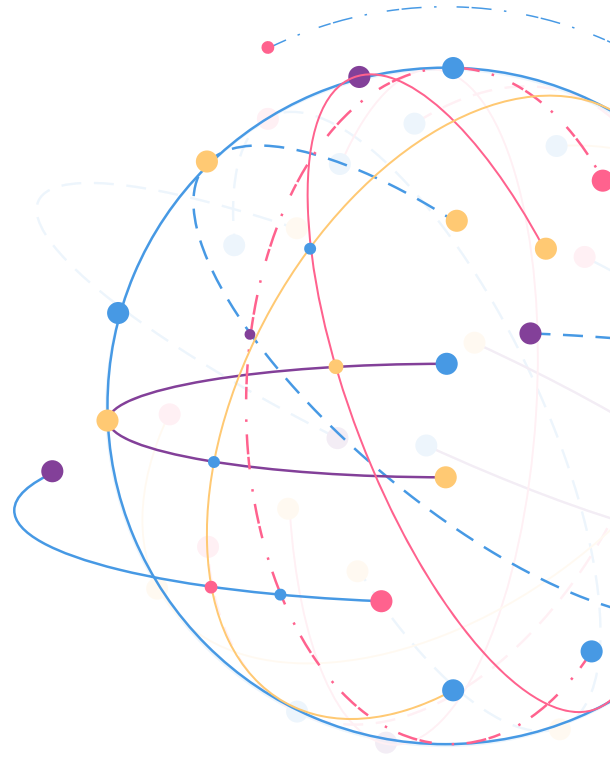
With immense gratitude and honor, we extend our thanks to the Hon'ble Minister for Communications, Electronics & Information Technology, and Railways, Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw, for inaugurating the Curtain Raiser of India Mobile Congress-2023 on July 12, 2023, alongside the esteemed presence of Shri Devusinh Chauhan, Minister of State for Communications; Shri VL Kantha Rao, Additional Secretary, DoT and Mr. Pramod Kumar Mittal, Chairman COAI. The event promises a transformative impact, creating abundant opportunities for individuals and businesses, potentially reshaping India's economic landscape. As we eagerly prepare for the upcoming IMC 2023 in October, we anticipate a multifaceted and significant impact on various fronts.

Although the telecom industry continues to face formidable headwinds, the new trends can help mitigate them with services to ripen opportunities. The ubiquity of technology and the growing application of AI in particular are enabling a new wave of growth and disruption. Telcos that take the support unity to continue to innovate on this path are more likely to emerge as the undisputed leaders in the long run.



COAI

Latest Updates:



Open House Discussions

Open House Discussion was held on 07.07.2023 on the Draft "Review of the Quality of Service (Code of Practice for Metering and Billing Accuracy) Regulations".

TRAI Consultation Paper on Definition of International Traffic

COAI submitted its response to the CP on 11.07.2023, stating that there is no need to define the term International Traffic in itself, but rather clarify on the messages sent from international servers. Further, we submitted our counter comments on the said CP on 25.07.2023, stating - (i) that the Authority should provide clarification on the treatment of traffic generated by international entities, and (ii) that the present regime of forbearance in international SMS termination should be continued with.

Energy Smart Grids including Smart Metering to be provided using Licensed Spectrum

We submitted a letter to the Ministry of Power (MoP) on 12.07.2023, raising concerns on the use of unlicensed band via RF Mesh for Smart Grid deployment. Vide the said letter, we emphasised that Energy Smart Grid is a service that has been identified as critical by the Inter-Ministerial Working Group (IMWG). We reiterated the need to provide Smart Metering Infrastructure by using only Licensed Band.

Simplification of verification process for deduction from GR for Access Services

We submitted a letter to DoT on 20.07.2023, requesting DoT to apply the same auditing methodology as is being done for NLDO and ILDO, where audit certificates are considered for allowing deductions and with no mandate of verifying each invoice. This modification would simplify the compliance requirement and reduce the administrative burden on service providers.

Storage of CDR/IPDR

We submitted a follow-up letter on 24.07.2023, requesting

DoT to reduce the storage period of CDR/IPDR to one year only, instead of two years.

TRAI Consultation Paper on Regulatory Mechanism for OTT Communication Services and Selective Banning of OTT services

We submitted a letter to TRAI on 25.07.2023, seeking an extension of six weeks on the deadline for submitting our response to the CP.

Report of the Committee constituted vide OM dated 03.11.2022, on regulation 6 GHz band

COAI signed the final report submitted to WPC and provided its additional comments on 05.07.2023. Accordingly, a COAI letter was submitted to the Telecom Secretary on this matter on 07.07.2023.

COAI Letter - Suggested FAQs on IT Amendment Rules - (Online Gaming)

In regard to the Draft amendments to the IT (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, in relation to online gaming issued by MeitY on 02.01.2023, COAI submitted a Letter to MeitY on "suggested FAQs on Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Amendment Rules, 2023 ("IT Amendment Rules") on 06.07.2023.

TRAI Consultation Paper on Encouraging Innovative Technologies, Services, Use Cases, and Business Models through Regulatory Sandbox in Digital Comm Sector

TRAI issued this CP on 19th June 2023, seeking comments from stakeholders by 17.07.2023 and counter comments, if any, by 01.08.2023. In this regard, COAI submitted a letter to TRAI requesting additional time to respond to this CP. TRAI extended the timeline to respond to the CP till 31.07.2023. Subsequently, COAI submitted a letter to TRAI requesting further extension of 3 weeks i.e., till 21.08.2023 to respond to the CP.

Representation to NSCS on CPE's availability in market

In regard to the requirement of the licensees to mandatorily submit the various customer premise equipment (CPE) products for approval from NSCS, COAI submitted a letter to NSCS on 17.07.2023, highlighting that the requirement for TSPs to seek approvals from the NSCS for various products must be done away with through appropriate directions.

Draft Addendum to TEC Test Procedure for Measurement of Electromagnetic Fields from Base Station Antenna (TEC 13019:2021) for EMF Measurement in 5G

In regard to the inputs sought by TEC on the Draft Addendum to TEC Test Procedure for Measurement of Electromagnetic Fields from Base Station Antenna (TEC 13019:2021) for EMF Measurement in 5G, COAI submitted its comments to TEC on 27.07.2023.

COAI letter to Chief Secretary, Government of Telangana on date 04.07.2023

COAI letter was submitted to Chief Secretary, Government of Telangana on 04.07.2023, requesting for Notification of RoW policy, aligning with the amendments issued by Gol on 17.08.2022.

COAI Letter to Minister of Energy, Minister of Information Technology and Minister of Large and Medium Industries, Government of Karnataka, dated 09.07.2023

COAI requested the Minister of Energy, Minister of Information Technology and Minister of Large and Medium Industries, Government of Karnataka to include Telecom as an Industry in the Karnataka State Industrial policy. This inclusion will support the sector's demand for industrial electricity tariff.

COAI letter to Principal Secretary, Government of MP, dated 11.07.2023

COAI wrote to Principal Secretary, Government of Madhya Pradesh on 11.07.2023, requesting Inclusion of Telecom industry in the Draft IT and ITES Investment Promotion Policy 2023 of Madhya Pradesh.

COAI letter to Chief Secretary, Government of Puducherry, dated 12.07.2023

Letter was submitted to Chief Secretary, Government of Puducherry on 12.07.2023, regarding the damages being caused and hinderance to OFC deployment work by Local Cable Operators (LCOs). It was requested that the TSPs be supported with assistance from local police, to ensure the safety of their telecom assets and employees, to be able to provide the essential digital connectivity services to consumers.

COAI letter to Chief Commissioner BBMP, Karnataka dated 16.07.2023

Internal Meeting with Karnataka Members was held on 14.07.2023, on fibre cuts in Bengaluru by local authorities. Based on the discussion, a submission to Chief Commissioner, BBMP was made on 16.07.2023, requesting to stop fibre cuts/damages to cables, further, such

activities should not be undertaken without any advance notice

Maharashtra & Goa virtual meeting with members

An internal meeting was held with Maharashtra and Goa members on 24.07.2023, wherein discussions took place on EMF Webinar and other issues like cutting of OFC, etc. A CCC meeting is being planned in the month of August.

DDG (Land) Meeting convened with Industry on 24.07.2023

DDG (Land) of DGDE convened meeting(s) with the industry on 04.07.2023 and 24.07. 2023, regarding the issues being faced by the industry while using the Online Portal and the possible resolutions. Further, as desired by members, office of DDG (Land) has shared the list of Nodal Officers for their local coordination with respective Cantonment Boards, fulfilling a long-standing demand of the industry.

COAI Letter to Chief Secretary, Government of Goa, dated 25.07.2023

COAI made a submission to Chief Secretary, Government of Goa on 25.07.2023, regarding the variations in the Goa State RoW policy notified on date 13.05.2023, and requesting for amending the variations in the State policy in line with the amendments issued by Gol dated 17.08.2023.

COAI letter to Principal Secretary (Power) Government of Kerala, dated 26.07.2023

COAI made submission to Principal Secretary (Power), Government of Kerala on 26.07.2023, requesting for Telecom Companies to be categorized under essential service-LT-IV (B) IT and IT Enabled Services- HT-I B for providing electricity tariff, thereby incentivizing and facilitating the industry.

COAI letter to Telecom Secretary dated 27.07.2023

With regard to the coercive action on the duly permitted aerial fiber in Mysore by the Civic Authority by cutting overhead OFCs, COAI made a submission to the Telecom Secretary, requesting support from the State Government to stop such uncalled coercive action, as these OFCs already have all the requisite permissions from the concerned authority. The issue was also highlighted during the SBC meeting with CS, Karnataka on 27.07.2023.

4th SBC of Karnataka State on 27.07.2023

The 4th SBC of Karnataka State was held on 27.07. 2023, chaired by Chief Secretary. COAI highlighted industry concerns, including request to support in stopping of fibre cuts in Bengaluru, Mysore by Civic Authorities, addressing PWD issue on stoppage of road cutting permissions. Also, sought state government support on Green Open Access and Composite Billing.

COAI Letter to PWD, Karnataka dated 28.07.2023

Karnataka State PWD has put all RoW applications for road cutting on hold, pending issuance of an SOP from the department. This has resulted in industry work coming to a complete halt. COAI, on behalf of the industry, raised the concern with the Chief Secretary of Karnataka in the SBC meeting and also made a formal submission to her, requesting for suitable instructions to the concerned officials in the PWD department to keep the aforementioned order in abeyance and duly process the RoW applications, to ensure continued operations and uninterrupted services.

Government

COAI Submission on Green Energy

Basis the Ministry of Power Gazette notification, submissions were made to Electricity Regulatory Commissions and Principal Secretaries (Power) regarding making Green Energy Open Access available for the states of Kerala, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Puducherry, Goa, Maharashtra, Assam, Tripura, Orissa, West Bengal, Andaman & Nicobar, Manipur, Mizoram, Haryana, Gujarat, Bihar, Delhi and Punjab.

COAI Submission on Composite Billing

Basis the Ministry of Power advisory, submissions were made to Electricity Regulatory Commissions and Principal Secretaries (Power) requesting DISCOMs to provide composite bills for multiple connections of our members for the states of Kerala, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Puducherry, Goa, Maharashtra, Assam, Tripura, Orissa, West Bengal, Andaman & Nicobar, Manipur and Mizoram.

Industrial Tariff for electricity

COAI filed its objection to the tariff petition by CESC Kolkata and Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission during July 2023, regarding industrial tariff for the telecom industry, as part of the annual tariff finalization exercise.

Update post Bihar SBC meeting

Post the Bihar SBC meeting held on 19.06.2023, a COAI letter was submitted to Chief Secretary, Government of Bihar on 05.07.2023, highlighting various RoW related issues and requesting Government Support on the same. Basis the submission, a meeting was held with the Chief Secretary, Government of Bihar, with participation from relevant departmental heads on 17.07.2023, to discuss the submitted issues. Another letter was submitted to Bihar Forest Secretary regarding Exemption from Consent Management of Standalone DG sets up to 1 MVA.

Gujarat 5th SBC Meeting

The 5th SBC meeting of Gujarat was held on 20.07.2023, under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary, Gujarat wherein several industry issues/challenges were highlighted like Regularisation of Telecom Tower & OFC pendencies, Provision/Permissions for Aerial OFC, Availing Green Access and Composite Billing, etc.

CAQM Direction on Regulation of DG sets

CAQM issued directions dated 02.06.2023 and 28.06.2023, for transition of all existing DG sets to a dual fuel mode (Gas + Diesel) and retrofitting of Emission Control Devices by 30.09.2023. Industry requested the commission for an extension of one year to implement the same. Further, we made submission to the DoT for support. The concerned officials at DoT are being reached out to for support.

Delhi Circle Coordination Committee (CCC) meeting

A Delhi CCC meeting was held on 26.07.2023. Industry issues like Delhi RoW policy / NDMC policy concerns and action(s) thereof, CAQM regulations on DG set usage, Policy and Permission issues in Delhi NCR, Conducting EMF Awareness session in Noida and Gurgaon, etc. were discussed in the same.

Letter to Telecom Secretary on support for Right of Way (RoW) policies by other Central Agencies

A COAI letter was submitted to the Telecom Secretary on 25.07.2023, requesting support towards getting Right of Way (RoW) policies from various central ministries for installing telecom infrastructure. Members have shared that many PSUs are denying permissions, stating the reason that "no guidelines are available for granting ROW permissions for third party use for laying telecom infrastructure".

COAI Letter to Noida & Greater Noida CEOs

COAI wrote letters welcoming the new CEO of Noida and the new CEO of Greater Noida, with requests for personal meeting with the members to discuss the important matter of proliferation of robust digital infrastructure in Noida and Greater Noida. Basis the request, CEO of Greater Noida met the industry on 31.07.2023, and discussed the concerns of the industry. Some quick actions have been initiated.

Meeting to discuss the forest pendency with DG (MoEF&CC)

With support from NBM, a meeting was held under the chairmanship of DG (MoEF&CC) on 10.07.2023, to discuss the forest pendency. A clarification was issued by MoEF&CC on 10.07.2023, regarding streamlining the process of approval under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 for laying OFC in the RoW of roads.

Follow-up meeting with Noida International Airport Authority (NIA)

A follow up meeting was held with NIA post the ground

survey of Noida Airport (Jewar). On members' request, NIA provided the permissible height with AMSL. Accordingly, TSPs/IPs are requested to lower the tower heights and apply for fresh NOC for all the sites by Dec 2023.

Model RfP document for leasing of Dark Fibers

A meeting was held with CEA (MoP) on 18.07.2023 to deliberate on model RfP document for leasing of Dark Fibers of State Transmission network. Members shared their inputs on the draft document circulated by CEA (MoP).

Meeting with Delhi LSA

COAI met Sr. DDG Delhi on 28.07.2023, for discussion on EMF awareness sessions to be held in NCR region. In addition, discussion happened on CAQM issue and BSES aerial fiber cutting happening in East Delhi.

Representation made to Hon'ble Finance Minister

We submitted representation to Hon'ble Finance Minister, Government of India with the copy to Revenue Secretary and to Chairman, CBIC on the following three GST issues.

- Denial of ITC on telecom equipment and accessories installed on towers.
- Demand of GST on the entire bid amount for spectrum allocation.
- Denial of credits on ducts and manholes used in network of optical fiber cables (OFCs).

We have informed the government that blocking of credit on towers itself is not on strong justifiable grounds, as the towers are often moveable and are key inputs in telecom networks. The basis for denial of credit on telecom equipment installed on towers by expanding the ambit of the blocking provision rests on even more weak and flimsy grounds.

On an average basis - spectrum, telecom towers, network equipment and OFCs constitute more than 50% of the input tax credit at the industry level. It is greatly concerning that all these four key inputs and input services are being pushed into the throes of legal uncertainty and unwarranted litigation with huge stakes merely due to arbitrary interpretations adopted by some state GST authorities in their bids to garner additional revenues.

We have requested the government that each of these issues be kindly deliberated in the GST Law Committee of the Council, and appropriate clarity be provided by way of issuance of circulars/clarifications that are binding on all states, so that the industry receives the due tax certainty and is spared the burden and cost of avoidable unwarranted enquiries and litigation.

Notification to define Telecom towers and other infrastructure assets as "Structural Support" for Telecom Equipment

We have submitted a letter to DoT requesting them to notify the definition of "Structural Support" to include Masts, Poles, Brackets, Mounts, Towers (i.e., Telecom Towers), Power Transmission Towers, Street light poles, ducts, manholes and other utility infrastructure, etc. so as to facilitate the legitimate claim of ITC on goods and services received for installation of towers and the optical fiber network.

Representation made regarding the implementation of guidelines/clarification issued by DoT

We have sent a follow up representation to Telecom Secretary with copy to Member (F), DDG LFA and to DDG LFP regarding the implementation of guidelines/clarification issued by DoT on 03/02/2020 and 23/03/2021, in the matter of verification of deductions claimed from Gross Revenue. We have requested the DoT to withdraw the order dated 24.11.2021 in the interest of justice and apply the DVR Clarifications consistently for all pending demands being issued/revised presently.

NBT Tech Charcha

The 5G roll-out has been the fastest in India, and its maximum benefits lay with the enterprises, especially since the development of 5G technology and industry 4.0 is going hand-in-hand,” states DG COAI.

[Read more](#)



Industry 4.0 and the connected society

Despite India's notable advancements in IT communications technologies, it still needs to overcome the challenges of fully connected world.

[Read more](#)



Importance of spectrum and its efficient management in telecom

In India, spectrum management at the national level is done by dividing the country into 22 telecom circles. Telecom companies bid for spectrum license in these circles to offer uninterrupted access across India.

[Read more](#)



Tech-driven leadership: CIOs and CISOs making strides as CEOs

The journey of CIOs and CISOs on the road to becoming CEOs is a testament to the growing recognition of technology as a critical enabler of success.

[Read more](#)



Privacy concerns shroud TRAI's proposal to regulate OTT platforms

OTT platforms, which have now been allowed to operate in India without a license, have long opposed increased regulatory oversight

[Read more](#)



COAI Events

India Mobile Congress 2023: Curtain Raiser inaugurated

Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw, the Minister for Communications, Electronics & Information Technology and Railways, inaugurated the Curtain Raiser of IMC-2023 on July 12, 2023, in the distinguished presence of Shri Devusinh Chauhan, Minister of State for Communications. The event saw the participation from industry leaders and representatives from various telecom verticals, start-ups, and others.

The India Mobile Congress (IMC) will be co-hosted by the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) and the Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI). It is scheduled to be held from October 27th to 29th at Pragati Maidan in New Delhi this year, with the overarching theme of 'Global Digital Innovation.' IMC 2023 is expected to welcome over 100,000 participants, 5,000 CXO-level delegates, 350 speakers, and 400 exhibitors, making it a significant gathering in the telecommunications industry.





Contact Us

Address : 14, Bhai Veer Singh Marg, New Delhi – 110 001

Phone : +91 - 11- 23349275 | Fax: +91 - 11 - 23349276

Email : contact@coai.in | Website: www.coai.in

Get to know us better. Our social media platforms are a great way to learn about our upcoming events, opportunities, latest trends and more. Follow us and join a diverse group of people across the nation and all around the world

Follow us on:

