



COAI

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LT. GEN DR. SP KOCHHAR (RETD.)

Director General, COAI

From DG's Desk

The Indian Telecom industry is rigorously working towards nurturing growth of digital communications and inclusive connectivity for the citizens in a manner and at a pace which will enable India to play a major role in the emerging digital world. As part of this effort, steps are being taken to address challenges and enhance the robustness of the entire telecommunications infrastructure in the country.

The TRAI recently issued some positive recommendations on the aspects of Licensing Framework and Regulatory Mechanism for Submarine Cable Landing in India, which were welcomed by the industry. The Authority's recommendations crucially recognize submarine cables as critical assets and provision protective measures for them. They also encourage self-reliance, while focusing on enhancing efficiency and security. The inclusion of provisions for 'Cable Landing Stations' and 'Submarine Cables' in the Indian Telecommunication Bill, 2022 is also being prioritized.

Additionally, measures are being proposed to support Indian Flagged Repair Vessels under the supervision of the Ministry of Defence and Indian Representatives Licensee officials. The recommendations are overall positive and will help in enhancing the robustness of the Submarine Cables ecosystem in India, which would add to the growth of the digital communications sector by strengthening our national infrastructure.

Further, recognizing the practical challenges and delays faced by the industry w.r.t. testing and certification of telecom equipment in the country, primarily owing to issues like non-availability and limited capability of testing labs, absence of defined timelines for testing procedures, and lack of benchmarks for both testing charges and certification charges as submitted and represented by the industry to the Government persistently, the Telecommunication Engineering Centre (TEC), Department of Telecommunications decided to extend the implementation timelines of the Mandatory Testing and Certification of Telecommunication Equipment (MTCTE) Phases 3 and 4.

The extensions would aid the industry which has been facing significant challenges in the operationalization of Phases 3 and 4 of the MTCTE, and also indicates that the Government has found merit in our submissions and taken a practical decision based on the ground realities in regard to the Testing and Certification ecosystem for telecom equipment in the country.

Such positive developments mark a progressive phase for the sector going forward, especially in regard to the



creation of a robust telecom infrastructure and network deployments across the country.

In terms of the Association's events, the Annual General Body Meeting of COAI was held on 14th June 2023, wherein the leadership of COAI has been affirmed for the upcoming 2023-24 term. Mr. Pramod K. Mittal, President of Reliance Jio Infocomm Ltd., has been reappointed as the Chairperson, while Mr. P. Balaji, Chief Regulatory & Corporate Affairs Officer of Vodafone Idea Limited, will serve as the Vice Chairperson.

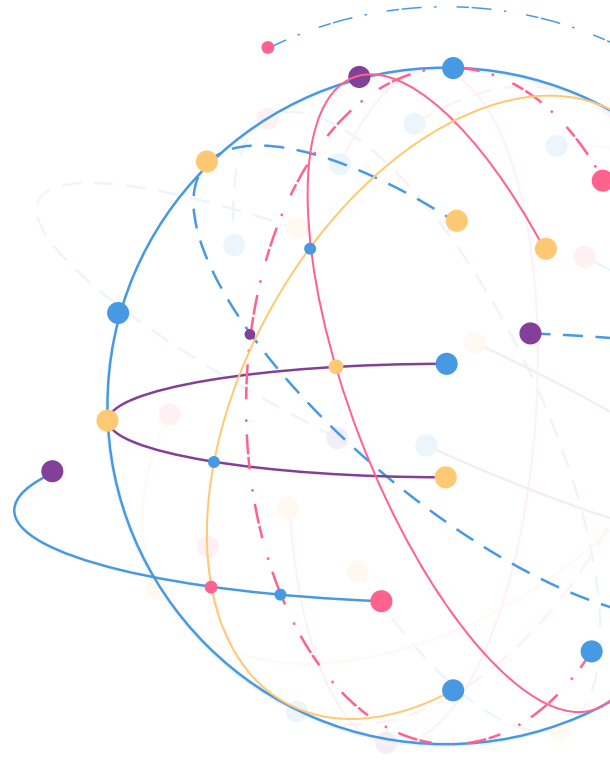
These developments reflect the industry's collective efforts to enhance telecommunications infrastructure, strengthen regulations, and promote sustainable growth in the digital communications sector.

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



COAI

Latest Updates:



5G Working Committee, Chhattisgarh

5G working committee meeting was held on 14th June 2023, chaired by state ACS Shri Subrat Sahoo, IAS. COAI participated and communicated the industry inputs on related matters while the modalities for deployment of 5G were also discussed.

Meeting to monitor the progress of BTS fiberization targets

A meeting to monitor the region-wise progress of BTS Fiberization targets, was held on 6th and 7th June 2023, organised by NBM, DoT. The status of fiberization done by TSPs so far was presented and participants discussed various issues related to achievement of the target (as per National Broadband Mission's norms) and the possible dates for completion.

Status of RoW pendencies across States

The status of RoW pendencies was discussed during meetings organised by NBM, DoT on 15th, 16th, 19th, 20th and 21st June 2023 - for Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Kerala and Bihar respectively. Concerned representatives of members participated, sharing detailed reasons for such pendencies. The meetings were attended by respective State Government and DoT, LSA officials, wherein the way forward for early resolution of issues was discussed.

Submission made to Hon'ble Chief Minister of Maharashtra on the RoW related issues

Submission was made requesting the kind intervention and support of the Maharashtra Government on the RoW related concerns of members. The industry also requested for an appointment to make a detailed presentation and sought assistance for early closures of the issues. It is expected that an in-person meeting will soon be provided to the industry.

Submission made to Chief Secretary, Government of Karnataka

Submission was made on 12th June 2023, requesting for

taking urgent action to stop coercive actions on aerial Optical Fibre Cables in Mysore City. Permission was also requested for allowing laying of aerial OFC, thereby creating robust telecommunication service for the citizens.

Submission made to Principal Secretary (UD-2), Government of Maharashtra

Submissions were made on 12th June 2023, regarding issues related to implementation of the amended RoW policy, reconsideration of the exorbitant property tax charges and regularization charges, apart from highlighting other relevant RoW related issues.

Representation to CERC Chairman regarding industrial category electricity tariff

A representation was made to the Chairman of Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (CERC) on 2nd June 2023, regarding implementation of Industrial category electricity tariff for Telecom networks in line with the recommendations of TRAI and the Sub-Group of Forum of Indian Regulators.

Submission made to Principal Secretary -Power, Government of Assam

Submissions were made to the Assam Government on 6th June 2023, requesting implementation of Industrial category electricity tariff for Telecom networks, in line with the recommendations of TRAI and the Sub-Group of Forum of Indian Regulators.

4th Broadband Committee meeting of Odisha

The 4th Broadband Committee meeting of Odisha State happened on 22nd June 2023, under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary, Government of Odisha. COAI shared the industry issues, including adoption of Green Open Access and consolidated Billing for electricity connections.

Members' meeting on current RoW issues of NCR

A meeting was held with members representatives from

NCR on the RoW issues being faced in Delhi NCR region, on 22nd June 2023. Deliberations happened on the approach towards challenges being faced for permissions in MCD, NDMC, Noida Authority, Ghaziabad, Greater Noida and with authorities of Gurgaon and Faridabad. Also, EMF related adverse activities happening on ground were discussed. Action points agreed upon will be taken forward with the support of the members.

Submission made to Chief Secretary, Government of Haryana

A submission to Chief Secretary, Haryana was made on 23rd June 2023, reiterating Industry issues, including alignment of the state policy with Central RoW (Amendment) Rules 2022, at the earliest.

Bihar State Broadband Committee Meeting

The state Broadband committee meeting was held on 19th June 2023, chaired by the Chief Secretary, Government of Bihar. COAI highlighted various RoW related issues for Government support, including adoption of Green Open Access amendment and electricity bill consolidation.

Submission made to Chief Secretary, Government of West Bengal

Submission was made to the CS, West Bengal Government on 12th June 2023, regarding deviation in the recently released state RoW Policy with respect to the Central RoW (Amendment) Rules 2022.

Industry engagement with the Noida International Airport Authority

An industry engagement happened with the Noida International Airport Authority regarding telecom infrastructure in the upcoming airport. A joint site visit also happened on 6th June 2023, for reviewing the existing telecom infrastructure and possible actions for making any required adjustments for aviation safety. This was followed by detailed discussion in the office of NIA on further actions.

Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) RoW amendment

MoRTH has issued an amendment to MoRTH 2016 guidelines, regarding permission for laying of underground OFC/telecom cables on National Highways. There has been an improved formula for calculation of charges and it is envisaged that the industry will benefit from these revised calculations. The charges for crossing highway through HDD mode has been made Nil.

Review of Port Charges

COAI submitted a letter on Port Charges to TRAI on 25th May 2023, requesting the Authority to review and reduce the Port charges.

Abolishment of Performance Bank Guarantee (PBG) and Financial Bank Guarantee (FBG)

COAI Submitted a letter on the issue of BGs to DoT on 31st May 2023, requesting for abolishment of PBGs and FBGs.

Relaxation of mandatory requirement of DoT representatives during survey of submarine cable routes

A letter was submitted to DoT on 7th June 2023, regarding "Relaxation of mandatory requirement of DoT representatives to be present during survey of submarine cable routes conducted by TSPs".

Transfer of Ownership of M2M SIMs

A note was submitted TRAI on 9th June 2023, on the issue of the Transfer of ownership of M2M SIMs. In the letter, it was stated that the rules and process for Transfer of ownership of M2M SIMs should be kept as simple as possible.

TRAI CP on "Definition of International Traffic"

A letter was submitted to TRAI on 14th June 2023, requesting for extension of time for submitting our response to the TRAI CP on "Definition of International Traffic". TRAI accepted our request and has provided extension on the same till 11th July 2023.

Guidelines for Audit of the Metering and Billing System and accuracy of Metering and Billing in LSA

With regard to the draft Regulation on Metering & Billing, a letter was submitted to TRAI on 20th June 2023, requesting that the process of Open House Discussion and Regulatory Impact Analysis be carried out prior to finalizing the "Draft Regulation on Review of the Quality of Service (Code of Practice for Metering and Billing Accuracy) Regulations, 2023".

IP-Messaging services

COAI submitted a letter on the urgent action required on IP-messaging service to DoT & TRAI on 6th June 2023, requesting to take immediate action against the IP-messaging to arrest the licensing and security issues and declare it illegal and also ban it with immediate effect.

6 GHz Frequency Band (5925-7125 MHz)

With reference to the meeting held in DoT on 23rd May 2023, to find ways to reach 10% rural Household FTTH Coverage by 2025, COAI submitted a letter on 8th June 2023, reiterating its position that the most optimal allocation for the country in the 6 GHz band is to identify the entire 5925-7125 MHz i.e., 1200 MHz spectrum for IMT applications. COAI also submitted a letter to DoT on 23rd June 2023, requesting DoT to kindly seek the Recommendations of TRAI on this issue before finalizing any view on delicensing part of the 6GHz band.

MTCTE - "List of Equipment impacted under MTCTE Phase 3 & Phase 4"

COAI submitted a letter to DoT on 9th June 2023, requesting for extension of MTCTE Phases 3 and 4 implementation date w.r.t. "List of Equipment impacted

under MTCTE Phases 3 and 4.

Adjustment of the Test Fees in the case of EMF Testing/Audit conducted by Field Units of DoT

With reference to the Hon'ble TDSAT order dated 30th October 2018, in the petition COAI Vs. UoI on the issue of charging the test fees in the case of EMF Testing/audit conducted by Field units of DoT, COAI submitted a letter to DoT on 13th June 2023, requesting that the excess amount arising from the closed demands may be adjusted against other liable charges of the TSPs to be paid to the exchequer such as LF, SUC, spectrum outstanding payments, subscriber verification penalties at LSAs, etc.

Request for Abeyance of Telecommunication Products under Schedule-I of E-waste (Management) Rules, 2022

COAI submitted a letter to DoT on 6th June 2023, requesting for Abeyance of Telecommunication Products under Schedule-I of E-waste (Management) Rules, 2022.

Input Tax Credit on equipment installed on telecom towers.

Some State Tax Authorities proposing to deny ITC on telecom equipment including antenna, base stations, transmitters and other items like DG sets and batteries installed on towers, by interpreting that such equipment is to be treated at par with telecom towers.

Even few state authorities have started questioning regarding Input tax credit on optical fibre cable.

DoT as well as TRAI have sent their recommendations to the Ministry of Finance on this issue.

Recently on 13th June 2023, COAI along with the members met with Member (F) to discuss the status of our representation and on 14.06.2023 we met with Chairman CBIC on 14th June 2023 to discuss the issue.

We are requesting DoT to notify the definition of "Structural Support" to include Mast, Poles, Brackets, Mounts, Towers i.e., Telecom Towers, Power Transmission Towers, Street light pole, manholes and other utility infrastructures etc. so as to defend the claim of ITC on goods and services received for installation of towers and the optical fiber network.

Pramod K Mittal to continue as COAI Chairperson in FY24

Reliance Jio President Pramod K Mittal will continue as the Chairperson of the COAI, while Chief regulatory officer of Vodafone-Idea, P Balaji will be the Vice-Chairperson for FY2024.

[Read more](#)



Government extends telecom equipment testing deadline again

The guidelines provide that every telecom equipment must undergo mandatory testing and certification before it is put to sale and used for network rollouts.

[Read more](#)



No Tariff hike by telcos anytime soon

Telecom operators in India are not going to hike their tariff anytime soon, said COAI DG SP Kochhar.

[Read more](#)



COAI's DG on 5G QoS, Fiberization and RoW issues, 6GHz band, 5G FWA use case

5G is being rolled out as a network and we are not at the stage where we can start learning about the applications. The rollout has been the fastest in the world and that speaks volumes for the progress of our industry.

[Read more](#)



Telcos activate intra circle roaming as cyclone hits Gujarat

Telecom operators are taking various initiatives including activating intra circle roaming, deploying portable sites while also provisioning adequate diesel and battery backup to tower sites to mitigate the impact of cyclone.

[Read more](#)



DoT busts the myth of harmful EMF radiation emanating from mobile towers

According to DoT, based on scientific evidence, studies and reports available, there is no conclusive evidence of any kind of health hazard or EMF radiation from mobile towers.

[Read more](#)



Declare Submarine cables operation as essential services: TRAI while batting for ease of doing business

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) said that Cable Landing Station (CLS) and submarine cables operation should be classified as critical and essential services.

[Read more](#)



COAI Events

Awareness Workshop on EMF Radiation

As part of the ongoing public advocacy programme to bust myths around EMF emissions, the Delhi LSA unit of DoT celebrated Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav by organising a webinar which addressed the unfounded fears of citizens and stated credible scientific evidence around EMF emissions from mobile towers.





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