

**Report on the proceedings of
First Meeting of NGN-eCO held on 11th October, 2006
at Hotel Ashoka, New Delhi.**

At the outset, Secretary, TRAI welcomed the gathering. During his address he has mentioned that TRAI will play as a facilitator for the industry to realize the benefits of NGN. He said that Industry on their own could come out suggestions as to what the regulator can do in terms of implementation of NGN. He has classified the issues into four broad categories. They are:-

Licensing related issues
Interconnection related issues
Quality of service related issues and
Migration issues.

He also said as far as the issues relating to standardization and its specifications are concerned, these issues will be handled by another expert group constituted by Telecom Engineering Centre (TEC).

Mr. A.K. Sawhney, Member, TRAI addressed the gathering. He thanked all the participants who were present at the meeting. He has pointed out that we are not more concerned about the regulatory part, but we are concerned as to how we achieve the desired objectives with some sort of seamless operation. He expressed hope that the deliberations at this forum will help the authority in forming and taking a very balanced & pragmatic view of the entire thing.

After this Mr. S.K. Gupta, Advisor (CN) made a power point presentation highlighting certain challenges before this particular expert

group. He said the committee would handle at least the following issues, namely NGN Awareness Building Program, timetable for NGN migration in the country and preparation of background paper to be used for consultation on interconnection and QoS issues by TRAI. He also explained certain technical aspects of NGN.

He has said that there are large number of services which can emerge if the NGN environment is available. As per the ITU, the move to NGN presents an opportunity to establish in advance, the ground rules for ensuring the continuous process of effective competition and minimum damage during transition. He said that there are number of issues like numbering, issue of customer protection, regulation of 'POTS', privacy, security, QoS, Emergency access, Interconnection, competition etc, which are required to be addressed or discussed before we go for the NGN platform.

Mr. Gupta has opened the floor for discussion on the issues he covered in the presentation. The highlights of the discussion are brought out below:

- The NGN regime would bring in paradigm shift in the licensing policy where a single platform will be providing large number of services. Therefore there will be a unified sort of a license by which all the services will be provided.
- Why should a technology change the licensing regime? The present service based licenses will be invalid in NGN scenario. NGN is a new technology, which helps to provide services by an operator in a more efficient network over a period of time when you migrate this new regime. So the services will be the same or even

more and therefore, do we need to consider service based licensing?

- In the present scenario there is a clear distinction of each service like fixed, mobile, long distance both national and international, ISP etc. But in NGN environment, it will be very difficult to differentiate the services because there will be end-to-end NGN configuration and on a complete IP based network.
- The emphasis should be given on licensing because when moving forward by another five years, it will be a classless network completely. Therefore, more stress needs to be given on the licensing.
- Fundamentally two different issues here, i.e. next generation technology and next generation licensing regime. For example in VOIP, the licensing regime is allowing this within India. But the technology has reached that level where any network can carry VOIP.
- There is going to be migration to the NGN in future. In the legacy network there was a business model, network, competition, which were already in place and then regulation followed. Here before the migration the regulator wants to ensure the pros and cons involved in this.
- The whole migration to NGN can be called as seamless mobility, arising out of merger of various technologies. US Congress has recently approved a new law which they call as seamless mobility

law which basically address the regulatory issues relating to the NGN and we can learn a lot from this.

- Licensing regime has also to evolve with the technology to provide the convenience to the customer for whom we are working.
- Out of three core regulatory issues i.e. licensing, interconnection and QoS, the licensing issues will attract lot of repercussions and lot of discussion needs to be taken before we decide what type of licensing regime would result from NGN.
- In NGN regime, there may be some advantages for operators, like reduced Capex and Opex. But what are the advantages for the users. As a user, one may not gain much. Initial migration cost will be higher for an operator, which will reflect on the cost of the service. We cannot really predict how long it will take for the operator to bring down the cost for the benefit of customer.
- Each operation may have their own migration plans or some may not move towards NGN, depending on business case and the kind of services, which are in demand. So the time frame for migration cannot be fixed by anybody. Only operators can decide for themselves.
- The Authority can never fix any time frame for migration. There is no compulsion. Some operators can implement NGN configuration on core network only. Some may justify foregoing NGN configuration on access network. So all kinds of mixed scenario may exist.

- Those who have legacy network may have their own time frame and those who are building networks today may have their own time frame.
- While discussing about NGN networks, the smaller players should not be left out. The smaller players have played a major role in building up the telecom infrastructure.
- When we talk about NGN, we have to involve representatives from Broad casting sector also in our discussion.
- In NGN regime there will be an evolution of new kind of operator.
- We will have to arrive at a consensus to resolve interconnect issues. Everyone should peer with everyone. We have to have Interconnect exchanges in place as we move forward.
- When we look at NGN from the technical perspective, there are lots of protocols, lots of standards, which are not fully compliant with any vendor. So Interconnection would also means interoperability.
- BT in UK for their 21CN project has engaged five vendors each for different layers. When we talk of NGN, there is an ITU-T standard for everything but the implementation of every vendor has some proprietary angle to it.
- There are three different types of issues involved. One is the technical interconnection with interoperability and

standardization. The second is the Point of Interconnection (POI) and there is an issue of Interconnect Usage Charge (IUC).

- The Interconnect regime in NGN will be different from that of present interconnect regime.
- Interconnection charges should be based on what kind of services you are offering and what kind of content the network is carrying.
- In NGN committee formed in UK, the regulator is playing only the role of a facilitator. In India also the regulator can bring out some regulation only when needed.
- QoS matrix evolves in NGN should be the one which can be monitored easily.
- These issues can be brought under three topics, i.e. Licensing, Interconnection and QoS. To have more meaningful deliberations, we should form three core groups to deal with these issues thoroughly. We have to complete the task before NGN-eCO within six months as per mandate.

The meeting closed with Vote of Thanks by Secretary, TRAI.
