

## **Press Release**

### **• BIF Urges Government to Reconsider the Spectrum Refarming Proposal Allowing Auction of 6GHz Band By IMT**

**New Delhi, January 17, 2025:** Alarmed by the [media reporting](#) indicating government approval for refarming the 1100 MHz and earmarking the upper 6GHz spectrum for International Mobile Telecommunications (IMT) services, the Broadband India Forum is distressed by this decision and strongly urges the government to reconsider this decision. While reports suggest a phased approach, with 320 MHz of spectrum initially released for auction, BIF remains steadfast in its belief that the 6GHz band should be delicensed, to stay at par with global standards. This aligns with BIF's consistent advocacy and is supported by key arguments outlined below:

#### **A. Economic Benefits of Delicensing 6GHz: Overall benefit of delicensing 6GHz spectrum band by 2030 shall be far higher than one-time auction proceeds of licensed 6GHz band for IMT.**

- [A study](#) estimates that delicensing 6GHz could yield recurring economic benefits of over USD 60 billion annually from 2028, with a cumulative impact of USD 180 billion by 2030.
- This is much higher than the one time revenue that the Government would get by auctioning this spectrum.
- As per [GSMA estimates](#), identification of IMT in the lower 6 GHz band shall yield a total GDP contribution of USD 21 billion (between 2024-2034)
- Further, the exploding AR/VR and gaming markets, powered by delicensed 6GHz, offer immense potential for India's telecom hardware and software exports.

#### **B. Global Alignment and Ecosystem Readiness: No Licensed IMT ecosystem anywhere in the world in lower 6 GHz band and none is expected in the next 10 years.**

- Globally, more than 84 countries have delicensed the lower 6GHz band (5925-6425 MHz), with more than 13 nations opening the entire 1200 MHz for unlicensed use. Australia recently has added an additional 160 Mhz to the delicensed band making a total of 660 Mhz seeing the benefits of using this band for delicensed use.
- If the lower 6GHz spectrum band is given for IMT, it is unlikely to have any operator bidding for this band due to lack of global ecosystem for IMT in this band, and is unlikely to emerge for at least the next decade.
- Thus, auction would not yield any results and there would be no revenues to the exchequer, as no operator will bid for the band which is not globally harmonized. Conversely, delicensing aligns India with international trends and ensures access to a mature, affordable device ecosystem.

#### **C. Trusted Source Wi-Fi vs. Non-Trusted Source IMT**

- Modern Wi-Fi devices powered by delicensed 6GHz are widely available from 'trusted sources', including Indian manufacturers. In contrast, IMT equipment for 6GHz is currently dominated by *non-trusted sources*, which India has restricted.

- Allocating 6GHz to IMT would compel reliance on equipment that jeopardizes national security. Additionally, IMT in the 6GHz band would require extensive new infrastructure, including base stations and antennas, while also compelling consumers to purchase new 5G devices. No existing 5G equipment or devices currently support IMT in the 6GHz band.

#### **D. Environmental Sustainability Concerns**

- If the entire 6GHz band were to be delicensed in India (which has nearly double the population of Europe and higher GDP growth), the energy savings annually would probably be about 10-15 megatons of CO<sub>2</sub>.
- India can thus take a lead position in sustainable spectrum usage at Conference of the Parties (COP) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

#### **E. The Case for Delicensing 6GHz: Unlocking India's Digital Potential**

- With the rapid surge in data-intensive applications such as Industry 5.0, artificial intelligence, augmented reality/virtual reality (AR/VR), and e-health, the need for wider bandwidth channels like 320MHz is indispensable. The 6GHz band is uniquely positioned to provide the requisite spectrum for these high-bandwidth, cutting-edge applications. Delicensed 6GHz will empower India to harness cutting-edge applications, drive economic growth, and ensure digital self-reliance.
- The 6GHz band complements ultra-wide broadband networks, enhancing their speeds, data capacities, and efficacy. Larger channel bandwidths of 320MHz can improve consumer experience for streaming, gaming, and other bandwidth-heavy services.

**TV Ramachandran, President, BIF said-** "India is aggressively forging ahead with its vision of becoming a 'Viksit Bharat' and a leading Digital Economy. This requires high digitalisation in all the key sectors of the economy. IMT in the 6GHz band not only cannot meet the advanced requirements of digitalisation of the key sectors of the economy in Manufacturing, Agriculture, Health, Education, etc., but also poses a grave security threat to our nation in the outsourcing of requisite telecom infrastructure equipment to predominantly a 'non-trusted' country/source. As against this, delicensed 6GHz can easily meet the requirement, as the ecosystem for the same is globally available and deployed in over 84 countries. We strongly urge the government to immediately delicense the lower 500 Mhz band of 6Ghz band and an additional 160 MHz from the 300 Mhz held back till 2030."

*About Broadband India Forum: 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 & broadcasting 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, to facilitate affordable and high-speed ubiquitous broadband throughout the country.*