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Chairperson's Message

Mr. Ajai Puri

Chairperson, COAI

COAI has successfully achieved great milestones and as we step into the new year, we bring forward 'I-Digest' to keep the discussions alive on the digital platform and to create a space with enriching information flowing around the developments of the digital communication industry. The industry is stronger today than ever before and the telecommunications sector has been acting as the central spine for digital innovations, which facilitated in providing uninterrupted services and has kept the 'Lights On' for the nation as a whole society at large during COVID-19 pandemic. The unsung heroes of the telecom sector continue to address issues and maintain the networks, towers and fiber besides securing RoW (Right of Way) from the local authorities while braving the virus as well as maintaining strict compliance with the law-and-order enforcements during the lockdown.

The team at COAI wants to bring to our readers and audience the updates, the know-hows of it all. Kudos to the team at COAI for their contribution and hard work to make this project transcend to its stage of distribution from a mere simple idea. Our team, the COAI Secretariat should be given a special mention for execution of this newsletter. As an industry body, COAI has continued to be an effective contributor in the Digital Communications industry which is poised to witness an explosive growth and transformation over the next few years.

COAI occupies center stage at the cusp of this convergence and wishes to share the upcoming challenges, milestones and our hits and misses while we embark on this new journey. I am happy to release the first edition of 'I-Digest'.



LT. GEN DR. SP KOCHHAR (RETD.)

Director General, COAI

FROM DG'S DESK

Telecom has today become an all-inescapable innovation cutting broad range, consequently having an unmistakably more astounding effect on the economy and life of the purchaser.

COVID-19 has undoubtedly highlighted that telecom is the lifeline of the nation. As the whole world is dealing with significant uncertainty, know that you are not alone. We are facing this situation together. The COVID-19 pandemic triggered significant changes in the use of telecom networks and services: employees are teleworking; students are learning on the web; people are communicating via video. Telecom has come at a very opportune time to save the economy of the nation. Telcos, with the help of the DoT and local municipalities, were able to bring online BTSs shut down due to various reasons by local Municipalities, from about 900 to approximately 70, ensuring additional coverage and capacity for the users. Our goal is to stay focused on living our core values and actively connect with teammates, our community, and our customers and keeping everyone connected.

We will use technology to break down barriers, come closer together, and find better days ahead. I'm optimistic because I've seen every day that we are stronger as a global community than we are as individuals and that we all can adapt and move forward. I believe this moment will ultimately teach us that we are resilient together.



COAI- LATEST UPDATES

COAI made representations to DoT and TRAI respectively for reduction in License Fee to 1%

The representations were made on Dec 3, 2020 and Dec 17, 2020 to DoT & TRAI. The key points highlighted by COAI are:

- LF reduction is necessary for maintaining the financial Health of the Sector.
- License Fee should be charged only for the administrative expenses.
- Reduction in Licence fee is necessary to facilitate Investments required to complete the Digital India Vision & 5G Roll-outs.
- International benchmarks show that India's LF % is way above the world average.

Review of Definition of AGR prospectively

COAI made representation to DoT on Dec 11, 2020 on Review of Definition of AGR.

The key points highlighted by COAI are:

- Review the definition of AGR as per NDCP 2018 Prospectively.
- Accept and implement Recommendations of TRAI on AGR dated January 2015.

COAI Submission to MeitY on Process Flow of Implementation of Project Arachnid

COAI made representation to MeitY on Dec 11,2020 on Submission of the Implementation process flow of Project Arachnid. The key points highlighted by COAI are:

- Netsweepers centralised database gets an automatic daily feed of URLs from Project Arachnid and in turn updates database of every Netsweeper server in the TSPs.
- Netsweeper already has the Project Arachnid list integrated with its core web content filtering system.
- TSPs propose to implement Project Arachnid list for addressing Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM).

Revised Process for Use of 'Aadhaar' Authentication Service

COAI wrote to DoT on December 03, 2020, on revision required for usage of 'Aadhaar' authentication service for mobile connections issued by UIDAI.

COAI requested DoT to take up the matter of costs with UIDAI and facilitate re-examination to bring down the cost of subscriber activation to a maximum of 70-80 paise per subscriber activation. Further, COAI has also requested DoT to institutionalize one-time KYC for PoS/ PoS agents.

SIM replacement process through D-KYC

To increase digital adoption, COAI has proposed a SIM replacement process through DKYC to DoT on December 16, 2020.

It was also suggested in the letter that the process should be applicable for Bulk subscribers as well, wherein a "subscriber" shall be replaced by "Authorized Signatory" on behalf of the entity/company/organization.

Police Verification of PoS Agents in J&K, Assam, and NESA

COAI requested the DoT as below:

- Review the required Police verification of each POS agent taking an inordinate amount of time and to do away with this requirement.
- Keeping in mind duration by local Police as in Para 2 above, permission for PoS agent to be on-boarded after a reasonable 15 days of the request being made to Police/TERM for verification.

The TSPs would continue to capture essential fields of the PoS as well as PoS agents at all times and the same will be made available to LSAs & LEAs at any given point of time. Also, the TSPs would continue to provide access of the DKYC app to all its PoS & PoS agents as per extant DoT directions.

COAI- LATEST UPDATES

PoS / PoS Agent Mobile Number Registration @ TSP ; Onboarding Subscribers wrt Verification Through D-KYC

COAI requested DoT for the following:

- DoT should reconsider provisions of its clarification dated November 19, 2020 requiring that the PoS / PoS agent mobile number registered in TSP database has to be exclusively in the name of PoS / PoS agent only.
- Say alternatively, TSPs should be given time until March 31, 2021 for reconciliation of PoS names & required correction. Date to be treated effectively to implement in the TSPs backend & IT systems to comply with DoT circular dated November 19, 2020 for all activations starting April 01, 2021.

Data for Graphical Display of RF Mobile Coverage – Prediction Maps:

COAI made the following submission to DoT in the letter:

- The existing tools of TSPs are being used with a primary objective of network planning. Dedicating the same to generate coverage plots for all the circles with such a level of granularity, may not be possible for the TSPs without procuring more hardware, software, and additional licenses for the tools.
- Coverage details already provided to the DoT/ LSA units on a regular basis but prediction maps with such granularity has been sought for the first time (sensitive business information). The rationale for seeking prediction maps from TSPs is not understood by the members. COAI requested DoT to reconsider these requirements regarding coverage maps which has been raised at various circles by the DoT TERM Cells.

COAI made representation to TRAI on Allowing denomination in multiple of Rs. 10 for Special Tariff/ Combo/ Plan Vouchers

COAI wrote to TRAI on Dec 14, 2020 on allowing denomination in multiple of Rs. 10 for Special Tariff/ Combo/ Plan Vouchers and doing away with the provision of mandatory colour coding of the vouchers.

The key points highlighted by COAI are:

- Existing restrictions about the offering of Top-up vouchers in multiple of ten rupees and STV and Plan vouchers, not in multiple of Rs 10, should be removed.
- As the vouchers are now being provided by the TSPs digitally through online mode, hence the paper vouchers and colour coding of paper vouchers have lost their relevance.

Review of TEC Test Procedure for Measurement of EMF from BTSs

COAI requested DoT for review of DoT's notification of Scheme of penalty in case of violation of terms and conditions of License and related instructions on the matter of EMF Radiation dated 20th November 2013 basis the Test Procedure for Measurement of EMF from BTSs Document.

One such point is submission of Upgrade certificates by all other pre-existing tenants on a shared site in case of upgradation or addition of new BTS at a site.

TEC circulated revised Test Procedure Document basis inputs received and the discussions during DCC-SC. Further, industry inputs to the Test Procedure and points raised by the TERM Cells were submitted to TEC on December 24, 2020.

Date of First Radiation or Date of Commission and Requirement of OSS Snapshot for LPBTSs

COAI submitted a letter on December 14, 2020.

Compliance for LPBTS is made as per the Simplified Assessment Procedure for EMF compliance of Low Power Base Transceiver Stations dated 24th November 2015 and its addendum issued on 31st March 2016.

Such Low Power BTSs categorized as compliant as per ITU-T Recommendation K.100. However, it was decided that the basic reporting of LPBTS is required to be adopted in our country. All stakeholders intensively deliberated during DCC meetings prior to finalizing and issuing the Simplified Assessment Criteria and Test Procedure 2018 for LPBTSs (one-page report required) and were specified in the Test Procedure issued in 2018.

In view of the above, COAI submitted that there is no need for additional supporting documents like an OSS Snapshot to be submitted for LPBTSs SAC and the present Test Procedure methodology should continue to be followed.

COAI- LATEST UPDATES

EMF Audit Testing Fee

COAI follow up letter was submitted on December 3, 2020, regarding DoT Order dated 08th February 2019 on EMF Testing Fee be modified as per the Judgment and Order dated 30th October 2018 passed by the Hon'ble Telecom Dispute Settlement & Appellate Tribunal (TDSAT) in Petition No. 500 of 2014.

It was submitted to DoT that any/all payment made by the telecom service providers after 20th November 2014 i.e. the date of the interim order passed by TDSAT, the rate of INR 10,000/-, for the shared site cannot be treated as closed demand as that would tantamount to violation of the TDSAT order.

Thus, all excess payments (whether paid under protest or not) corresponding to those demands and made after the interim order dated 20th November 2014 ought to be refunded to the Telecom Service Providers at the earliest and/or adjusted against future testing fee charges.

Review of Biennial Self-Certificate Submission Instructions

COAI requested a review of the submission of Biennial Self-Certificates as they are being duly submitted by TSPs for any installation of new Sites and additional BTS at existing Sites. The Portal availability is offering an online means to the TERM Cells as well as TSPs for access to any kind of database/information about site compliance. The submission to DoT is as below:

- Biennial Submission of Calculation Method Category Sites: Exemption from submitting biennial certificates for Sites that are compliant using Calculation Method because it is already providing the worst-case overestimated value instead of the actual lower value for exposure for EMF Compliance.
- Biennial Submission of Broadband Category Sites: For biennial submission of these sites, a system-generated report should suffice with no need for field surveys as there are regular upgrades and field measurements being done by TSPs at such sites. The latest Self-Certificate and EMF compliance information is available online in the Portal to LSA officials at all time.
- Review of Biennial Cycle Duration: Considering the above modifications, the timeline for biennial submission for Sites those are compliant using Broadband and Narrowband Methodology for field surveys are extended to at least 4 years in place of submitting after every 2 years.

5G Trials in India

Members have submitted 5G trial applications to DoT, however, till date the approvals for progressing, instructions for conduct for these trials have not been made clear and there is no set date for commencement of these trials.

Awaiting a revert from DoT regarding the commencement of trials. A presentation was also made by COAI on Aug 12, 2020, to the Parliamentary Committee where the issue of expediting the trials was taken up. Submissions were also made to PSCIT on 5G Readiness on Nov 6, 2020. A letter was submitted to DoT for expediting the trials on Dec 2, 2020.

Electromagnetic Compatibility (EMC) Essential Requirements (ERs) for MTCTE

COAI we requested DoT/TEC to incorporate the following suggestions:

- Voltage Dips and Interrupts on DC PSU per IEC 61000-4-29: Revisit such ERs either to completely remove or add the note" this standard is applicable to low voltage DC power ports of equipment supplied by external DC networks. Also, this test is applicable only in equipment in which the battery backup is not permanently connected to the distribution system."
- Conducted and Radiated Emission – "Class-B should be applicable only to the equipment intended primarily for use in domestic (residential & commercial) environment."
- Immunity to surges-TEC EMI/EMC standard EN/IEC 61000-4-5- "Regarding DC ports, only those DC ports shall be tested that are intended to directly connect to outdoor lines."
- Modes for Testing: Define the test configuration modes to remove the ambiguity during testing and review and approval by the approving agency.
- PTP PMP Microwave Fixed Radio Systems (ER No. TEC56422005): Consider in removing this ER as this safety standard is not applicable to PTP Microwave System.
- Local Testing for EMI/EMC for Radio Telecom Products: Take up this issue with local labs and confirm regarding their readiness, so that our OEM members may start preliminary testing.
- Protocol Implementation Conformance Statement (PICS Test): Remove this ER as facility is not available to conduct the tests mentioned under PICS test.

PRE-BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS MADE AT VARIOUS LEVELS IN MOF & DOT

On December 21, 2020, COAI was invited by the Hon'ble Minister of Finance to discuss pre-budget recommendations on key issues of the sector. Key issues discussed by DG were:

- Reduction in regulatory levies, Review of definition of AGR (prospectively), USOF should be abolished, Licence Fee (LF) to brought down from 3% to 1%, SUC should reduce and no LF on Wireline revenue.
- Tax Issues discussed were: Exempt Custom Duty on telecom equipment, Removal of GST on LF, SUC, and Payment of Spectrum acquired in the auction, Refund of accumulated Input Tax Credit (ITC) of Rs 35,000 Crs. Exemption from levy of Service tax on "Right of Way" granted by the Central Government/ State Government and Development Authorities and Clarification regarding non- Applicability of service tax on AGR payable is pursuant to the Supreme Court order.

Prior to this meeting, the detailed submission requesting clarification/concessions related to Direct Tax, Indirect Tax including GST, Custom Duty, Service Tax, etc. were presented to the delegation led by Ms. Anita Praveen, JST, DoT, Chairman CBIC & to concerned senior officers from Budget, CBIC & CBDT in MoF

COAI- STATEMENTS

Spectrum Auction

"We welcome the government's decision to auction spectrum by March 2021. This will enable the industry to cater to the exponential increase in data usage and continue supporting the Digital India vision. While the Govt. has addressed the requirement for more spectrum, lower reserve prices would have provided additional resources for network expansion to the Telcos. High reserve prices in past auctions have resulted in large amounts of spectrum remaining unsold. We hope the Govt. will take additional measures to boost the financial health of the industry, which is the backbone of a digitally connected India." [Read more](#)

Production Linked Incentive Scheme

We are yet to receive details of the scheme from DoT, but are confident that the government will have designed the PLI scheme to ensure demand for telecom gear in the local market is enhanced and that exports too are suitably supported and incentivized," said S P Kochhar, Director General of COAI that represents Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel, Vodafone Idea and global vendors, Nokia and Ericsson. [Read more](#)

NEWS WIRES



Telecom operators looking for early 5G trials

It has been demanded that no equipment/application vendor should be restricted for conducting the lab trial and operators should have the flexibility to conduct the trial for "Make in India" solutions with minimum to no requirement of submitting documents to the department of telecommunications (DoT). [Read more](#)

Spectrum auction decision welcome; lower reserve prices would've allowed more resources:COAI

Industry body COAI on Wednesday welcomed the government's decision to auction spectrum by March 2021 but said lower reserve prices would have freed-up additional resources for network expansion by telcos. [Read more](#)



Telcos expect the Government to take immediate steps to resolve industry woes, AGR Definition: COAI

Telecom Service Providers expect the government to take immediate steps to resolve the issues of the sector which has played the role of an enabler for other key industry verticals and supported 30-35 per cent of GDP during the COVID-19 crisis. [Read more](#)

India bets big on 5G technology going mainstream in 2021

Earlier this month K. Ramchand, Member (Technology), Department of Telecommunications (DoT) said that it would soon announce 5G spectrum bands for auction. That's a clear indication that adopting 5G is now a priority for the government. [Read more](#)



COAI says the telecom industry financially stressed; seeks Govt. support

The telecom industry, which facilitated wide-spread digital adoption during the pandemic, continues to be financially stressed and seeks government support on issues like liquidity, rationalization of levies, AGR & spectrum pricing. [Read more](#)

INDIA MOBILE CONGRESS 2020

VIRTUAL EDITION



Recently, DOT in hands with COAI unveiled the fourth edition of India Mobile Congress, 2020. The event was of the duration of 3 days (8 Dec, 2020 to 10th Dec, 2020) and was themed as Inclusive Innovation: Smart, Secure, and Sustainable. To add a golden feather in IMC 2020's cap, it was successfully inaugurated by Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Ji.

IMC 2020, was the largest digital technology event and was also the biggest international tech conference in South Asia!



Key Highlights



EVENT STATS

-  **27,213** Footfall
-  **11,306** Session views
-  **6725** Resources downloaded
-  **170** Partner & Exhibitor Booths

COAI-NOKIA JOINT WEBINAR

PPDR NETWORK NEEDS TO BE BUILT FOR FUTURE AND LTE IS WAY FORWARD

COAI **NOKIA**

WEBINAR

Panel Discussion on
WIRELESS BROADBAND FOR MISSION CRITICAL SERVICES

Panelists

Brig. Ajay Gangwar
Advisor (Operations & Communications)
National Disaster Management Authority
Minist of Home Affairs, Govt. of India

Mr. Pranav Jha
Senior Consultant
IIT Bombay

Mr. Randeep Raina
Chief Technology Officer
Nokia India

Moderator

Mr. Vikram Tiwathia
Deputy Director General
COAI

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In view of addressing the growing importance of effective digital communications infrastructure for mission-critical services, COAI, along with Nokia organized a special session on 22nd December 2020 to discuss the issues, challenges, and solutions for communications to be provided for Mission Critical Services. This event brought forward some key issues on this crucial subject, like India in recent months witnessed multiple requirements for Public Protection and Disaster Management that included, in addition to routine police work, the pandemic, mass migration to villages, and also various cyclones in different parts of the country.

The webinar witnessed the welcome note by Lt. Gen Dr. SP Kochhar, DG, COAI followed by the presentation of Mr. Marc Balliet, Public Sector Solutions (Enterprise), Global, Nokia on LTE for Mission Critical Services. The online event also had a panel discussion on the issue with the participation of experts on the subject including Mr. Pranav Jha, Professor, IIT Bombay, Brig. Ajay Gangwar, Advisor, Operations and Communications, NDMA, and Mr. Randeep Raina, CTO, Nokia.





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