

BIF Hails Epoch Making Satellite Communication Reforms From DoT!

Will mainstream satcom to benefit Digital India and Antyodaya

BIF hails the excellent initiative of the Department of Telecommunications to recently launch a spate of reforms which will surely go a long way in the mainstreaming of Satellite Communications, significantly enhance the ease of doing business (EoDB) and help reduce costs in the sector. *This would lead to use of Satcom in proliferation of broadband and achieving Hon'ble PM's vision of Digital India.*

All the measures announced by DoT towards simplification of processes and procedures and waiver/reduction in charges/fees for permissions/ licenses which are part of the liberal and simplified framework is likely to lead to increase the provisioning of satcom in unserved and underserved areas of the country and are extremely welcome steps in the journey towards achieving Broadband for All. *These measures, which operate in tandem with the great Liberalisation programme of DoS and InSPACE, are big boosters of investor confidence.*

The benefits that are likely to accrue from the reforms undertaken would include:

S. No.	Reform	Benefit to stakeholders
1.	Single-stage scrutiny process by WPC & NOCC instead of the erstwhile multi-stage process. Major Simplification of doing away with time-consuming per-site clearance (like WOL) for each user side terminal/VSAT from that would save a lot of time in providing the satellite-based services to the citizens.	Process which used to take 6-8 months, is proposed to be brought down to 6 weeks. Will lead to ease of doing business and faster rollouts and efficiency
2.	Self-verification instead of Mandatory Performance Verification Testing (MPVT) of Satellite Antennas	Will lead to savings in testing charges & help faster rollout of services
3.	Completely automated & online processing of all applications through the Saral Sanchar portal	Will enhance ease of doing business
4.	Waiver of annual NOCC charges for both broadcasters and VSAT licensees and reduction of MPVT charges	Will greatly benefit both the broadcast and the satcom industry and help rollout services in an affordable manner
5.	Till now, the satellite usage has been mostly limited to static-use. DoT has enhanced scope of VSAT and other licenses to include a) User Terminals on Moving Platforms b) Satellite based M2M/IoT devices	Likely to pave way for enhanced use of satellite-based services in logistics, Indian Railways & other sectors and attract more investment thereby creating more job opportunities. Will lead to proliferation of IoT in rural and remote areas. Likely to benefit Industry 4.0.

The savings from the actions on NOCC charges and the removal of MPVT (Mandatory Performance Verification Testing) charges, would lead to an estimated savings of about Rs.120 crores per annum, for the satellite broadcast and communication sector, including all players who are liable to pay. A very significant step since the sector has been struggling for quite a while on cost and viability issues.

It may be noted that, as pointed out by TRAI, the cost of monitoring of satellite transponders is already included in the SUC charges, thereby eliminating the need for charging it separately.

The significant savings that would arise from the vastly improved EoDB and the great benefit to the public and the economy from speedier and better quality rollouts cannot be quantified at this stage but, undoubtedly, these would be huge and constitute the most valuable outcome of these epoch making measures.

Lauding the efforts of DoT, Mr. TV Ramachandran, President of Broadband India Forum said, "These Satcom Reforms announced by DoT would go a long way in meeting the goals of 'Digital India' and 'Broadband for All' and become all the more significant in the present scenario with positive and powerful developments such as the ongoing Liberalisation Programme and the forthcoming Space Bill along with opening up of the sector to enhance the involvement of the private sector in space activities. The latest Satcom reforms by DoT are bound to boost the country's digital connectivity quotient, including provisioning of broadband to the remotest and most inaccessible terrains in a most efficient and expeditious manner, thereby helping the nation to achieve its goal of attaining 'Antyodaya'. Other benefits include providing broadband the move - in trains, flights and ships, as well as several other innovative services and applications in the overall public interest."

About Broadband India Forum

Broadband India Forum (BIF) functions as a policy forum and think-tank that works for the development & 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.