

**Minutes of Meeting of State Broadband Committee held under the Chairmanship of Shri S C Gupta, Chief Secretary, Govt. of Sikkim on 28.09.2021 at Conference Hall, Tashiling, Secretariat, Gangtok.**

The Meeting commenced with the Welcome address by Shri J. Kole, Director Sikkim, DoT followed by brief introduction by the participants.

Shri S C Gupta Chief Secretary has expressed that reliable communication network is a long felt basic necessity for Sikkim and asked for strictly monitoring the performance of TSPs. Chief Secretary suggested for coordination with Rural Development Department for assessing the quality of mobile connectivity/services (physical verification) in Grampanchayats and remote villages as the Rural Development Department have greatest reach and resources for collection of information. He also desired that students residing in remote villages of Sikkim should be able to attend on-line classes through reliable communication media.

Shri N Murali Krishna Deputy Director General, DoT in his presentation highlighted the progress made since the 1<sup>st</sup> SBC meeting held and new proposals to improve the connectivity in the State of Sikkim. He has directed all TSPs to take note of Chief Secretary's suggestions and work in that direction to meet end goal at shortest possible time.

Points discussed are:

1. Fibre Connectivity for all the Districts/Blocks/Villages and further extended to Police Stations/Hospitals/Colleges/Schools/Home-stays etc.

*One GPU namely "Kyongosla" in East Sikkim District connected through satellite mode. BBNL assured that 3 more sites will come in next 10 days and total 13 sites will be commissioned by the end of October 2021. Barring this no progress made for laying OFC to connect remaining GPUs due to various reasons. BSNL raised the concern regarding laying of cable and maintenance of the OF Cable very much difficult in long run, due to geographical conditions coupled with rain and landslides. Chief Secretary suggested that wherever the geographical conditions are tough or not feasible to provide connectivity in near future by optical fibre, SBC can recommend the deployment of satellite connectivity as an immediate measure for 50% of GPUs.*

2. Bharat Net project roll-out status (Phase I & II) and issue there in.

*BSNL said that the delay in implementation of the project is due to non-availability of store materials, delay in DPR approval, delay in payment to contractors etc. However 50% of pending payment is made to contractors and hopefully work will start in next 15-20 days. BSNL requested for laying overhead cables against already laid but damaged location. DDG Sikkim suggested that BBNL/BSNL*

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*should examine the combination of underground-overhead cable in order to complete the work through "hybrid-mode" approach. This can address BRO's concern of damaging road berm also. Chief Secretary suggested for making a conscious decision after examining all pros and cons in the interest of providing telecom connectivity in Sikkim.*

3. Mapping of telecom infrastructure along with Govt. Dept./Institutions/ facilities like Police Stations/Hospitals/Colleges/School etc. in digital Map of Sikkim.

*DDG, DoT explained the need of mapping Telecom infrastructure with the Govt. Institutions like Police Stations/Hospitals/Schools/Colleges/Polling stations etc. Secretary, IT assured to get the data from concerned departments in a week time. On obtaining this information, TSPs to share the connectivity status along with plan to connect uncovered Govt. Institutions.*

4. Enabling fiberisation of BTS and Towers.

*DDG DoT informed that TSPs made little progress on Tower & BTS fiberisation. He reminded all TSPs to achieve the SBC target set for this year.*

5. Implementation of Single window Electronic Application process & Disposal of RoW permission within stipulated timeframe.

*DDG Sikkim thanked the Department of IT, Govt. of Sikkim for issuing Gazette Notification broadly in line with DoT RoW rules 2016. It was further requested that DIT Sikkim to operationalise single window portal. Secretary IT assured that it will made functional in a month time.*

6. Exploring the possibilities of using existing/upcoming infrastructure of Power Department to extend the Optical Fiber cable along with electric poles.

*Secretary IT raised the Power Department's reservations on sharing their poles for FTTH cable project of TSPs. Secretary Power Department replied that they will allow the same after assessing some critical factors related to weight bearing capacity, feasibility etc.*

7. For connectivity Planning to Police Stations, Hospitals, Educational institutes etc., the TSPs need Lat-Long information

*Secretary IT confirmed that requisition for providing the Lat-Long information has been received from DoT. IT Department will provide the same within a week time. The Principal Secretary, Home requested to include the list of polling booths also.*

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8. Exploring the possibilities of using land/roof of educational institutions for installation of BTS towers.

*Secretary IT requested for allowing new tower erection in school land to get better internet facilities to students. ACS, Education Department raised his concern about safety for school children from electricity and electromagnetic radiations. He assured that the school lands can be permitted if proper fencing and others safety measures are ensured.*

9. Laying of OFC Cable & Bandwidth capacity creation up to GPU/BHQ level by PGCIL.

*PGCIL has already shared its short term, mid-term and long term plans. TSPs expressed their willingness to avail this offer. DDG directed the TSPs to submit their requirement within 15 days' time to enable PGCIL to proceed as per the plan.*

10. Plan & Status of Sharing of Towers by TSPs.

*Chief Secretary requested DoT to collect present status of towers sharing. DDG directed all TSPs to submit their report in next 10 days. Progress of tower sharing will be reviewed after six months.*

11. Expediting permission process for electricity connection to new mobile tower(s)

*M/s. Indus Tower raised the issue of huge delay in getting electricity connections for mobile towers. At the same time, Power Department is charging exorbitant amount for providing commercial connections.*

*Chief Secretary suggested that a request may be made to Secretary, IT along with the comparison sheet of electricity connection charges being charged in the other states.*

12. Regularization of mobile towers for which permission not sought/pending with Govt. of Sikkim

*M/s Indus towers raised their concern for not approving applications for tower erection by UDHD. He further added more than 50 applications are pending for approval from State Govt. Chief Town Planner, UDHD replied that the delay in according permission is due to non-submission of proper documents by the applicants. Chief Secretary suggested the TSPs to keep Secretary IT in loop since he is single point of contact for Telecom sector issues to be dealt in Govt. of Sikkim.*

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*Further, CS directed Secretary IT to submit a proposal to the Government for creation of district level committee for issue of clearances to Telecom Service Providers for areas outside Urban Development Department notified areas.*

13. Payment of Dues by TSPs to Government of Sikkim

*IT Secretary raised the issue of rent amount not paid to State Govt. by Indus Tower.*

14. Issues faced by TSPs with GMC and smart city authority i.r.o. laying of OFC

- *CTO, Smart City project informed that 13 numbers of ducts are available on rent for laying OFC. TSPs asked the charges for taking the duct on rent. TSPs asked for outlet to tap the cables. Chief Secretary suggested to carry out the road crossing through under-ground means.*
- *BSNL raised the issue regarding laying of Optical Fibre Cables in the BRO areas. CS instructed Chief Engineer BRO to sort out the issue amicably.*
- *COAI highlighted the issue of exorbitant power charges. CS instructed COAI to submit application in this matter to the State Government with comparative rates of other states.*

15. Issues/Points emerging from the Sub-Committee meeting on improvement of Quality of Service of Telecom and internet in Sikkim.

*DDG, DoT directed all the TSPs to submit the pending information on various items within 10 days' time. Based on this information, Sub-Committee will propose improvement plans.*

16. Specific issues/concerns raised by TAIPA/COAI

- A. *COAI has raised the issue of high charges for overhead cables by Govt. of Sikkim.*

*Chief Secretary suggested to submit the detailed proposal along with the comparative statement of other State Govt.*

- B. *DIPA requested for formation of District level Broadband Committee to resolve the operational issues at District level.*

*DDG, DoT informed that provision is there in NBM for formation of District Level Broadband Committee.*

The meeting ended with the vote of thanks by the Director, DoT.



DDG Sikkim, DoT  
Member-Convener SBC

List of Participants:

1. Shri S C Gupta, IAS, Chief Secretary, Govt. Of Sikkim
2. Shri G.P.Upadhyaya, IAS, Addl. Chief Secretary, Education Department
3. Shri N Murali Krishna, ITS, Deputy Director General, DoT, Govt. of India.
4. Shri C S Rao, IFS, Pr. Secretary, Rural Development Department, Govt. Of Sikkim.
5. Shri R. Telang, IAS, Principal Secretary, Home Department, Govt. Of Sikkim.
6. Shri D.C. Nepal, IFS, Chief Conservator of Forests, Forest & Environment Department, Govt. Sikkim.
7. Shri Raj Yadav, IAS, Secretary, IT Department, Govt. Of Sikkim.
  
8. Shri Bhupendra Kothari, Chief Technical Officer, Gangtok Smart City Development Ltd.
9. Smt. Yogeeta Rai, Additional Chief Architect, Urban Development Department, Govt. of Sikkim.
10. Shri T.P. Shangdarpa Secretary Road & Bridges Department, Government of Sikkim.
11. Shri S. K. Samanta, CGM, BSNL, Sikkim Telecom Circle, Gangtok.
12. Shri E. Swer, GM, BSNL, Sikkim Telecom Circle, Gangtok.
13. Shri Jayanta Kole, ITS, Director, DoT Govt. of India.
14. Shri K. Ashok, Director, BRO.
15. Shri S.T. Wangdi, Additional Director, DIT, Govt. of Sikkim.
  
16. Representative from GMC
17. Assistant Manger PGCIL, Kolkata
18. Representatives of TSPs
19. And other officials from Govt. of Sikkim

Following Participants joined through VC

1. Shri A K Sinha, The State Head, BBNL
2. Smt. N Mathur, COAI.
3. Shri Keshab Kapur, COAI.
4. Shri T R Dua, DG- DIPA.
5. Shri Harpreet Kapur, DIPA.

(Attendance Sheet Enclosed)



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