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TELECOM REGULATORY AUTHORITY OF INDIA

For Immediate release.

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TRAI issues recommendations on ‘Growth of Broadband’

New Delhi, 2nd January, 2008 – Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) today issued its recommendations on ‘Growth of Broadband’.

Government announced Broadband Policy in 2004 and made certain projections for broadband subscribers’ growth. It was expected that broadband growth rate would be stepped up. However, it is observed that the growth of broadband in the country is slow and below expected level.

In order to identify various impediments affecting the growth of broadband and to adopt forward looking approach to address all such impediments, the Authority issued its draft recommendations on ‘Growth of Broadband’ on 17th September 2007 and sought the comments of stakeholders.

Based on the feedback of stakeholders and best international practices, recommendations have been finalised.

The salient features of TRAI's recommendations are as follows:

- BSNL and MTNL should be encouraged to appoint franchisees for providing broadband services to supplement their efforts. Any procedural restrictions/ limitations to be addressed immediately.
- TEC should undertake certification of different CPEs model for interoperability for provisioning of the broadband. All CPEs conforming to specifications for interoperability should be displayed on TEC website for the information of customers.
- Incumbents may declare future plans for providing broadband using DSL technology to encourage manufacturing of CPEs within country.
- Government should expedite decision on TRAI's recommendations regarding mechanism and pricing of Spectrum for 3G & Broadband Wireless Access.
- Spectrum for 3G & WiMAX should be made available at the earliest to boost the deployment of broadband using these technologies.
- Streamlining RoW procedures
 - Central Government may take-up with the state governments to adopt uniform Right of Way (RoW) procedures.
 - A district level committee may be formed to study RoW requirement and to take measures to encourage service providers to share ducts.

- Govt. should ensure availability of more number of Ku band transponders to roll out broadband services through Direct to Home (DTH) platform.
- Cable TV operators should be encouraged to provide broadband over their network.
- Utilise Universal Service Obligation (USO) fund to provide subsidy for providing broadband services through satellite in remote and hilly areas.
- Utilise USO fund to subsidise backhaul charges initially for a period of 3 years to support the broadband rollout efforts.
- Precondition that service provider identified for USO Fund subsidy to provide broadband should have spectrum for suitable technology.
- In order to increase the competition to provide broadband in rural areas, more than two service providers seeking minimum subsidy should be identified with a rollout obligation to ensure the establishment of network.
- Encourage Municipal committees to include a clause for making Multiple Dwelling Units/ buildings broadband ready by adopting suitable internal wiring while giving clearance for the construction of all such buildings in future.

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Authorised to issue: