

## **Policy Guidelines for Captive Private 5G Networks must be implemented in letter and spirit of Cabinet decision: BIF**

- *Supposed delay in implementing direct spectrum allocation to affect enterprises unfairly*
- *Must prevent distortion of competition and undue advantage to certain industry sections*

**New Delhi, 27 June 2022:** Broadband India Forum (BIF) notes certain media reports to state that the Government is expected to shortly come up with policy guidelines that would allow setting up of Captive Private 5G Networks, also referred to as Captive Non-Public Networks (CNPNS). BIF hails this progressive move by the Government in the process of digital transformation for the nation and towards achieving Industry 4.0.

However, based on some of the media reports, it is understood that the Government is initially considering to include only the framework for enterprises to set up private 5G networks in partnership with telecom operators, by taking spectrum on lease or by getting their networks built by them. BIF feels that such an action, if taken, will provide a regulatory advantage to one side, more so since that side is already overly strong and has the advantages of huge external market power of an incumbent network, which directly impacts the businesses of the weak non-telecom vertical players, i.e. enterprises.

**Mr. TV Ramachandran, President, BIF,** stated, *"If the mentioned media reports are taken to be true, these guidelines would surely distort competition and go against the essence of the Cabinet decision as well as the NIA dated 15th June 2022, wherein there was no indication that the options for incumbents to offer these services first were to be facilitated. Besides creating undesired differences in the system at the very beginning, it would also lead to uncertainty and a Hobson's choice for the enterprises for setting up their CNPNS. That, in turn, would lead to sub-optimal outcomes for them as regards efficiency, quality and cost of service being offered/made available to them."*

**In fact, to truly implement the Cabinet decision in letter and spirit, it might be appropriate to provide a suitably calibrated handicap to the enterprises to offset the disadvantage they face due to the privileged position that the other side holds.** The enterprises should, in all fairness, be provided their fundamental right to choose with whom they partner to set up their private captive networks, and this choice should be available to them right from the beginning itself.

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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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