No. DDG/Rural/TN LSA/CHN/SBM-TN/2021-22/36   Dated 25.01.2022

Minutes of 1st State Broadband Committee of Tamilnadu held on 9.11.2021- Revised

The first State Broadband Committee (SBC) meeting of Tamilnadu state was convened on 09.11.2021 at 15:30 Hrs in the conference hall of Chief Secretary, Tamilnadu. The following Members/Special invitees attended the meeting:

Sl No	Name (Shri / Smt)	Designation	Government/ Organisation
1	Dr. Neeraj Mittal	Principal Secretary IT Dept	Tamilnadu
2	Mary Vinita	Additional Secretary IT Dept	Tamilnadu
3	Ajay Yadav	MD ELCOT	Tamilnadu
4	Kamal Kishore AK	MD TANFINET	Tamilnadu
5	Dr. Pinky Jowel	Special Secretary, RD & PR	Tamilnadu
6	Deepak Tayal	Advisor/Sr DDG, TN LSA, Chennai	DoT, TN LSA
7	SK Radha	DDG(Rural), TN LSA, Chennai	DoT, TN LSA
8	Muraleedharan G	CGM Tamilnadu Circle	BSNL
9	Muralikrishna	PGM CFA BSNL Tamilnadu	BSNL
10	Kalai vani G	CGM, BBNL Chennai	BBNL
11	Chandrasekhar M	PGM, BBNL, Chennai	BBNL
12	Rajasekhar S	Director, TN LSA, Chennai	DoT, TN LSA
13	Srikanth V	ADG Rural	DoT, TN LSA
14	Senthil Kumar S	DM ELCOT	ELCOT

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15	Balaji S	DGM BSNL	BSNL
16	Senthil Kumar	CEO Indus Towers	Rep. of DIPA
17	Manoj Madhavan	Legal & Regulatory Head, Indus Towers	Rep. of DIPA
18	Ashish K Mitra	Circle Head, American Tower Co	Rep. of DIPA
19	RM Nagappan	Circle Head, Vision India	Rep. of DIPA
20	Suresh Kumar KG	GM, Airtel	Rep. of COAI
21	Sunil S	GM, Nodal & Regulatory Affairs, VIL	Rep. of COAI
22	Senthil A	State Construction Head, RJIO	Rep. of COAI

Principal Secretary IT informed that Chief Secretary, the Chairman of the State Broadband Committee (SBC) could not attend due to heavy rains/Flood situation in Tamilnadu. Principal Secretary IT has informed that the draft ROW policy aligning the ROW policy of DoT is under finalization and will be issued shortly. The new ROW policy of Tamilnadu state will expedite the permission process and will be beneficial to all telecom operators in faster deployment of Telecom Infrastructure. He has requested all stakeholders to actively participate in improving the Telecom Infrastructure and achieve the objectives of the National Broadband Mission (NBM). DDG(R), TN LSA gave power point presentation to all stake holders.

The discussion on various agenda points is summarized below:

a) Increasing Tower Density

DDG(R), TN LSA has informed that 10% increase in Internet subscribers results in 3.2 percent increase in the rate of growth of state per capita GDP. She has explained the objective and deliverables of NBM and SBC. As per NBM targets a tower density of 1 tower per 1000 population should be met by 2024. At present there are 45,495 towers in Tamilnadu with a tower density of 0.57.

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b) <u>Laying of Optical Fibre Cable</u>

DDG Rural, TN LSA has informed that the broadband speeds envisaged in the mission can be achieved only by increasing fibre connectivity. Laying of common ducts and Dig once policy shall be encouraged in Smart city area.

c) <u>Increasing Tower Fiberisation</u>

Tower fiberisation plays important role in improving speed of mobile data and is required for deploying new technologies like 4G and 5G. At present only 43% of the towers and 38% of BTSs were fiberised in Tamilnadu.

d) <u>Align State RoW Policy with GoI's RoW Rules, 2016/ 2021</u>

Advisor/Sr DDG TN LSA requested Principal Secretary IT to consider important features of ROW rules 2016 and amendments vide letter dated 21.10.2021 i.e.

- One time administrative charges of Rs.1000 per km for underground laying
- One time administrative charges of Rs. 10,000/- per overground tower infrastructure
- One time administrative charges of Rs. 1000 per km for aerial OFC laying
- Grant of permission within 60 days and deemed approval etc.,

A Consultation was also done with DoT and by DoT with all Operators on draft RoW Policy on 09/11/2021.

e) <u>High Speed Broadband in all villages</u>

As per NBM annual plan, availability of broadband speeds has to be improved to 50Mbps by 2024. At present broadband connectivity in rural areas is mostly through mobile connectivity. DDG Rural, TN LSA has informed that around 59 villages in Tamilnadu are not covered with any Telecom facilities. Principal Secretary IT has informed that none of the villages should be left uncovered in Tamilnadu. He has directed all operators including BSNL and Infrastructure providers to plan for covering the uncovered villages within 6 months period. An action plan should be submitted by 31.01.2022 by DDG Rural, TN LSA in consultation with operators/ ELCOT.

Representatives from Digital Infrastructure Providers Association (DIPA) and Cellular Operator Association of India (COAI) informed that these villages could not be connected due to feasibility and Techno-commercial issues as they are located in remote hilly areas. They have also informed that there were permission issues as these locations being in Reserve forests and hilly areas. Principal Secretary IT has assured that permission issue for erecting the towers will be

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taken up with respective District collectors and will be resolved. DDG(R) has informed that the list will be shared with the operators and it will be ensured that these villages are covered in a phased manner.

f) <u>National Broadband Mission Targets of Tamil Nadu</u>

DDG Rural, Tamilnadu has informed that the target for broadband connectivity to villages is 100% achievement by Dec-2022. Other important targets like tower fiberisation, increasing of tower density, optical fibre laying and improving the broadband speeds are to be met by 2024 in a phased manner.
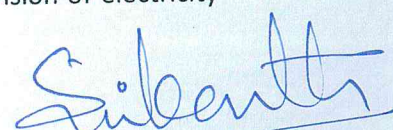
g) <u>Broadband Readiness Index (BRI)</u>

The National Digital Communication Policy (NDCP) 2018 acknowledged the need for building a robust digital communications infrastructure leveraging existing assets of the broadcasting and power sectors including collaborative models involving state, local bodies and the private sector. Accordingly, the policy recommended that a BRI for States and UTs be developed to attract investments and address Right of Way (RoW) challenges across India.

DDG Rural, Tamilnadu informed that, BRI will capture condition of the underlying digital infrastructure and attract investment in the state from private players. The development of BRI will be a collaborative exercise with stakeholders including State governments and industry associations like the Digital Infrastructure Providers Association (DIPA) and the Internet Service Providers Association of India (ISPAI) and the Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI). This will be a first of its kind exercise that will comprehensively measure the development of telecom infrastructure at the sub national level. Response to 35 point questionnaire has been submitted to Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER) for compilation of BRI of Tamil Nadu. BRI ranking is yet to be finalised.

Representatives of COAI have requested to include usage of electrical pole for laying aerial cable and regularising the aerial cables already laid in the policy. Advisor/Sr DDG, TN LSA has suggested to take advantage of pillars of metro rail as well. Representatives of COAI has also requested the Government to consider policies like Dig Once and laying of common duct in smart city areas.

Representative from DIPA has requested to set Timelines for disposal of ROW applications and include deemed approval clause. He has also informed that large number of offline applications which were submitted prior to the launch of ROW portal are yet to be processed. Issues on provision of electricity

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connection to non-patta land was also raised by representatives of the DIPA. Principal Secretary IT has informed that time lines for clearance including deemed approval have been proposed and offline applications will be migrated to the portal once the ROW policy gets finalised. He stated that most of other issues raised by representatives of DIPA and COAI will be addressed once the policy gets released.

Advisor/Sr DDG TN LSA has thanked Principal Secretary IT for conducting the long awaited SBC meeting of Tamilnadu despite heavy rains and monsoon season in a tight schedule. He has thanked Principal Secretary IT for pursuing State ROW policy aligned to DoT ROW Ruling 2016/2021. He thanked all participants including Secretaries of various departments and their staff, CGM BSNL, CGM BBNL, representatives of DIPA and COAI on behalf of Tamilnadu LSA.

The minutes have been issued with the approval of Principal Secretary IT, Tamilnadu State Government.

-Sd-
Advisor/Sr DDG (TN LSA)

Copy to
All members of SBC
P.S to Chief Secretary TN

(ADG Rural) 25/01/22
O/o Advisor TN LSA
DoT , Chennai

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