

Minutes of the 4th meeting of the State Broadband Committee, Kerala held on 19.07.2022

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

The meeting started at 12:00 noon.

1) The Senior Deputy Director General (DDG), Department of Telecommunications, Kerala LSA (convenor), welcomed all the participants to the meeting and stressed upon the need for creation of Digital Communications Infrastructure in view of the upcoming launch of 5G network across the country. He also thanked the State Government for the extensive support for RoW Portal Integration, and for the district level reviews which has brought down the RoW pendency. He also emphasized the need to fast track RoW permissions to enable faster roll out of OFC network and towers, so that the State can enjoy full benefits of 5G.

The Chairman in his address stressed upon the importance of telecom infrastructure. He urged all the stakeholders to work together to create world class telecom infrastructure in the State and requested all to work towards this goal.

Additional Chief Secretary (E&ITD), informed that a new Comprehensive Kerala Telecom Infrastructure Policy is under consideration and is awaiting comments from various Departments. This policy incorporates the latest Indian Telegraph Right of Way Rules and aspects related to Telecom Infrastructure in National Building Code of MoHUA.

Managing Director, KFON informed the Chairman that KFON has received ISP license and IP-1 registration from DoT.

The DDG (Tech), DoT Kerala LSA presented the following agenda points for discussion and detailed deliberations were made on each points:

(a) Comprehensive RoW/Telecom Policy: A Single Comprehensive Kerala State RoW Policy aligned with the Indian Telegraph Right of Way Rules 2016, is pending and the salient points were explained. It was requested that the permissions for use of KSEB poles for Aerial OFC be made online. The Chairman emphasized that all permissions should be online. Principal Secretary, Power Department informed that he will direct KSEB to do the needful. Chairman further suggested the Committee to explore the possibility of sharing of Aerial OFC drawn along KSEB poles, to avoid the Electric Poles becoming cluttered. He also directed MD, KFON to create an Online Portal with details of availability of spare capacity in OF Cables so that the capacity can be optimally utilised.

(b) Policy for using Government Land and Building: The need for a Policy for leasing Government Land and Buildings for installation of telecom infrastructure for future technologies like 5G, due to the increased requirement of towers was briefed in the presentation.

(c) Model Building Bye-Laws, 2016 on "In-building access by Telecom Service Provider" issued by Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (MoHUA): The need for Buildings to be made 'Digital Infrastructure' ready was briefed in the presentation. Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has issued the Model

Building Bye-Laws, 2016 on Common Telecom Infrastructure (CTI), which needs to be adopted by Kerala State.

(d) Policy for the use of street infrastructure for installation of 5G Smallcells: Need for Single Street furniture Policy in regard to all public agencies owning street furniture (Electric Poles, Traffic Signals, Lamp Posts, Metro Pillars, Bus Stops, etc) was briefed. The charges for use of Street Furniture are to be nominal, to facilitate proliferation of 5G.

ACS (E&ITD), informed the Committee that all the issues raised above have been addressed in the new policy under consideration. He also informed that they are getting comments from the departments concerned. Chairman SBC, directed to get the comments for the policy expedited from different departments.

e) Pending Right of Way Permissions for Towers and OFC: Sr DDG DoT, informed that maximum RoW pendency for OFC is with both PWD and local bodies, and in the case of Towers, the maximum pendency is with local bodies. Chairman directed that RoW issue is to be regularly reviewed by the LSGD.

The Secretary (PWD) replied that he will review the PWD cases, though monsoon ban is currently in force. Chairman advised that Aerial OFC permission can be considered during monsoon season.

The Chairman asked the Principal Secretary LSGD to review the pendency in SUGAMA and SANKETHAM Portals regularly as large number of RoW permissions for OFC and Tower are pending. Principal Secretary (LSGD-Rural) agreed to expedite permissions.

(f) Integration of Right of Way permissions for Tower with GatiShaktiSanchar Portal: Need for Tower permission portal integration with Central RoW Portal "GatiShakti Sanchar Portal" was briefed in the presentation. In reply to this, Director (KSITM) informed that SANKETHAM portal is maintained by IKM, and that KSITM will co-ordinate with IKM to integrate with "GatiShakti Sanchar Portal". The Chairman directed to complete the integration as soon as possible.

(g) Promotion of Broadband through PM WANI (WiFi) Scheme: Under the PM-WANI scheme, it was suggested to deploy Hotspots in Fair Price Shops, Hospitals, Primary Health Centers, Tourist Sites, Smart Cities, Bus stands, Public places, utility offices etc. Director (KSITM) informed that existing Kerala WiFi which is deployed in collaboration with BSNL can be migrated to PM-WANI. MD KFON also expressed interest in deploying PMWANI WiFi Hotspots.

Director General, DIPA in his briefing thanked the Government of Kerala and DoT, Kerala LSA for their support and emphasized the need for increasing tower density and fiberisation in view of the upcoming launch of 5G. He also requested that District Level Telecom Committee meetings be held regularly and also requested the Chairman for deemed approval for RoW permissions. The Chairman advised LSGD to consider the deemed approval clause as part of new policy under consideration. Director General, DIPA also requested for prioritised EB connections.

The Deputy Director, COAI, informed the need to provide Electricity connection

for Telecom at industrial tariffs. ACS(E&ITD) asked him to share tariff orders from any DISCOMs where favourable/ industrial tariff has been provided to mobile towers. He also told that Finance and Power departments are looking into the proposal for lower tariff for towers. The Deputy Director, COAI, also requested the Chairman for measures to ensure safety of towers. The Chairman replied that security during installation may be given upon payment of requisite fee through SISF and during operation a CCTV camera feed can be given to the local police station for enhanced safety.

DDG(Rural), DOT Kerala LSA informed that Secretary (Telecom) had flagged the issue of high administrative charges for underground OFC and high pole rentals in Kerala, and requested to align the charges as per the National ROW Rules. In reply to this, ACS (E&ITD), informed that this is being considered. meeting concluded at 01:00 pm

List of Participants

Shri. Bishwanath Sinha IAS, Additional Chief Secretary, ITD

Dr. Sharmila Mary Joseph IAS, Principal Secretary, LSGD

Shri. Rajesh Kumar Sinha IAS, Principal Secretary, Power

Shri. Ajit Kumar IAS, Secretary (PWD)

Dr. Santosh Babu IAS, Managing Director, KFON Limited

Shri.Snehil Kumar Singh IAS, Director,KSITM

Shri.Vinod.P.Abraham ITS, Senior Deputy Director General, DoT, Kerala LSA

Smt.Sobhana.V ITS, DDG (Technology), DoT, Kerala LSA

Shri.N.S.Deepu ITS, DDG(Rural), DoT, Kerala LSA

Shri C.V. Vinod ITS, Chief General Manager, BSNL, Kerala

Shri M.Chandrasekhar ITS, Chief General Manager, BBNL, Kerala

Shri Kshem Kapoor, Deputy Director, COAI (Cellular Operators Association of India)

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

