



Government of India
Ministry of Communications
Department of Telecommunications
O/o Sr. DDG, North East LSA,
3rd Floor CTO Building, Shillong, Meghalaya

To

SBC Members

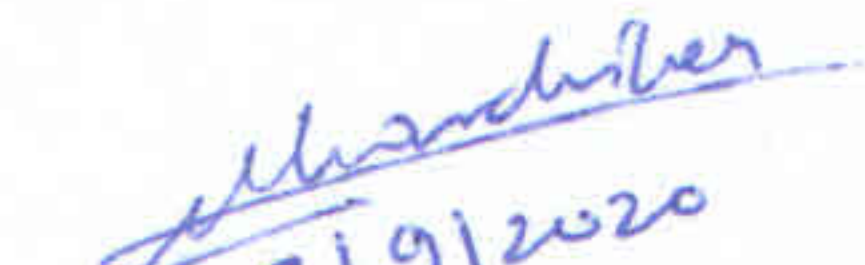
Sub: Regarding MOM of first SBC Meeting of Meghalaya State

Respected Sir

Kindly find enclosed Minutes of Meeting of first SBC Meeting of Meghalaya State held on 02-09-2020 under the Chairmanship of Shri M.S. Rao IAS, Chief Secretary Government of Meghalaya in Main Conference room Secretariat Building Shillong Meghalaya.

This is for kind information and necessary action at your end please.

Yours Sincerely


23/9/2020

Sarang Mandviker

Director Rural 2

O/o Sr DDG NE LSA

Copy to:

1. P.S. to Chief Secretary Government of Meghalaya , Shillong.
2. DGT , New Delhi .
3. DDG SE ,New Delhi.
4. ALL DDGs of NE LSA.

Minutes of first meeting of the State Broadband Committee (SBC), Meghalaya held on 2nd September, 2020 in the Conference Room, Main Secretariat Building, Shillong to discuss the progress of National Broadband Mission (NBM)

1. The Mission envisages enabling fast track growth of Digital Communication Infrastructure, bridging the digital divide, digital empowerment and inclusion, and providing an affordable and universal access of broadband for all by the year 2022. Meghalaya State has constituted State Broadband Committee (SBC) for monitoring the progress of the Mission in the State.

2. First SBC meeting was held on 2nd September 2020. Following members attended the meeting:

I. M. S. Rao, IAS, Chief Secretary, Government of Meghalaya- Chairman, SBC
Information Technology and Communication Department, Govt of Meghalaya:

II. M R Synrem, Commissioner & Secretary, IT&C

III. E Lyngwa, Head, SeMT

IV. D Dkhar, Sr Informatics Officer, Directorate of IT&C

Power Department, Govt of Meghalaya:

V. E B Kharmujai, Director (Distribution), MeECL

VI. J Sumer, SE(SD), MePDCL

Public Works Department, Govt of Meghalaya:

VII. B Rapsang, Joint Secretary, PWD

VIII. M Marbaniang, ACE, PWD (Roads)

Forests & Environment Department, Govt of Meghalaya:

IX. R. S. Gill, Addl. Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Meghalaya, Shillong

X. Gunanka D B, IFS, DCF(FC)

DoT LSA side:

XI. A. K. Sahu, Sr. DDG, NE-LSA-Convener, SBC

XII. R. R. Mittar, DDG (Technology), NE-LSA

XIII. Deepak Pathak, Director (Rural-1), NE-LSA

XIV. Sarang Mandviker, Director (Rural-2), NE-LSA

XV. Chirag, ADET (Rural), NE-LSA

Special Invitee:

XVI. P Sudhakar Rao, GMTD (Meghalaya), BSNL

XVII. Bhupong, DGM, BSNL

Special Invitees (on VC):

XVIII. Cmdr Dr J Jena, DDG, COAI

XIX. Mr. T.R. Dua, DG- TAIPA

XX. Kapil Bhateja, VP- TAIPA

XXI. Mr. Avinash Vyas, Northeast Region Head- TAIPA

3. In the introductory address, the Chief Secretary (CS) who is the Chairman of SBC, emphasized upon the importance of connectivity and digital governance

particularly in these times of the COVID19 pandemic. He stated that Meghalaya has one-third uncovered mobile coverage and facing serious issues with respect to telecom services. The state has always been committed to expansion of broadband and is further willing to address all concerns of various Service Providers to accelerate broadband penetration. He also stressed upon the need to take steps on a war-footing in order to improve the telecom and internet connectivity in the state.

4. The CS further lamented the poor progress of Bharat Net and urged BBNL to expedite the execution of the project. He also emphasised on the need for BBNL to deploy a dedicated, active and effective representative in the state. He further expressed his displeasure at the visible absence of the representative of BBNL during the meeting. The Chair directed that a comprehensive followup letter be sent to DoT, Gol, detailing the issues related to BBNL & BharatNet implementation. The letter shall also address the point that signal quality of telecom network of Bangladesh is comparatively better in border areas and this may become a national security concern.

5. Sr DDG NELSA -DoT informed that under Bharat Net Ph-II, 766 VSAT sites were initially identified by BBNL, and subsequently 320 sites were diverted, resulting in 446 sites only. The Chair directed that a meeting should be convened between the Corporate Headquarter of BBNL and the State Government to discuss the current status of BharatNet project & its way forward. Further, the Chair directed BBNL to clarify on the objective and end utilization of the Bharatnet-II sites in line with the National Broadband Mission objectives.

6. Sr. DDG, NE-LSA, DoT made a presentation on the agenda points and informed the committee that the NBM was launched by Hon'ble Minister of Communications in Dec 2019. He mentioned about the importance of broadband in the growth of State GDP. He also informed the committee about the objectives of the Mission, governance structure for its implementation and the functions of State Broadband Committee.

7. The following agenda points were discussed during the meeting:

- (i) **For Increasing Tower Density, possibility of State funding, availability of Govt. land and buildings.**
- (ii) **Right of Way for Optical Fibre Cable laying and Tower erection.**
- (iii) **Village/Hamlet Data updation with Lat./Long. details.**
- (iv) **Power connections for Towers/ telecom infrastructure.**
- (v) **Broadband Readiness Index database updation.**
- (vi) **Any other issues with permission of chair.**

8. While discussing the Annual Implementation Plan (AIP), the Chair enquired about the start/end date of the first year targets. The committee deliberated upon the Annual proposed targets for Meghalaya, as finalization of state targets is an important function of SBC. DoT explained that the proposed targets are based on the growth rates mentioned in national AIP. As the present status of Broadband connectivity to villages is already 57%, CS directed to upwardly revise the targets for the first year from 60% to 65% (by March 2021) and from 70% to 75% for the second year. The present status is calculated based on the number of villages covered with 3G and 4G connectivity. It was suggested that the present status of availability of broadband speed (Mbps) and GIS mapping of fiber cumulative may be taken as 512Kbit/s and zero respectively.

Based on the above, the Committee agreed that the start year for National Broadband Mission in Meghalaya shall be recorded as FY 2020-2021 & continues to the next five year upto FY 2024-25. Further, the NE LSA is requested to prepare the revised targets and schedule in such a way that they are achievable and should have clearly defined breakup of roles, responsibilities & specific activities to be carried out by every stakeholder.

9. The Chief Secretary explained that there are no Gram Panchayats (GPs) in Meghalaya since the entire state falls under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution. He, therefore, requested the Sr. DDG NE LSA not to use the GP terminology for Meghalaya and also to explore alternative clustering method for effective planning and execution of telecom projects.

10. Sr. DDG, NE LSA, DoT informed the committee about the master database being prepared by the department and its usefulness in creating national fiber grid. Data of latitude and longitude, as given by the state, for inhabited villages has been incorporated in master database of Meghalaya. Regarding the latitude and longitude of remaining 309 inhabited villages, NE LSA, DoT shall share the Block-wise list of such Villages with the IT&C Department so that this may be taken up with the respective Deputy Commissioners. The SBC decided to finalize the master database based on villages as per Census 2011 data only.

11. As per 2011 Census Data available with IT&C Department (also shared with NE LSA DoT-Gol vide IT&C Dept emails dtd 06/08/2020 & email dtd 27/08/2020) there are only 22 Villages with 0 (Zero) population i.e Uninhabited Villages in the state. However, as per presentation made by NE LSA, the number of Uninhabited Villages in Meghalaya is 380 (Total villages - 6839 less total inhabited villages - 6459). This discrepancy in the total number of uninhabited villages in the State needs to be jointly reconciled by NE LSA & IT&C Dept. with the help of the respective Deputy

Commissioners, if necessary, so that no inhabited villages are left uncovered by mobile network.

12. Salient features of Right Of Way (ROW) policy of Meghalaya were discussed with reference to DoT guidelines. The only major issue is non-availability of a Single Window portal for processing ROW applications by service providers. The state through NIC Meghalaya is in the process of developing the Online Portal for RoW clearances under the "Ease of Doing Business." The target date for completing the Online Portal shall be end of October 2020. The Representative of TAIPA, NER may share his expertise pertaining to the best practices adopted by other States while implementing such online systems.

13. The SBC discussed the formation of District/ Municipal Monitoring Committee who may submit monthly report to SBC regarding progress of activities pertaining to NBM. Commissioner & Secretary (IT&C) informed that District Level Committee has already been existing for monitoring, reviewing and facilitating the telecom projects of the district. The same would, however, be re-notified to include all stakeholders such as DoT, Forest Department (DFO Territorial), PWD, Power Department (MePDCL), Urban Affairs, TSPs/IPs, TAIPA, COAI, etc. The Commissioner & Secretary IT&C is the State Nodal Officer for implementation of the Meghalaya Telecom Infrastructure Policy (MTIP) 2018 and the District Nodal Officers shall be nominated for NBM. All District Nodal Officers shall submit monthly reports to State Nodal Officer for its review by SBC.

14. On the issue raised by TAIPA related to deposit of Telecom fees, the Commissioner & Secretary (IT&C) informed that the account heads have already been created and the same will be shared with NE LSA DoT-Gol. The possibility of providing online solution for payment of telecom fees shall also be explored by IT&C Department with NIC Meghalaya.

15. DG, TAIPA raised issues related to delay in RoW clearances. It was informed that 28 cases of EB connection are pending for more than 6 months in Meghalaya. Director (Distribution), MeECL agreed to look into the issue of pending EB connections case by case for its early resolution. MeECL will update IT&C Department regarding the progress of pending EB cases. TAIPA & COAI shall send to State IT&C Dept the list of pending Power connections with specific details, area wise, for necessary action.

16. TAIPA informed that MeECL is charging as per their approved tariff for utilization of electricity poles, which is higher than the rates mentioned in RoW policy. The CS directed the Commissioner & Secretary, IT&C and the State Power

Department to discuss the issues related to charges as per MTIP 2018 for using electric poles for overhead OFC, and resolve the matter.

17. The Director (Distribution), MeECL informed the committee that the weight bearing capacity of Electric Poles is limited. Hence proper care needs to be taken while installing the optical fiber cables and adequate ground clearances need to be ensured to prevent accidents.

18. TAIPA and COAI informed the committee about the long pending (more than 6 months) RoW/NoC permission for 576 towers. CS asked them to share the list of these pending cases, Local Authority wise (as per MTIP 2018), with the IT&C department, who will further coordinate with the concerned district authorities for resolution.

19. COAI informed the committee that despite the availability of deemed approval clause in the RoW policy, local authorities are not allowing the infrastructure installation to commence work even after 60 days without certificate. The Chair directed the Local Authorities to abide by the provisions of the Meghalaya Telecom Infrastructure Policy 2018.

20. NE-LSA DoT explained the importance of Broadband Readiness Index. The response of State Government to the various questions related to finalisation of the score were touched upon. Sr. DDG requested that the state government may relook at the responses and changes, if any, may be communicated to DoT HQ by 4th September, 2020. In this regard, the IT &C Department clarified that the 76 nos of applications received by the Local Authorities from TSPs for the period from April 2019 to December 2019 are all incomplete applications and hence, invalid. So the number of applications received is effectively zero and hence, applications cleared are also zero. So the "Response" /Score of zero provided to the State for this parameter is logically incorrect since percentage calculation of application cleared versus application received is undefined for the specified period (zero by zero is undefined). (A letter has been sent vide No.ITC(R).18/2019/172 dtd 02/09/2020 to Dir-DoT-Gol & emailed to ICRIER for necessary action & noted by ICRIER vide their returned email dt 03/09/2020).

21. GMTD, BSNL (CGM, BSNL representative) stated that penetration of internet services in the rural areas along the international Border (South and South West

Garo Hills) is negligible. In this connection, BSNL has taken up with BSF authorities for laying of around 326 KMs of Over Head OFC along the Indo-Bangladesh Border Fence from Mankachar to Shella, for which Joint survey of BSNL & BSF Teams has been conducted and BSF Authorities have accorded the permission for OF laying on Border Fence. BSNL informed that the estimated cost for laying OFC is about Rs. 10.86 Crs and requested SBC to seek USO Funding (USOF Administrator). SBC agreed to the proposal of BSNL.

22. GMTD, BSNL also requested the committee to explore the possibilities of improvement of mobile/ broadband coverage in Ranikor and Balat areas. However, NE LSA DoT informed that these areas are covered under USOF projects of 4G mobile coverage to uncovered villages and National Highways.

23. GMTD, BSNL also mentioned that the fibre connectivity to DHQ/SDHQ/BHQ by M/s RailTel under USOF project has been halted which are affecting the internet services. The DoT may expedite or may entrust the same to BSNL in Meghalaya.

24. TAIPA raised the following additional points:

- a. TAIPA flagged the issue of delays in issuing of in ePasses by the DCs offices for inter State / district movement of telecom field Staff during present COVID-19 Pandemic. The Chair directed that these epasses must be issued on priority basis by the respective DCs by also following the SOPs/safety guidelines issued by Health & Family Welfare Department.
- b. MeECL may explore the possibility of online solution for payment of electricity Bills by TSPs/ IPs.
- c. Request for reduction in electricity Tariff - MeECL may examine the point.

25. COAI raised the following additional points:

- a. BSNL to actively participate in Infra-sharing to overcome tenant constraints - BSNL agreed for the same.
- b. Adoption of RoW policy by Municipal Bodies – Urban Affairs department to examine the same.
- c. Penalty clause on fiber cut as a standard contract clause and proceeds be used for swift restoration - Clause 19-20 of State Telecom Infra policy may be followed.
- d. Urban Affairs Department and PWD Authorities to explore provision of common ducts for underground electrical cables and OFC during new/ widening road construction- Sub-clause 14 of clause 11 State Telecom Infra policy may be followed.

- e. A 'Dig-once' and 'Call before you Dig' policy should be encouraged as part of State's Policy – Urban Affairs Department and PWD Authorities may examine the point.
- f. Laying of OFC as per National Building Codes to be made mandatory- Urban Affairs Department and PWD Authorities may examine the point.

The meeting ended with vote of thanks.



(M.S Rao, IAS)

Chief Secretary Meghalaya