



## **Industry response to the Drive Test Results Released by TRAI**

**New Delhi, June 02, 2016:** TRAI yesterday released the Drive Test results for Delhi Service Area. COAI wishes to point out the following issues with regard to these Drive Test Results.

For one, these results ought not to be confused with the standard QoS which is mandated by TRAI which is computed for the whole Licenced Service Area (i.e. all cell sites in the LSA). The particular Drive Test and its results do not cover all the cell sites but only a limited amount of the LSA. While the area of Delhi NCR is 46,208 km<sup>2</sup>, these results are limited to a route covering 600 km only. Hence the QoS results from the Drive Test are not strictly comparable with the standard QoS for Dropped Calls regularly published by TRAI for the entire service area.

To get a fair and an accurate picture, the issue of Quality of Service and Call Drops has to be seen in a holistic manner for the entire LSA and not only for selected samples or areas. When we look at the QoS for the whole LSA of Delhi we notice that all the operators are in compliance with the benchmark set by TRAI of  $\leq 2\%$ , as of the last published QoS results for call drops which are as of Sept. 2015.

Given the limited coverage of these Drive Tests, the results show problems limited to the known problematic areas where the industry faces issues in obtaining cell sites. The TRAI report clearly shows majority of the call drops happening in the four areas of Central Delhi, Dwarka & IGI Airport, Gurgaon & Manesar and Noida & Mayur Vihar. For example, the Delhi IGI Airport has large areas of defence property and only recently has the Minister of Communication and IT (MOC&IT) opened up defence land for setting up of telecom infrastructure. Another area where call drops were seen as out of parameter is Central Delhi. Here again, this is a known problem area and the industry is involved in ongoing deliberations with NDMC for Central Delhi and with MCD for other parts of Delhi, for installation of towers. Over 400 towers have been sealed by MCD across the city over the past few months. In Noida-Mayur Vihar, the industry continues to face challenges with the local Municipal Authorities and more than 250 towers were shut down in 2015. The story is the same in Gurgaon-Manesar where the industry is continuously facing problems with the Gurgaon authorities. Moreover in Delhi NCR, there have been concerns raised about location of towers, citing EMF issues.

Moreover, the TRAI report itself acknowledges that majority of the call drop instances are in these problematic locations. For example the TRAI report states that for Airtel, 65% of the call drops are attributed to 4 areas of Connaught Place, Dwarka, Gurgaon and Noida. In case of Vodafone 60% of the call drops have occurred in Delhi University and Noida.

We also understand that the measurement practices used by the outsourced agency/ vendor (M/s Phistream Consulting) used by TRAI for conducting the Drive Test vary from those adopted by the operators. Members pointed out these anomalies to TRAI and these still remain unresolved.

It is also interesting to note that the big headlines regarding masking of call drops using the RLT ( Radio Link Timeout) parameter proved misleading as TRAI's own published results in the Drive Tests show only one operator out of parameter.



The industry is concerned that the publication of results by TRAI, before resolving the outstanding technical and measurement issues, leads to erroneous conclusions by citizens, Government and others. Further, without explaining the difference between a selective drive result of called drops over known problem areas and the license prescribed LSA wide measure of QoS of call drops, the public is misled as to the true nature of the problems. The resolution of the call drop problem in the known difficult areas is not through the imposition of penalties but a constructive partnership between the industry, DoT, Ministry of Urban Development, local municipal governments, among others, to facilitate and hasten the approvals of required cell sites.

In this regard we remain indebted to the honourable Minister of Communication and IT, Mr. Ravi Shankar Prasad and the DoT Secretary, Mr. J.S. Deepak for their proactive and timely assistance to locate cell sites on Government buildings and land, Postal Department Facilities and defence properties. It is this type of constructive partnership that will ultimately address the network issue of call drops faced by the industry and the citizens.

The industry has invested over INR 8.5 Lakh crores till date. Moreover, in order to augment coverage and capacity, the industry has put up over 2 lakh cell sites nationally in the past 15 months. Hence it would be fallacious to say that operators are not making the requisite investments in networks and infrastructure.

#### **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.

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