



Telecom industry seeks more clarity on spectrum roadmap

New Delhi, 19th June, 2020: The need to resolve the conundrum surrounding Spectrum, as a 'Public resource, and National resource,' is currently being debated, across the world, and has become more critical, since economic growth is increasingly dependent on a connected ecosystem, and for that Spectrum is essential.

With this as the backdrop, COAI and the GSMA organised a Webinar to help the country tackle critical issues surrounding Spectrum. The Webinar deliberated on important issues such as spectrum availability, spectrum auction and the importance of spectrum pricing. What roles spectrum slicing, trading and availability of free spectrum to manage the networks during emergencies were also discussed.

In the last few months, the role telecom and digital technologies have played in shaping the economic activities is well established. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of optimum spectrum use, helping connect India's citizens. Also, as the global discussion is in full swing on how to realise 5G's full potential, policymakers must renew their approach to manage the economy and steer technology advancement accordingly.

Telecom operators across the country have played a critical role in supporting India's economy during a very trying time. To help the country recover, more action is needed, and a new world-class approach to spectrum licensing is a crucial step.

The Webinar also discussed how a well- designed spectrum policy could drive investment during the time of economic recovery and benefit consumers in a special panel discussion. The panel comprised senior officials from TRAI, GSMA, COAI, WPC and GSA. Panellists reiterated the need for outlining a clear roadmap and allocating 5G licences in 2021 target time frame.

Mr. Rajan S Mathews, DG, COAI, during his opening remarks mentioned, "Spectrum is the equivalent of cement and iron for us. The current pandemic has effectively put forth the importance of a robust network required to run an economy digitally. Spectrum is the fundamental ingredient of telecom infrastructure and a key essential of a connected society. It's now the foremost duty of all stakeholders to understand the critical role of spectrum and frame policies and implement accordingly. In India, we have to seriously look at the issues of availability of required spectrum to run digital networks seamlessly, the pricing, which is one of the highest in the world and also going forward how we can be innovative in using available spectrum and deploying use cases to address the requirements of the nation's digitally supported economy."

Mr. Manoj Misra, Senior Public Policy Director, GSMA, India, said, "There is greater need today for a transparent and judicious spectrum policy, especially in a country like India. The world has realized the importance of a robust telecom infrastructure and India still needs vast investments in its telecom infrastructure to be ready for the future digital economy. We believe, with 5G on the horizon, India is at a crucial point where a clear, predictable and economically viable policy will help in sustainable investments to come in and provide a boost to the evolution and development of next level of technology revolution in the country."



During the lockdown, India's telecom industry with its Infrastructure worked tirelessly to ensure a 99.9 % uptime and also managed immediate data surge after the lockdown and during the natural disasters. Spectrum is the imperative to take forward the economy in a world that will be more integrated and connected online.

About COAI

COAI was constituted in 1995 as a registered, non-governmental society. COAI's vision is to establish India as the global leader of innovative mobile communications infrastructure, products and services and achieving a national teledensity of 100%, including broadband. The association is also dedicated to the advancement of modern communication and towards delivering the benefits of innovative and affordable mobile communication services to the people of India.

About GSMA

The GSMA represents the interests of mobile operators worldwide, uniting more than 750 operators and nearly 400 companies in the broader mobile ecosystem, including handset and device makers, software companies, equipment providers and internet companies, as well as organisations in adjacent industry sectors. The GSMA also produces the industry-leading MWC events held annually in Barcelona, Los Angeles and Shanghai, as well as the Mobile 360 Series of regional conferences.

For more information, please visit the GSMA corporate website at www.gsma.com. Follow the GSMA on Twitter: @GSMA.