FROM DG’S DESK

COAI LATEST UPDATES

TELECOM INFRASTRUCTURE POLICY ALIGNMENT WITH ROW RULES, 2016

NEWS WIRES

COAI EVENTS
From DG’s Desk

The first half of year 2021 will always be remembered as one of the most excruciating one. In such unprecedented & tough times importance of proper connectivity and communication is incomparable. Telecommunication industry stood strong providing best possible services to the citizens.

I would like to thank the central and state governments for categorizing telecom professionals as frontline workers and conducting well managed vaccination drives for them.

Another revolutionary decision came in the form of expansion of Sanchar portal which is going to act as a big boost in the digitization of the licensing process. This is truly a step towards ease of doing business.

The government has allocated spectrum for 5G trials in different locations across India. TSPs have started these trials to demonstrate improved user experience in terms of data download rates and continue supporting the Digital India vision. 5G will surely prove to be of prime importance in connecting people in dire need. Thus, its deployment in near future seems revolutionary.

Advancement in every technology is imperative for its better functioning, moving in this direction commercial deployment of 5G network can prove to be a ‘game changer’ resulting in exponential benefits for the society and economy.

All the rumours going around regarding harmful effects of radiation and its impact are just fallacious fears. Our systems have kept a check as radiation in India already operates on one tenth of globally accepted measure.

We wish that the situation regarding the Pandemic improves soon. Though thanking seems rudimentary, still thanking all the frontline workers working day in and day out to make things better and normal from the bottom of our hearts.
COAI
Latest Updates:

Allowing Project Arachnid List as an alternative to IWF list to prevent the distribution and transmission of online CSAM into India

MeitY vide its letter dated 11th June 2021 allowed the industry to adopt and implementation of ‘IWF Resources’ OR ‘Project Arachnid List’ OR both to prevent the distribution and transmission of online CSAM into India.

Letter to DoT on Spectrum Pricing

COAI submitted a letter to DoT on 2nd June 2021 on the issue of Spectrum Pricing and requested DoT as follows:

a) To set modest reserve price for all the spectrum bands i.e., for 700 MHz, 800 MHz, 900 MHz, 1800 MHz, 2100 MHz, 2300 MHz, 2500 MHz, 3.3 GHz-3.6 GHz).

b) Adequate spectrum should be ensured in 3.5 GHz band of 100 MHz per operator. Further, the complete C-band should be allocated for 5G to meet the extremely high demand of IMT/5G based wireless services in India.

c) SUC should be dispensed with for future auctions to bring down the weighted average rate. Reduce the SUC by 3% across all the bands for all the TSPs.

Regulatory Framework for Over-the-Top (OTT) Communication Services

COAI submitted a follow-up letter to DoT on 14th June 2021 requesting DoT that:

a) Players providing OTT communications services should be licensed by introducing the OTT Communication Authorization under the Unified License.

b) Till the time any decision is taken regarding licensing of OTT communication providers, no new licensing conditions, including that of Traffic Management Practices for Net Neutrality etc., should be imposed on TSPs.

c) In case the Government is unable to apply similar obligations to OTT players, then the existing rules/obligations of TSPs should be reviewed and minimised by making these proportionate to that of OTT players.

Need to remove paper-based information to consumers and shift to digital modes

With reference to the various requirements, under various Regulations and Directions, of communicating certain information to the telecom consumers through physical mediums like newspapers and other such modes, COAI submitted a follow-up letter to TRAI on 14th June 2021 requesting to repeal the redundant activities like Welcome Letter and mandatory hard copy of the bill, etc.

Review of Financial Bank Guarantees submitted by Telecom Service Providers and inclusion of dues related to CAF and EMF penalties

COAI submitted a follow-up letter to DoT on 3rd June 2021 requesting that a suitable clarification may kindly be issued to all the CCA offices so that the dues relating to CAF & EMF penalties etc. and other related matters, that are already sub-judice, are not included during the periodic review of the License Fee / Spectrum Usage Charges FBGs by the CCA offices.

COAI submitted a follow-up letter to DoT on 14th June 2021 requesting DoT that:

a) Players providing OTT communications services should be licensed by introducing the OTT Communication Authorization under the Unified License.

b) Till the time any decision is taken regarding licensing of OTT communication providers, no new licensing conditions, including that of Traffic Management Practices for Net Neutrality etc., should be imposed on TSPs.

COAI submitted a follow-up letter to TRAI on 14th June 2021 requesting to repeal the redundant activities like Welcome Letter and mandatory hard copy of the bill, etc.
Request for additional Time to comply with requirements of QoS (Code of Practice for Metering and Billing Accuracy) Regulation, 2006

COAI has submitted a letter to TRAI on 17th June 2021 stating that due to the challenging situation w.r.t COVID19 pandemic it is extremely difficult for TSPs to submit the Audit report and Action Taken Report within due date. Hence, we requested TRAI:

a) To provide an extension of eight weeks from the respective due dates for submission of audit status reports by Auditors and Metering and Billing Audit Reports and Action Taken Report by our member TSPs.

b) Notify the list of Panel of Auditors for the audit of Metering and Billing systems for FY 2021- 22 at the earliest.

Letter on Reduction in Regulatory Levies - USOF Contribution

COAI has submitted a letter to Ministry of Finance (MoF) on 18th June 2021 and a follow-up letter to DoT on 17th June 2021 requesting that the USO contribution should be abolished immediately by the DoT/Government.

Allowing deductions of lease line / bandwidth charges and the charges paid by one TSP to the other TSP as pass-through charges

COAI submitted a follow-up letter to DoT on 21st May, requesting for allowing deductions of lease line / bandwidth charges and the charges paid by one TSP to the other TSP as pass-through charges.

Joint Industry letter on Internet Traffic Monitoring Requirement

A Joint industry (COAI-ISPAI) letter was submitted to DoT on 21st June 2021 requesting DoT to exempt the Caching and peering type of internet traffic from the purview of the internet traffic monitoring system as this traffic is static in nature and doesn’t contribute to any security risks.

Joint Industry letter on Review Process and Related Impact on Cost of the Internet Traffic Monitoring System

A Joint industry (COAI-ISPAI) letter was submitted to DoT on 23rd June 2021 requesting DoT that:

a) Provisioning of all monitoring requests shall be undertaken by C-DoT only on the request of LEAs/Government agencies.

b) Cost of deployment / upgradation of servers and their annual maintenance should be borne by C-DoT.

c) The IMS deployed through C-DoT should be the only source through which any monitoring requirement of the LEAs/Government agencies can be catered.

Need for uniform timelines for the declaration of revenue related details by the TSPs

COAI submitted a follow-up letter to DoT on 24th June 2021 requesting to maintain uniformity in the timelines for declaration of price sensitive information/revenue related details to DoT as well as the Stock Exchanges as prescribed by SEBI.

Industry meeting with Principal Secretary (IT) Maharashtra

COAI arranged a meeting of its members with Principal Secretary (IT) of Maharashtra. Issues of the Industry were noted by Principal Secretary (IT) to take action and issue appropriate directions accordingly.

Industry meeting with MCD

Industry meeting was arranged with officials of MCD to highlight issues faced by the industry w.r.t installation of Telecom Towers.

Rationalization of restoration charges

Representations were submitted to central agencies like MoRTH, MoD, MoUD, and the AAI for formation of RoW policy in alignment with RoW Rules, 2016. Meetings also sought with the above agencies to take the discussion forward.

Engaged Chief Secretary of Maharashtra, Delhi, UP & AP for rationalization of Exorbitant Restoration charges, exceedingly high Aerial OFC laying charges & for removal of additional charges.

Training of industry officials for RoW Portal launched by Andhra Pradesh (AP)

Andhra Pradesh has launched an RoW portal on 9th June 2021 for installation of Telecom Towers. A demo session was coordinated with the AP Government Municipal Administration and Urban Development Department (MAUD) and the industry representatives on 25th June 2021.

Online Portal Development for Tamil Nadu

COAI’s submission was made to DoT for the development of an Online Portal for the State of Tamil Nadu.

Rural Connectivity across Tamil Nadu

An industry meeting was coordinated with the Additional Secretary, TN (E&ITD), Tamil Nadu w.r.t initiatives being taken regarding connecting the unconnected villages.
Jharkhand OFC Policy

COAI made a submission to the Chief Secretary, Jharkhand regarding inclusion of OFC Rules in the existing RoW Policy for Jharkhand.

EMF Awareness Webinar for Mobile Communications and EMF Emissions for Rajasthan

EMF Awareness Webinar for the State of Rajasthan was organized on 29th June 2021 to debunk the prevailing EMF myths w.r.t installation of Telecom Towers. Over 400 people participated in the Webinar. The Webinar was very informative and queries of the audience were well answered by the Panelists with facts and relevant information. This activity was adequately covered by Rajasthan and online media.

Priority Power Grid supply on industrial tariffs

COAI made submission to Secretary, Ministry of Power requesting for priority Grid supply on Industrial tariffs to the Telecom Industry.

State Broadband Committee Meetings

COAI requested States of West Bengal, Tamil Nadu & MP to conduct the first, meeting of the State Broadband Committee as prescribed in the National Broadband Mission.

Implementation of Single Number based Emergency Response Support System

COAI submitted a reminder letter to DoT on 10th June 2021 on the subject requesting DoT to do the following:

a) Issue instructions to CDAC/State Agencies to reconsider new addition of PSAP locations.

b) Instruct PSAP service providers to desist from demand of PRI cards of PSAP at every location to TSPs.

c) Instruct state agencies to approve pending RoW applications and not levy any RoW charges for the work concerning PRI connectivity to PSAP.

Security and Financial concerns in respect of misuse of new OSP regime

COAI made a submission to Secretary, DoT on 11th June 2021 stating that the liberalization of OSP regime, vide new guidelines for OSPs dated November 05, 2020, is being misused and misrepresented to allude that the OSPs do not require to rely on licensed service providers for VPN connectivity.

In this regard, COAI requested that no change be brought in the current oversight in provision of VPN services and requested DoT to clarify that VPN connectivity in connecting various OSP centres is permitted only through NLD route.

Graded Penalty Structure for Non-Compliance

COAI submitted a letter to Secretary, DoT on 23rd June, 2021 on the issue of penalty in case of any non-compliance at a maximum of Rs. 50 Crores without getting into the proportionality and genesis of such noncompliance and its possible ramifications. COAI requested DoT to review the penalty regime in the present licensing framework and also sought a meeting in this regard to discuss the issue in detail.

Consideration of 3GPP Rel-15 and Rel-16 Specifications

COAI submitted a reminder letter to TEC on 23rd June 2021 to ensure that the necessary ER and QR based on the 3GPP Rel. 15 and 16 specifications are in place for the timely roll out of 5G networks and devices and urged TEC to consider the GCS specifications referred (05/22-E approved by ITU-R SG5) at the earliest.

Allocation of 28 GHz band for IMT/5G use

COAI submitted a letter to DoT on 28th June 2021 requesting them to reserve 26 GHz band and 28 GHz band for IMT for the TSPs. For the remaining mm Wave bands beyond 28 GHz band, the same may be coordinated with Department of Space for future use by both Satellite and Mobile industry. It was highlighted that adequate provisioning of protection zone/guard band can be considered for satellite gateway operations at critical locations so as to ensure smooth operations for both the sectors. Any proposal for allocation of 28 GHz band (n257) spectrum for non-5G/IMT use is not acceptable.

S-KYC Process:

COAI held various meetings with TSPs and submitted inputs on the draft S-KYC process to DoT on 29th June 2021. The process will help the customers in getting self-verification to be carried out by them.
Extension / relaxation of certain compliances by DoT.

Post our representation made to DoT for seeking extension / relaxation in certain compliances, we are happy to inform that DoT vide letter dated 15-06-2021 has extended timeline / given relaxation in the following compliances.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Current Practice</th>
<th>Extension / relaxation by DoT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Proofs of payment for claiming deductions for Q4 of 2020-21</td>
<td>To be submitted by 15-06-2021</td>
<td>31-07-2021</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>TSPs need to submit physical copies of the supporting documents as proofs to support the deductions claimed by them.</td>
<td>To be submitted within a period of 15 days in response to the DVR issued by CCA office.</td>
<td>(Response for the DVR issued during the period of March 2021 to June 2021)</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Submission of Audited statement of Revenue and license statement (Audited AGR)</td>
<td>To be submitted by 30-06-2021</td>
<td>31-07-2021</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Acceptance of Bank Guarantee (BG) in Digital/Scanned format via email</td>
<td>Physical copies of BG to submit with CCA office.</td>
<td>31-07-2021</td>
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## Telecom Infrastructure Policy Alignment with RoW Rules, 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Notified / Cabinet Approval Date</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Policy Status</th>
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<td>29</td>
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*G.O Only (Detailed Policy is under discussion)
**Policy notified with some clause not aligned with RoW Rules, 2016
***TSPs to be included in DTC
Issues around telecom industry's health even more relevant now; viability a must: COAI

The industry’s long-term viability is a must to ensure robust, ubiquitous telecom services, and issues related to financial health are now even more relevant for the sector that has kept the nation connected amid the pandemic, COAI has said. Read more

5G tech safe; concerns around health consequences misplaced: COAI

Industry body COAI has said that any concern around adverse impact of 5G on health is “totally misplaced”, and all evidence available supports that the next-generation technology is safe. Read more

Bharti Airtel’s Ajai Puri re-elected as COAI Chairman for 2021-22

COAI on Thursday said Ajai Puri, Chief Operating Officer of Bharti Airtel, has been re-elected as Chairman of the industry association for 2021-22. Read more

Radiation from cell phone towers causes no harm: DoT official

Contrary to popular fears that radiation from cell phone towers may be injurious to health, a senior DoT official on Tuesday said extensive research on electromagnetic field signals has established that it does not cause any harm. Read more

Can 5G spread coronavirus? Here’s what govt. says

The centre has rejected the claim that 5G mobile networks spread or transmit Covid-19. The government claimed that viruses cannot travel on radio waves or mobile networks. Read more
COAI Events

**Advanced Digital Communication Technologies Toolkit for India held on 8th June 2021**

Vikram Tiwathia, DDG, #COAI shared his thoughts on ‘Advanced Digital Communication Technologies Toolkit for India’ on the 2nd Virtual Workshop organized by EU India along with telecom industry experts.

**Cybersecurity for Tomorrow’s Digital World held on 14th June 2021**

With #digitization in almost all the sectors, #cybersecurity becomes the need of the hour. Learn from the experts about the best ways to reinforce cybersecurity with new technologies, standards, and approaches in the new world at the ‘Cybersecurity for Tomorrow’s Digital World’ webinar organized by ET Telecom.

**Awareness Webinar on EMF Radiation organized by Dept. of Telecommunications, Rajasthan LSA, Jaipur**

In an #EMFawareness session organized today in Jaipur, Department of Telecommunications (DOT) along with #COAI, TSPs, IPs, TAIPA & local authorities dispelled some common myths on the ill effects of mobile tower radiations.