

COAI welcomes TRAI recommendations on Licensing Framework and Regulatory Mechanism for Submarine Cable Landing in India

New Delhi, 20th June 2023: COAI, the apex industry body for the digital communications sector in the country, welcomed the TRAI recommendations on Licensing Framework and Regulatory Mechanism for Submarine Cable Landing in India, issued today.

The recommendation that Indian entity-owned vessels will address undersea cable maintenance delays and reduce reliance on foreign providers for repairing subsea cables along the Indian coastline is welcomed by the industry. Further, the recommendation that the Indian Entities be facilitated and incentivized for setting up of the 'Cable Depots' will help in further development of the Submarine Cables ecosystem in India.

The recommendation that considering the submarine cable and CLS as a critical asset, a section should be added in the Indian Telecommunication Bill, 2022 to promote, protect and prioritize 'Cable Landing Station' and 'submarine cable' in India is also a positive one. It is also appreciated that the damage to sub-sea infra has been recommended to be considered as damage to Critical Infrastructure of national importance, and is to be strictly dealt under the Indian laws.

COAI commends the measures proposed for Indian Flagged Repair Vessels including constituting a committee to study and recommend the different financial viability models and possible incentives from Government. Additionally, the recommendation that survey data be collected under the supervision of MoD and Indian representatives/responsible Licensee officials, who shall ensure adequate safeguards, rather than the mandatory requirement that DoT representatives be present during surveys of submarine cable routes conducted by TSPs, is well received by the industry.

Lt. Gen. Dr. S.P. Kochhar, Director General, COAI, commented, *“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 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.”*

About COAI

Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) represents the leading Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) and telecom equipment vendors in India. COAI is dedicated to the advancement of mobile telephony and broadband in the country through development and provision of world-class infrastructure, products and services; for delivering the benefits of innovative and affordable mobile communication services to the people of India. The association works closely with Ministries, Policy Makers, Regulators, Financial Institutions and Technical Bodies towards these objectives. (www.coai.in)