

1. What should be the minimum number of free-to-air (FTA) channels that a cable operator should offer in the basic-service-tier (BST)? Should this number Basic Service Tier for the Digital Addressable Cable TV Systems

be different for different states, cities, towns or areas of the country? If so, what should be the number and criteria for determination of the same?

Comment: If every FTA channel will be distributed as an encrypted channel.

Since FTA channel by definition is a free to air channel, when encrypted it no more remains FTA. Hence, no logic to determine the number of FTA channels to be part of a basic package.

After encryption if the broadcasters decide to provide the

Encrypted channels free of cost then any such number of channels can

Be transmitted to the subscribers in the provided bandwidth.

There are more than 600 FTA channels at present. Number of channels in BST should be left to the MSO/cable operator depending upon the affordability of the package in an area.

DD1,Rajyasabha & Lok Sabha Doordarshan channels can be made part of a basic package of the MSOs and Cable TV Operators.

2. In the composition of BST, what should be the genre-wise (entertainment, information, education etc.) mix of channels? Should the mix of channels and/or the composition of BST be different for different states, cities, towns? If so, how should it be?

Comment: It depends on the service provider. TRAI need not specify this. Even in Telecom sector, only the service providers make their packages to attract different types of consumers.

I&B Ministry also have only two types of licenses for down linking and unlinking of TV channels: News and Current Affairs and Non-News. Hence, no need to be specified for the basic package.

If TRAI decides on specific genre of channel to be part of the BST,
And at the same time if such a genre is not available on free to air basis,
then the condition cannot be exercised in the BST

3. What should be the price of BST? Should this price be different for different states, cities, towns or areas of the country? If so, what should be the price and criteria for determination of the same?

Comment: BST should include min charges to keep the business running in a respectable manner. Also the price should be affordable to a common man of the country.

Anyway, an upper limit can be laid down for different types of packages depending upon the number of channels in the package.

Packages can be made considering the average number of channels carried in different areas at present. Suggested packages are (i) up to 60 channels, (ii) up to 100 channels, (iii) up to 200 channels and (iv) more than 200 channels.

For the above packages MRP can be (i) Rs 82, present CAS area rate. (ii) Rs 110, (iii) Rs 130 and (iv) Rs 150, laid down by TRAI for DTH.

4. What should be a-la-carte rate of channels that form part of BST? Should there be a linkage between a-la-carte rate of channels in the BST to the BST price or average price of a channel in the BST? If so, what should be the linkage and why?

Comment: BST- Packages are meant to look after the needs of all types of subscribers and contain only Free to Air Channels. Putting a price to these channels is contradictory to the purpose of FTA.

Retail Tariff for the Digital Addressable Cable TV Systems

5. Should the retail tariff be determined by TRAI or left to the market forces? If it is to be determined by TRAI, how should it be determined?

Comment: Retail price can be determined by TRAI. It should be based on experience of five years in CAS areas.

There can be three packages:

- a) BST- Price as given above.
- b) Middle Tier- MRP of Rs 5.35 which is already proven in the CAS areas and till date it has not been challenged in the court by any stake holder.
- c) Premium Package/ HD channels. They can be priced at Rs 5.35+ 15% (Rs 6.25) + applicable tax to cover additional cost of production. At

present there is

no extra cost in production as all cameras and studio equipment are HD

and only extra bandwidth is used in transmission.

(a) Should the a-la-carte channel price at the retail be linked to its wholesale price? If yes, what should be the relation between the two prices and the rationale for the same?

Comment: A-la-carte price can be 10-15% more than the wholesale price. This is a standard profit margin on a commodity.

(b) Should there be a common ceiling across all genres for the pay channels or different ceilings for different genres? What should be the ceilings in each case and the reasons thereof?

Comment: Only two genres as per licensing regulations- only a common ceiling will suffice.

Ceiling for channels can change if it is ad-free.

(c) Should there be a common ceiling across all genres for the FTA channels or different ceilings for different genres? What should be the ceilings in each case and the reasons thereof?

Comment: FTA channels are never priced and hence the issue is not relevant. More over all DD Channels are carried compulsorily without any price.

(d) Any other method you may like to suggest?

(i) Sharing events on two different channels in parts must be stopped. Channels must declare their broadcast dates of an event at least 6 months before the event; this will enable consumers to decide which channel to buy, like many matches particularly Cricket Matches are shown on more than one channel, some matches of the series on one channel and the rest on the other channel. This happens often on Ten Sports and Ten action, on Star Sports, Star Cricket and ESPN etc.

(ii) Categerision of channels should be done on the basis of News, Sports, Education, Entertainment, strictly the guidelines on the subject should be Followed by the channels. Otherwise channels like Sony SetMax have the

Practice of airing sports though it is not a sports channel.

(iii) Regular or minimum live events should be a compulsion for Sports Channel to qualify as a pay channel if not such channels should be free to air or should not qualify as a sports channel.

(iv) STB'S should be made Universal, to help the subscriber to use the same box purchased by him while shifting from one area to another. And also in case a particular MSO is not able to provide channels and good service, then the Cable TV Operator can opt for another MSO without having to go through the problem of changing the boxes and putting the subscribers in hardship.

(v) Once a box installed at a Subscribers end, then there shall be no claim by any establishment on the box,

(vi) Standards should be fixed by TRAI on the sourcing of Digital boxes keeping in mind future technology.

(vii) Shifting of channels from any particular alliance to another should not affect the consumer.

Interconnection in the Digital Addressable Cable TV Systems

6. Does any of the existing clauses of the Interconnection Regulations require modifications? If so, please mention the same with appropriate reasoning?

Comments: Yes many modifications are required.

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Comment:

7. Should the subscription revenue share between the MSO and LCO be determined by TRAI or should it be left to the negotiations between the two?

Comment: When subscription revenue is shared with the MSO, then the carriage fee also requires to be shared.

8. If it is to be prescribed by TRAI what should be the revenue share?
Should it be same for BST and rest of the offerings?

Comment: Revenue sharing can be -MSO- 15%.. LCO-85% for BST

MSO -20%, Broadcaster - 20% and LCO -60% on other offerings

On the condition that the Carriage fee and Ad revenue be shared on the same basis.

Transparency no market forces. All MSOs have broadcasters as principle. No under declaration – so now they must get enough to survive.

9. Should the 'must carry' provision be mandated for the MSOs, operating in the DAS areas?

Comment: YES Only for Doordharshan Channels.

10. In case the 'must carry' is mandated, what qualifying conditions should be attached when a broadcaster seeks access to the MSO network under the provision of 'must carry'?

Comment: It should be only Doordarshan channels, but should not have any sponsors or Ad's

11. In case the 'must carry' is mandated, what should be the manner in which an MSO should offer access of its network, for the carriage of TV channel, on nondiscriminatory terms to the broadcasters?

Comment: Carriage Fee.

12. Should the carriage fee be regulated for the digital addressable cable TV systems in India? If yes, how should it be regulated?

Comment: Yes, Carriage can be a fixed amount as there is no frequency allocated.

13. Should the quantum of carriage fee be linked to some parameters?
If so what are these parameters and how can they be linked to the carriage fee?

Comment: Should be fixed by keeping in mind both FTA and the pay channels on different ceilings. Pay channels can be on higher ceiling.

14. Can a cap be placed on the quantum of carriage fee? If so, how should the cap be fixed?

Comment: Uniformity will be suggestible.

15. Should TRAI prescribe a standard interconnection agreement between service providers on similar lines as that for notified CAS areas with conditions as applicable for DAS areas? If yes, why?

Comment: No.

Quality of Service Standards for the Digital Addressable Cable TV System

16. Do you agree with the norms proposed for the Quality of Service and redressal of consumer grievances for the digital addressable cable TV systems? In case of disagreement, please give your proposed norms along with detailed justifications.

Comment:

17. Please specify any other norms/parameters you may like to add with the requisite justifications and proposed benchmarks.

Comment:

18. Who should (MSO/LCO) be responsible for ensuring the standards of quality of service provided to the consumers with respect to connection, disconnection, transfer, shifting, handling of complaints relating to no signal, set top box, billing etc. and redressal of consumer grievances?

Comment: It should be MSO to LCO & LCO to Consumer.

19. Whether Billing to the subscribers should be done by LCO or should it be done by MSO? In either case, please elaborate how system would work.)

Comment: Billing of Subscribers should be done by LCO, SMS (Subscriber Management System) at LCO end and Master SMS at MSO end.

20. Should pre-paid billing option be introduced in Digital Addressable Cable TV systems?

Comment: YES only through the LCO

Miscellaneous Issues

Broadcasting of Advertisement free (ad-free) channels

21. Whether an ad-free channel is viable in the context of Indian television market?

Comment: YES

22. Should there be a separate prescription in respect of tariff for ad-free channels at both the wholesale and retail level?

Comment: YES

23. What should be the provisions in the interconnection regulations in respect of ad free channels?

Comment: Only on CAS Model.

24. What should be the revenue sharing arrangement between the broadcasters and distributors in respect of ad-free channels?

Comment: Broadcaster - 60%, MSO - 20%, LCO - 20%

Non addressable digital Set top boxes

25. In case you have any view or comment on the non-addressable STBs, you may please provide the same with details.

Reference point for wholesale price post DAS implementation

26. Would there be an impact on the wholesale channel rates after the sunset date i.e. 31st Dec 2014, when the non-addressable systems would cease to exist? If so, what would be the impact?

Comment: No

27. Any other relevant issue that you may like to raise or comment upon.

Subscriber Management System should be under LCO Control, because the subscribers are the customers of the LCO's. Any service related or other issues related to our industry, the customer can be reached and their issues addressed immediately without any delay only by the LCO.

No FDI- beyond 49%

Between only Broadcasters & MSO/Opr

8.BST- no revenue shares- if revenue share- then carriage placement & ad revenue also must be shared.

9. as per law. No must carry for MSOs- only DD channels only if there is a demand from consumer demand. 2/3 subscriber.

15. Yes, STD interconnect Agreement-Carriage per connection-TRAI is competent-experience in Telecom Industry.

Big MSOs control only 20% of C&S home.

16. Yes- if reasonable quality of language- picture, broadcast signal quality-B'caster to give affidavit/ agreement for proper signal content etc.

No money for disruption period.

19. Billing to be done by LCO.

20 Prepaid- No prepaid- only itemized govt will get exact taxes.

21. Ad free channel.

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26. Wholesale ch rate after sunset today it is on assumed connectivity after that it will be actual- so it will be much lower.

1. Whether a distr agency is a broadcaster- who will sign agreement with MSO/Operator?

If agent- will he indemnify for all channels about content etc?

Aggregator not a stake holder

should the agreement be signed by each broadcaster or aggregator.

2. Can a government force a technology on existing business houses?

3. Is the distr agreement to be made between the licensed broadcaster and the aggregator?

4. What is the relationship between B'caster and Media aggregator?

5. If any legal case has to be filed against content, who should be a party B' Caster.

6. No channel rates on websites of channels only on distr's (aggregators) 'website.

7. Why channel rates are not on TRAI consolation paper.

8. What about a-la-carte distr agreements who will do it.9. Any sale or purchase deal done by MSO or others which includes LCO's Subscriber base should be deemed illegal if it is done without the consent of the LCO.10 Aggregators are not required in this business.