



COAI

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LT. GEN DR. SP KOCHHAR (RETD.)

Director General, COAI

From DG's Desk

COAI has stressed that the authorization process must not be made and we must continue to retain the contractual nature of the present licensing regime, as this will ensure policy and regulatory certainty, essential for attracting investments to the industry. Sadly, this request of COAI has not been addressed. Moreover, it is noted with concern that the role of TRAI may be diluted as it has been stated that with respect to minor or procedural amendments, the Licensor may not seek recommendation from the Regulator.

SATCOM should also be used for enhancing the coverage in uncovered rural areas and that there should be a level playing field between Terrestrial Service Providers and Satellite Communication Service Providers in all other areas. Unfortunately, this important issue has not been addressed by DOT or by TRAI, which will adversely affect investors' sentiments.

Furthermore, OTT Communication Services are not covered under the new Telecom Act as an access service as per our understanding. While we had submitted that these competing and substitutable services should be included under Access Services authorization under the new framework to address the issues of non-level playing field and ensure adoption of principles of "Same Service Same Rule", however, till date, our concern has neither been addressed by the Regulator, nor by the Licensor.

The COAI has supported the recommendations of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Communications and IT to bring the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, the Department of Telecommunications and the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting under one umbrella. Taking the same logic into the operational domain covering spam/fraud messages and calls spanning over both telecom networks and OTT channels, it is necessary to apply one set of policies and regulations to both components, i.e., TSPs and OTTs, bringing similar regulatory convergence for both. It is known that while telcos are currently being governed by the Telecom Commercial Communication Customer Preference Regulation (TCCPR) 2018 and noticeable results have been observed in the spam/unwanted forms of communication via the TSPs, the App based communications currently not under the same regulation, remain unchecked and are becoming a growing concern for the consumers and the Government. Thus, it would be proper for regulatory and security measures to be put in place for all players, including OTTs and TSPs, to be governed by the same regulatory framework. This would help in better coordination of issues related to convergence of technologies and lead to a focused and composite handling of issues, thereby formulating policies which are equally applicable to all the concerned ministries and reduce multiple policy formulations on the same subject, thus improving transparency and compliances.

The prerequisites for industrial units to commence operations, with or without proper telecom solutions, include an



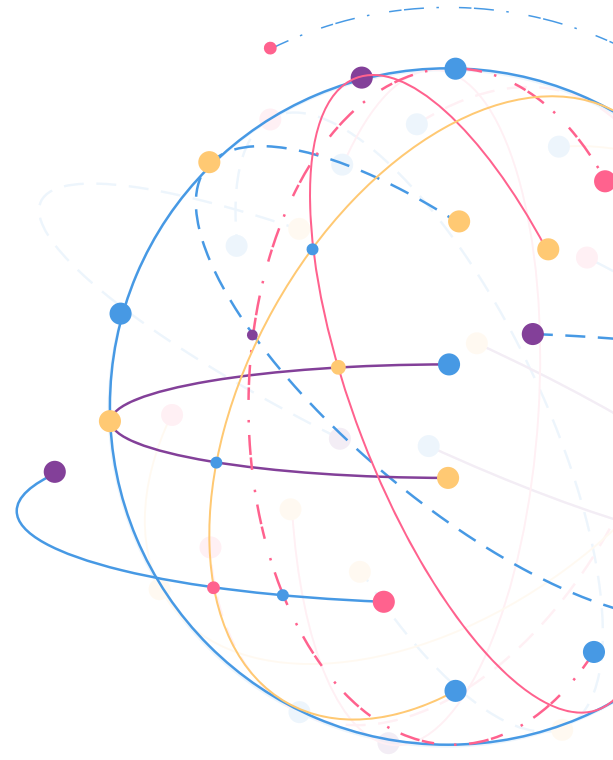
industrial setup, physical infrastructure, roadways to the facility, supply of raw materials, workforce, power and logistics among others. The absence of telecom infrastructure, despite the presence of all these essential facilities would create a serious gap. However, in India such a scenario does not arise anywhere. The rapid advancements in telecom technology necessitate continuous upgrades and modernization, an effort that TSPs undertake efficiently. India stands at a pivotal moment in its digital evolution, with 5G rollouts unlocking unprecedented economic opportunities. Policymakers must adopt a measured approach to regulatory decisions, ensuring they align with the nation's long term economic and technological interests.

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



COAI

Latest Updates:



Letter to CBIC for adoption of Uniform Policy by Customs Department

COAI submitted a letter on 05.03.2025 raising the concerns regarding the Customs Department dispute in classification of various parts of imported telecom equipment. We requested CBIC to issue suitable instructions directing all field formation officers to follow a uniform policy while clearing these telecom equipment parts.

Letter to Hon'ble MoC/DoT on Input Tax Credit Accumulation issues in Telecom Sector

COAI submitted a letter on 17.03.2025 sharing the requisite information sought in the Stakeholders Advisory Committee held on 14.02.2025 pertaining to GST ITC accumulation in the industry and the estimated ratio of the GST blockage vis-a-vis the industry debt burden.

Letter to the Government on concerns regarding Mandatory Migration to the Authorization Regime

We submitted a letter to DoT on 28.02.2025 requesting that migration to the new authorisation regime under the Indian Telecommunications Act, 2023, should remain voluntary, in line with the Telecommunication Act, past precedence and TRAI's recommendations. We further submitted that the draft rules should be amended to allow TSPs to acquire spectrum through auctions under existing licenses, ensuring regulatory certainty and investment.

Letter to TRAI regarding suggestions for improvement of TRAI's Portal for submission of Compliance Report of Access (Wireless) service

We submitted a letter to TRAI on 03.03.2025 suggesting various improvements in TRAI's portal, including provision for uploading consolidated excel sheets for all LSAs, enabling a unified test environment, optimizing error codes, and ensuring uniformity in formats. We also suggested extending the submission timelines, introducing a ticketing system, and simplifying the final submission process.

Letter to MoC/DoT on continuation of Contractual Nature of Authorization/Licenses for Regulatory stability

We submitted a letter to MoC/DoT on 18.03.2025, highlighting the success of existing regulatory framework for over 30 years. We further requested the authority to retain the contractual telecom licenses under the new Telecommunications Act, 2023, to ensure regulatory certainty, attract investments, and maintain stability.

Submission to Chief Secretary, Andhra Pradesh

A submission was made on 19.03.2025 to the Chief Secretary, Government of Andhra Pradesh post the 7th State Broadband Committee (SBC) meeting held on 17.03.2025, requesting support on industry issues of Portal integration, Local authorities not being aligned with RoW Rules 2024 etc. raised during the SBC meeting.

Submission to Chief Secretary, Chhattisgarh

A submission was made to Chief Secretary, Government of Chhattisgarh on 17.03.2025. COAI requested for urgent support in speedy implementation of the Right of Way Rules 2024 in the State. In absence of a functional online portal for application processing, deployment of telecom infrastructure by the industry has been severely constrained.

Submission to Chief Secretary, Chhattisgarh

A submission was made on 07.03.2025 to the Chief Secretary, Government of Chhattisgarh on the issues discussed during the 6th State Broadband Committee meeting. Further, we requested for support in improving the deployment of robust telecom infrastructure in the State.

Submission made to the Administrator Lakshadweep

A request was made to Administrator for the Union Territory of Lakshadweep on 04.03.2025 for support in issuance of the notification for adoption and implementation of RoW Rules 2024. Helping in improving the digital connectivity for the citizens/visitors.

State Broadband Committee (SBC) meeting of Rajasthan

The 13th SBC meeting of Rajasthan was held on 25.03.2025, which was attended in-person. Internal pre-meeting with the Members was held on 13.03.2025 and 24.03.2025, issues related to portal limitations and absence of full functionality leading to stoppage of RoW application processing and other RoW related industry issues were discussed.

Industry meeting by National Broadband Mission (NBM) on Central Ministries

A meeting was chaired by Director, NBM on 03.03.2025 regarding the Right of Way (RoW) related issues and approval timeline of Central Ministries. Members requested to have meetings with individual Ministries to resolve industry's RoW issues.

Central Electricity Authority (CEA) guidelines for the usage and sharing of fiber cores

CEA on 03.03.2025 has notified "Comprehensive guidelines for the usage and sharing of fiber cores of Optical Ground Wire (OPGW)/ Under Ground Fiber Optic (UGFO) Cable for power system applications". The guidelines establish a structured approach to fiber allocation, which is expected to facilitate the telecom industry.

Central Electricity Authority (CEA) draft regulation on Installation and Operations of Meters

CEA on 04.03.2025 issued draft of the amendment to the Metering regulation titled "Central Electricity Authority (Installation and Operation of Meters) (5th Amendment) Regulations, 2025". All Stakeholders are invited to submit inputs, suggestions, objections and comments on the draft regulations by 05.04.2025, draft has been shared with members for their input(s).

Industry Meeting chaired by Additional Secretary, Telecom on Right of Way portal related issues of States

A meeting was held 10.03.2025 chaired by Additional Secretary Telecom with States on portal related issues. Each State's status with regards the portal functionality and shortcoming(s) were discussed during the meeting.

Submission to Chairman Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission (DERC) to align DISCOM pole charges

A submission was made to Chairman (DERC) on 18.03.2025, reiterating industry long standing industry demand to align pole leasing charges by DISCOMs in accordance with Delhi RoW Rules, 2025.

Uttarakhand State Broadband Committee (SBC) meeting

The SBC of Uttarakhand was conducted on 18.03.2025 under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary. Implementation of RoW rules 2024, PWD portal integration were highlighted by COAI during the meeting.

Submission to Jharkhand State Electricity Regulatory

Commission (JSERC) on Annual Electricity Tariff Exercise

A submission was made to Secretary, JSERC on 19.03.2025 for facilitating telecom industry by extending Electricity under industrial tariff and requesting for no further tariff hike for the upcoming year.

Webinar on Telecommunications (Right of Way) Rules, 2024

A Webinar by DoT and NCA was organised on RoW Rules, 2024 on 24.03.2025. Industry perspective on Implementation of rules and to discuss the way forward and explore strategies to ensure smooth adoption and compliance were presented by COAI.

Assam State Broadband Committee (SBC) meeting

The SBC of Assam was conducted on 12.03.2025 under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary of the state. Implementation of RoW rules 2024 and Assam Power Distribution Company Limited (APDCL), the DISCOM's high Pole charges were highlighted during the meeting.

Representation at Assam State Electricity Regulatory Commission (AERC) Public Hearing

Industry was represented at the public hearing conducted by AERC regarding the tariff petitions on 12.03.2025. Request was made for extending Electricity under Industrial tariff for the telecom industry.

Workshop on EMF Awareness

A workshop on EMF awareness was held at Delhi Technological University (DTU) campus on 20.03.2025. The Workshop saw good attendance and active participation from students and faculty.

Request for Extension in Timeline for Submission of EMF Triennial Self-Certificates for Sites under 5G Relaxed Category

COAI submitted a letter to DoT on 27.03.2025 requesting for an extension in timelines for submission of EMF Triennial Self-Certificates for sites under 5G Relaxed Category.

TCCCP (Amendment) Regulation 2025

COAI submitted a letter to TRAI on 13.03.2025 regarding the TCCCP (Amendment) Regulation 2025 issued by TRAI on 12.02.2025. Vide the said letter COAI requested that the implementation of the said regulations may be kept in abeyance until Industry shared concerns are not addressed by TRAI.

Rules on DPDP Act 2023

COAI submitted response towards the draft rules on DPDP Act 2023 on 5.03.2025.

AI Governance Guidelines Development

Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) released the AI Governance Guidelines Development for public consultation on 6.01.2025. In response to this, COAI submitted its response on 5.03.2025.

COAI for stringent measures on telecom players, apps to make services spam, fraud-free

COAI DG said that world over telecom operators want internet-based calling and messaging apps should be covered under the same rule as telecom.

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Slow 5G monetization may delay 6G launch

According to the global mobile industry body GSMA, telcos have invested \$109 billion- or 85% of the total investment in telecom networks, excluding end-user devices.

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Telcos pitch for stringent measures to curb WhatsApp, Meta spam

The fair-share issue has been raging between telecom carriers and OTTs for over 10 years now, with negotiable progress toward any resolution.

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COAI supports convergence of MeitY, DoT and MIB under one roof

COAI also calls for similar regulatory convergence for telecom service providers and app-based communication providers.

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Telco body warns of investor risk concerns over unequal rules for telecom, satcom, and OTT service providers

Private Telecom providers have voiced concerns that the DoT and the TRAI have failed to address their concerns regarding a level playing field for over-the-top (OTT) communication services and satellite communication in the proposed service authorisation framework.

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