

BIF recommends data communication services between aircraft and control tower to be permitted under captive network license

New Delhi, 14th February, 2023: Broadband India Forum (BIF), a leading independent Think-Tank and Policy Forum for Digital Communications in the country and working for enhancing the scope of Broadband ecosystem has in its submission to TRAI on its Consultation Paper on Data Communications between Aircraft and Ground Stations clearly stated that this is strategic in nature and falls under the category of critical communications. Captive network-based services (such as Captive Non-Public Network - CNPN and Captive Mobile Radio Trunking Service) are being regulated through light touch licensing regimes. Since Data Communication Services between Aircrafts and Ground Stations is similar to a captive network and the spectrum allotted is used entirely for the strategically vital communications between the aircraft and ground stations and is not part of any public communication service (PSTN/PLMN) or the public internet service, hence it should be permitted under a service license similar to that of the already notified CNPN license and should be a 'light touch' one.

BIF does not recommend auctioning of the spectrum and recommends that the desired Spectrum band 117.975Mhz to 137Mhz be assigned administratively with suitable power/emission limits to ensure protection of other co-primary and secondary users in the same band. This is based on global best practices, world over.

BIF President, Mr. TV Ramachandran, shared, *"Since Captive Networks have now been permitted under a gazette notified standalone CNPN license with the provision of direct assignment of spectrum through administrative manner, similar regulatory dispensation can be awarded to this strategic segment of vital data communications between the cockpit of the aircraft and the control tower. "He added "However, no commercial communication services should be permitted inside the aircraft ".*

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.

For further information, please contact:

Mr. Debashish Bhattacharya – debashishbhattacharya@broadbandindiaforum.in/ +91-98101 64822