

## No call for level playing field between Captive Private 5G Networks and Public Networks: BIF

- *Nowhere in the 55+ countries where Private 5G Networks are deployed, have similar regulations been issued*

**New Delhi, 21<sup>st</sup> June 2022:** Broadband India Forum, the leading independent Think-Tank and Policy Forum for Digital Communications in the country, dismissed claims of a level playing field between Public and Captive Private 5G Networks, as is being irrationally demanded by some quarters, as absurd and impractical, since the two are entirely different set of services for two entirely different requirements, are on completely different footings and are not competing with each other.

The age-old and time-tested concept of “level playing field” cannot apply in the case of Captive Private 5G networks, as they have several distinctive traits which distinguish them from Public Networks, with whom they are being compared without any logic or basis:

1. Single end-user (the enterprise itself) in the given location, unlike a vast number of users in Public Networks.
2. Captive usage in a very limited geographical area of operations with defined Lat–Long coordinates, in comparison to LSA/State or Circle wide deployments in Public Networks.
3. Quantum of spectrum required is very small (going up to about 100 MHz) unlike the huge amounts of spectrum (almost 72000 MHz) used by Public Networks.
4. With no connectivity to external Public Networks (PLMN/PSTN), there is no requirement for lawful interception, LIM/LIS, Trusted Source requirements, and other Security related conditions.
5. While Public Networks are configured for ‘best effort’ SLAs to deliver average performance for external voice and data connectivity, Private 5G Networks are meant to serve extremely high reliability and ultra-high SLAs with extremely low latency applications and ultra-high data rates for M2M/IIoT/Automation/Industry 4.0/Robotics, etc. In fact, the QoS requirements of Captive Private 5G Networks are much more stringent owing to these extremely high SLAs and must be monitored and course-corrected by internal audit, and not through public audits by TERM cells of DoT.
6. The telcos can operate their networks in full power, whereas Private Networks have to restrict power to a regulated level - just like Wi-Fi networks, to prevent signals spilling out of their premises, and hence the same spectrum can be re-used many times across multiple different locations, unlike the case of Public 5G Networks.
7. Private Networks are not in the business of selling telecom services and earning revenues from it, but would be using the same purely for self-consumption.
8. Private Networks operate under strict pre-defined rules and regulations, and have completely different set of obligations as compared to PLMN (Public) Networks and therefore cannot be compared with them.

Importantly, the suggestion that private networks should not be given spectrum in bands which are possible for telcos to use for offering services is also unjustified, as the telcos’ businesses depend on economies of scale, while that of enterprise businesses having private networks does not. The spectrum that is earmarked for private networks needs to be exclusive and distinct from

those bands for Public 5G, to avoid needless possibilities of interference between the two networks.

**BIF President, Mr. TV Ramachandran**, commented, *“Seeking a level playing field with enterprises for captive private networks is akin to a child in kindergarten being asked to compete with someone who has a doctoral degree. No mature regulator anywhere in the world imposes regulation on a player with no or minimal market share. Regulations are applied on mature players in competition, who have significant market share and can abuse it. Enterprises will not be in the business of selling services or earning revenues through private 5G networks, but only use it for self-consumption. The credibility and rationale of such claims are questionable and require introspection.”*

BIF reiterated that the Cabinet decision for permitting captive private 5G networks is a progressive and forward-looking one, and has been taken keeping in mind the overall growth and advancement of the nation, the vital aspects of consumer benefits, adoption of technology, and continued reforms, for the benefit of all stakeholders, eventually leading to greater economic as well as socio-economic gains for the country. This will, in turn, accelerate Digital Transformation of Enterprises to Industry 4.0, generate more job opportunities, and provide impetus to our national missions of ‘Atmanirbharta’ & ‘Make in India’.

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#### **About Broadband India Forum**

Broadband India Forum (BIF) functions as an independent policy forum and knowledge-based think-tank that works for the development and enhancement of the entire broadband ecosystem in a holistic, technology-neutral and service-neutral manner. BIF has established itself as a thought leader and a credible and effective voice, to help propel the nation to achieve the country’s ambitious vision of creating a Digital India. To achieve this, BIF works to promote the rapid development of policies, so as to facilitate affordable and high-speed ubiquitous broadband throughout the country.

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