

DDG(R)



GOVERNMENT OF KERALA



Electronics and IT (B) Department

04/10/2021, Thiruvananthapuram

No-IT-B1/23/2020-ITD

From

The Principal Secretary to Government

To

The Principal Secretary, Local Self Government Department-(Urban)

The Principal Secretary, Environment Department

The Secretary, Public Works Department

The Director, Kerala State IT Mission, Thiruvananthapuram

✓ The Advisor /Sr. Deputy Director General, Department of
Telecommunications, CTO Building, Karakkat Road,
Ernakulam - 682016

The Managing Director, Kerala Fibre Optic Network Limited

The Chief General Manager, Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited

The Chief General Manager, Bharat Broadband Network Limited

Shri. P.Ramakrishna, Principal Advisor,

Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI)

Shri. T.R. Dua, Director General, Digital Infrastructure Providers Association
(DIPA)

Sir,

Sub: E&ITDept-State Broadband Committee-Meeting held on 16.09.2021-
forwarding minutes-reg

Ref: Government letter of even number dated 06.09.2021

Inviting your attention to the reference cited above, I am to furnish a copy of the
minutes of the 3rd State Broadband Committee meeting held on 16.09.2021, for
information and necessary action.

Yours Faithfully,

N C Santhosh

Under Secretary

For Principal Secretary to Government.

Approved for Issue,

Signed by Manesh Mohan

Date: 04-10-2021 15:42:40

Reason: Approved
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Minutes of the 3rd meeting of the State Broadband Committee, Kerala held on
16.09.2021

In the chair:Dr.V.P.Joy IAS, Chief Secretary

The meeting started at 10 am.

1) The Senior Deputy Director General (DDG), Department of Telecommunications, Kerala LSA (convenor), welcomed all the participants to the meeting. He briefed the agenda of the meeting and the objectives of the National Broadband Mission. He emphasized the necessity for notifying the Right of Way (RoW) Policy aligned with the Government of India's Indian Telegraph Right of Way Rules, 2016. He also stressed the importance of time-bound RoW permissions for both OFC laying and tower erection. He further requested to simplify the RoW policy.

2) The DDG (Rural), DoT Kerala LSA presented the points for discussion. In his presentation he briefed the action points and requested State Government support in addressing the issues. Each agenda items were discussed in detail and the following decisions were taken:

a) **Comprehensive RoW/Telecom Policy:** The Senior DDG, DoT, Kerala LSA requested to notify a Comprehensive RoW Policy for Telecom Infrastructure (Underground, Overground OFC), duly aligned with the Indian Telegraph Right of Way Rules, 2016 and to issue the time limit for granting RoW permissions be 60 days, else permission is deemed to be granted. Further requested that the one time fee for meeting Administrative expenses for processing applications for Right of Way - @ Rs 1,000/- per km for OFC and @Rs. 10,000/- per application for towers. In case of underground telegraph infrastructure, only restoration charges shall be levied.

On query from the Chairman, the Principal Secretary (E&IT) stated that Kerala has a RoW policy, but it is not aligned with the Government of India Policy. He also pointed out that a decision on connectivity in Tribal areas with concessional rates has been taken by the Council of Ministers and most of them are as per the Indian Telegraph Rules and that DoT, TSPs & IPs are demanding this for the entire State. He further informed that regarding the timelines of 60 days, a new online portal is created which will be online on 27th, through which permission will be given within 21 days.

Senior DDG, DoT clarified that more towers are required even in the existing covered areas including urban areas, as the average coverage in the city for 4G is only 500 meters to 1 km and this is a technological limitation. Further when 5G is introduced from next year, the maximum coverage will be 500 m, and hence more towers are required in the Urban area too. Optical Fibre connectivity has to be established to have better data download experience.

Principal Secretary, ITD informed that the State also desires the same as it is a key benefit for the State and the people and that while densifying or strengthening the infrastructure, the requirement of areas that are not covered yet has also to be considered. Chairman agreed to this and directed the telecom operators to consider the areas which are not covered. Sr DDG informed that out of 1035 tribal locations shared, only 131 is left and all other locations are covered, with the planned towers; and where population of 100-200 is there the TSPS / ISPs will take action immediately and gradually will increase the number of towers. Chairman advised to fiberize all the towers. The Chairman directed Principal Secretary, ITD to frame the General Telecom Policy.

b) Policy for using Government Land and Building: Sr. DDG, DoT requested to notify policy to lease Government Land and Buildings for Mobile Tower erections, as this will facilitate high quality mobile broadband communications to large number of citizens. Further, it was suggested that Govt may prescribe nominal lease/rental charges as done in many States. Construction, maintenance & operations may be left to Infra Providers (IP-1) registered with Department of Telecommunications. It was also requested to direct District Collectors to identify Land and Buildings of State Govt/ PSU/Institutions & Central Govt/PSU/Institutions in their jurisdiction in a time bound manner, so that the TSPs/IPs can check for technical feasibility. Principal Secretary, ITD suggested that the responsibility of identifying the land and buildings shall be vested with the Department of Telecommunications. Chairman advised Principal Secretary (E&IT) to come up with a draft policy for leasing Government Land and Buildings for installation of telecom infrastructure.

Principal Secretary, ITD informed that an amendment was moved in LSGD Rules to permit by self-certification for buildings less than 300 sq. meter, but has not been notified. The same can be extended for towers also, if the infra providers follow technical specifications given by DoT/by competent authority. Chairman directed LSGD Secretary to get this implemented. Secretary, LSGD agreed to this.

c) Online/Single Window Portal: Sr. DDG, DoT informed that a unified Online / Single Window Portal for all underground and overground Telecom Infrastructure - OFC, Towers, Aerial OFC for KSEB Electric Post (For aerial OFC) etc., is an important component of the Indian Telegraph RoW Rules, 2016. At present, there are separate portals for OFC and Towers. Chairman reiterated that an online Portal for all kind of RoW permissions will be launched on 27th and this will be the only one portal for all the permissions. KSEB will include the usage of KSEB poles and shifting of poles also in the new portal.

d) Pending Right of Way permissions: Sr. DDG informed that as per the decision of the 1st SBC Meeting, Director KSITM is the nodal officer for RoW issues. Every month, the pending OFC and Tower permissions are being sent, by DoT for resolution. As on date 4820 Km OFC permissions are pending with average delay of 406 days and 198 tower permissions are pending for NOC from LSG with average delay of about 124 days.

The Chairman advised that these offline applications may be re-applied through the new online portal. Sr.DDG DoT replied that this will be conveyed to the Service Providers.

e) Tribal Hamlets: State Government had shared list of 1035 Tribal locations with geo co-ordinates. Principal Secretary, ITD appreciated that DoT, Kerala LSA has been co-ordinating with the Telecom Service Providers, Infra Providers, Internet Service Providers and bringing them together to get connectivity to Tribal areas implemented. Chairman has pointed out that Government have already issued a policy for providing internet connectivity to the students in the remote tribal areas of the State for facilitating online education. Chairman enquired about the pending NOC issues which has been presented by the DoT and assured that when the new portal will be online on 27th, this will be taken into account. He also clarified that there is a provision for deemed approval in the new G.O approved by the Cabinet recently for tribal areas. Sr DDG DoT, requested that orders have to be circulated down the line so that the same will reach to the field level units also.

3) Director General, DIPA (Digital Infrastructure Providers Association - Erstwhile TAIPA) in his briefing informed the SBC Committee that the service providers are facing issues due to labour union strikes which are disrupting telecom operations and requested Government's intervention. The Chairman remarked that this will have to be sorted out by the Service Providers itself by including necessary provisions in the Service agreement with their respective contractors/sub-contractors.

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4) The Head Telecom Infra Division, COAI (Cellular Operators Association of India) informed that more than 200 sites of member service providers have received necessary permission but tower construction is held up due to public protests. He requested to issue an order from Government granting police protection to the sites where permission has already been issued. Principal Secretary, IT pointed that Government Order will not serve this purpose. He further mentioned that District Level Telecom Committees are formed to look into such issues and these issues have to be solved through a conciliatory approach. Further, the LSG - Panchayath President / Secretaries can also be asked to settle these issues, educating them the need to have more towers, as connectivity is more important for online education. The Chairman remarked that public needs to be informed that the radiation norms in India from towers are at safe levels. Chairman also advised that instructions may be given to Panchayat Presidents/Members to deal with such issues at local level. Chairman advised LSGD, Secretary to give necessary direction to the Panchayaths. Sr. DDG DoT informed the Committee that the limit for Electromagnetic radiation emission from towers is 1/10th of international standards and that DoT is already creating awareness program for the district and for the people in that area and local Panchayat level. He also stated that during the last 2 months, many issues have been resolved in the DTC meeting and in extreme cases the police protection has also been arranged. These issues will be further taken up with District collectors and resolved.

5) Secretary, LSGD pointed out the issues related to electricity connection for tower and delay in getting power connection. Chairman pointed that the issues will be discussed later with the Secretary, Power Department. He also suggested to invite Power Secretary in the next meeting to discuss issues related to power connection.

The meeting concluded at 11:30 am.

List of Participants

Shri.Biswanath Sinha IAS, Principal Secretary,ITD

Shri.Anand Singh IAS, Secretary, PWD

Shri. Biju Prabhakar IAS,Secretary, Local Self Government (Urban)

Shri.Seeram Sambasiva Rao IAS,MD, KFON Limited

Shri.Rajeev Panicker,Head-Technology,KSITM

Dr.P.T.Mathew ITS,Senior Deputy Director General, DoT, Kerala LSA

Smt.Sobhana.V ITS, DDG(Technology)

Shri.N.S.Deepu ITS, DDG(Rural)

Shri S. Ajith Kumar ITS, DDG (Co-ordination)

Shri.Girish Kataria ITS, Director(Rural-2)

Shri.Seetharaman T.A. ITS, ADG(Rural)

Shri C.V.Vinod ITS, CGM,BSNL, Kerala

Shri Saju George ITS, GM(NWO-CM), BSNL, Kerala

Shri.N.K.Sukumaran ITS, GM(NWP-CFA), BSNL, Kerala

Shri.P.G.Nirmal ITS, GM(NWO-CFA), BSNL, Kerala

Shri M.Chandrasekhar ITS, CGM,BSNL, Kerala

Shri T.R.Dua, Director General, DIPA

Shri Ashish Garg, General Manager, DIPA

Shri Kshem Kapoor, Dy.Director, COAI

Lt Col(Retd) Mukesh Kumar, Advisor, COAI

Shri.Deepak Gupta, Dy.Manager, COAI