

Wireless Licensing Reforms to expedite Digital India efforts: COAI

- ***Simplification and digitization of processes to aid faster roll-outs***
- ***Ease of Doing Business via reduction in compliance burdens***
- ***Spectrum usage clearly defined in Redbook of NFAP 2022 to help provide high-speed data***

New Delhi, 27th October 2022: COAI, the leading representative body for the Indian telecommunications industry, congratulated and lauded the Ministry of Communications, the Department of Telecommunications (DoT), Government of India on announcement of the procedural reforms on the aspect of Wireless Licensing amongst, as well as the release of the National Frequency Allocation Plan (NFAP) 2022. The reforms, some of which have already been implemented, will aid in quicker roll-out of networks and services, and promote Ease of Doing Business (EoDB) through reduced compliances.

Some of the key highlights of the Telecom Reforms 2022 – Wireless Licensing, are as follows:

1. Simplification of SACFA certificate clearance guidelines (procedure for clearance of Low Power BTS/small cells i.e. Micro, Pico and Femto cells on street furniture/infrastructure) – The requirement for an application for SACFA processing for such BTSs/small cells has been simplified. The Processing Fee has been reduced significantly from INR 1000 to INR 100. ***This will help TSPs reduce their compliance burdens and save time, facilitating expediting the roll out of Telecom Services in the country.***
2. Bringing telecom equipment into the Country made easier – The entire import license process has been made online and Self-Declaration based clearance adopted instead of the earlier scrutiny-based clearance process. ***This will help in quicker deployment of the vital telecom equipment in the country.***
3. Entire licensing process has been made online through the Saral Sanchar portal – resulting in ***reduction of processing time from an average 1 year timespan to a significantly lower average of 2 months.***
4. DoT has also issued an advisory on the proper use of wireless Jammers/Boosters and Repeaters – ***This will help counter the menace of illegal activities which interfere with network operations and performance, affecting consumer experience.***

The National Frequency Allocation Plan (NFAP) 2022 takes into account the outcomes of the ITU's Radio Regulations and the specifics for usage of spectrum by various users in India via the India remarks. This will provide regulatory certainty to all users of spectrum in India.

Lt. Gen. Dr. S.P. Kochhar, Director General, COAI, shared - *“We greatly appreciate the Government’s proactive approach in implementing these progressive reforms, which are aimed towards facilitating a simpler, less time-consuming system for quicker execution of processes, as well as towards enabling Ease of Doing Business for the sector. This would be instrumental in helping faster deployments of networks and roll-out of services to the users. The industry is enthused and motivated with the impetus being provided by the Government towards strengthening the critical telecom ecosystem in the nation, and we look forward to provide all the requisite support to help realize the collective vision of a ‘Digital India’ for all. We are optimistic that the other issues faced by the industry will also be addressed by the Government in a similar manner.”*
