

Telecom and Broadcasting Sectors Set to Benefit from TRAI's Latest Ease of Doing Business Recommendations

A trailblazing undertaking that is expected to catalyze the growth and development of the Digital Economy and fuel its momentum.

New Delhi, May 05, 2023 - The recently announced TRAI Recommendations on 'Ease of Doing Business' in the Telecom & Broadcasting sectors are extremely comprehensive and greatly facilitating. This development is welcomed by the industry, as it will aid in healthy and rapid growth of the Digital Economy. Over the last three decades, the telecom sector has undergone rapid technological changes, with almost three generations of technology evolution having taken place. There has also been a remarkable transformation in the 'Space' sector during the same time. This necessitated changes in the complex and time-consuming procedures and processes, many of which were associated with the past legacy and have become obsolete or irrelevant over time and needed to be done away with.

T.V. Ramachandran, President of Broadband India Forum said, *"Coming on the footsteps of the recently announced Space Policy 2023, these proposed reforms in Ease of Doing Business, along with the new Space Policy, are likely to give a big boost to the entire Satellite Communications & Broadcasting sector."*

The suggestions made by the regulator for ease of doing business (EoDB) in the telecom sector include reducing the heavy compliance burden on the operators, simplifying the verification process for license fees and spectrum usage charge, granting critical and essential service status to submarine cable laying and repair, and a single window portal for inter-departmental and/or inter-ministerial clearances-all of which are extremely progressive steps.

Some of the other noteworthy recommendations made by the Regulator for the Department of Space (DoS) are

- (i) Process of hiring space capacity from DOS to be fully integrated with the portals of DoT/ MIB and made completely transparent through an online process
- (ii) Stage-wise status of the application to be made transparently visible to the applicant. Timelines for each stage should be clearly defined. A two-way query system to be incorporated online.
- (iii) Within DOS, the processes at New Space India Ltd. (NSIL) should also be made online to ensure transparency and time-bound processing
- (iv) DOS to publish a list of the following on their portal:
 - a. Indian satellite details and the capacity availability.

- b. Approved foreign satellites/ satellite systems, their orbital locations, transponders and frequency availability and other technical and security parameters.
 - c. Inter-Ministerial Committee for Satellite Network Clearance (IMC-SNC) should meet at least once in two months or upon receiving any application, whichever is earlier, to expedite the in-principle approvals. The meeting should be held online.
- (v) Permit Long term agreements with satellite operators
 - (vi) With respect to hiring of foreign satellite capacity:
 - (a) Service licensees be permitted to hire the foreign satellite capacities for a longer period as per need instead of a fixed period of 3-5 years at present
 - (b) Long term agreements with foreign satellite providers should be allowed to ensure business certainty.
 - (vii) DoS to publish a roadmap detailing schedule of launch of communication satellites and availability of the domestic satellite capacities in India to facilitate the service licensees to plan and optimize their capacity procurement.

About Broadband India Forum (BIF): *Broadband India Forum (BIF) is 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.*