



GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS  
DEPARTMENT OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS  
O/o DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL, SIKKIM, WB LSA,  
GROUND FLOOR, BSNL TELEPHONE EXCHANGE, NH-10, GANGTOK-737101  
Ph: 03592-204051, Email: [ddg.sikkim-dgt-dot@gov.in](mailto:ddg.sikkim-dgt-dot@gov.in)

No. 208-2/WBLSA/Sikkim/2020-21/NBM

Date: 24.06.2024

**Minutes of Meeting of State Broadband Committee held on 27.05.2024**

The State Broadband Committee meeting for Quarter I of 2024-25 was held under the Chairmanship of Shri V. B. Pathak, Chief Secretary, Govt. of Sikkim on 27.05.2024 at 2:30 PM at Conference Hall, Secretariat, Gangtok. Apart from regular members of the SBC, special invitations were extended to USOF, Department of Education, Department of Commerce & Industries, Department of Rural Development. Representatives from COAI and DPIA also attended the meeting through VC. The list of participants is in **Annexure**.

Shri M. Mahmood Ur Rehman, DDG Sikkim, DoT, convenor of SBC, welcomed all the participants. Shri V. B. Pathak, Chief Secretary, Govt. of Sikkim, in his opening remarks, stressed upon the need for universal broadband connectivity in the state of Sikkim as per the mandate of National Broadband Mission.

DDG, Sikkim introduced the agenda to the participants and the following points were discussed:

**1. Current Telecom status of Sikkim:**

Current status of connectivity, subscriber base, BTS & Tower details were presented before the SBC. They were apprised about the importance of BTS Fiberization in the faster rollout of 5G and other telecom services.

As per the National Broadband Mission's target, overall, 70 % fiberization of the BTSs is to be done by the TSPs in Sikkim by March 2025.

The Chief Secretary asked the TSPs to expedite the Fiberization process and assured all necessary support for the same.

**(Action By: TSPs of Sikkim)**

**2. 5G Rollout:**

The 5G working committee has already been constituted by the Govt. of Sikkim to work out the modalities for use of the Govt. Infrastructure/street furnitures for establishment of Telecom Infrastructure.

As on date, 524 electric poles and 7 Govt. Buildings have been mapped and uploaded in the Gatishakti portal.

The Chief Secretary directed all the concerned departments to contact the Department of Commerce & Industries, Govt. of Sikkim which is the nodal



department for street furniture mapping to expedite the mapping process with the Gatishakti portal.

**(Action By: Department of Commerce & Industries and all the concerned departments for mapping of street furniture)**

### **3. USOF Projects in Sikkim:**

The status of the USOF projects were presented before SBC.

#### **(a) 4G Saturation:**

The 4G saturation project has 52 new sites and 3 upgrade sites. DDG Sikkim also pointed out the challenge of land acquisition in 28 private sites.

BSNL apprised the participants about the dropping of 31 sites (27 sites at private sites, 3 Govt. & 1 Forest sites) due to pre-existing coverage.

DDG Sikkim asked BSNL about the tests conducted to audit the pre-existing coverage under the planned sites. BSNL informed that they cannot test the signal from other TSPs. DDG Sikkim suggested conducting a drive test to observe coverage under planned sites. The Additional Chief Secretary, Home Department suggested USOF to include representatives from Govt. of Sikkim in audit of pre-existing coverage under planned sites.

DDG Sikkim has emphasised not to drop any planned sites as Sikkim is a disaster-prone area and has mountainous terrain. USOF was also requested to revisit the criteria for duplicate sites for Sikkim.

DDG Sikkim suggested relocating the sites on recommendation of SBC if at all USOF decides to drop the planned sites on account of pre-existing coverage.

Chief Secretary has asked USOF to expedite the completion of 4G Saturation scheme.

**(Action By: BSNL, USOF)**

**(b) BharatNet project:** The current status of Bharat Net Phase I and II presented before SBC. Chief Secretary expressed his dissatisfaction over low no. of functional GP under the scheme.

DDG, SP USOF apprised the SBC that USOF is working on the scheme to enhance usage of the connected GP under the amended BharatNet program.

**(Action By: BSNL, USOF)**

**(c) USOF-BAL NER Project:** DDG Sikkim informed about the NER project being executed by Bharti Airtel Ltd. and as on date 8 sites have been installed and are operational out of 21 planned sites.

### **4. Language of Messaging in Sikkim:**

The Chief Secretary pointed out that IVR announcement and SMS messages by TSPs are being done in Bengali by Airtel, RJIL & VIL in Sikkim instead of the local language of Sikkim. He demanded that the IVR announcement and SMS messages from TSP must be in the local language("Nepali") of Sikkim for the telecom



subscribers of the State. He further recommended to make Sikkim a separate telecom circle with separate licence for Sikkim. **(All TSP, DoT)**

**5. Portal Usage:**

The participants were apprised about the utility of the various citizen centric portals of the Department of Telecommunications like CBuD, Gatishakti Sanchar, Tarang Sanchar, SancharSathi etc.

The Government of Sikkim was requested to spread awareness about these portals among the stakeholders. The Chief Secretary suggested that short videos on the same may be shared with all stakeholders for awareness.

Importance of the CBuD portal was emphasised and Government of Sikkim was requested to encourage the use of CBuD application to enhance the usage. It was also suggested to take up the CBuD agenda in the district level committee meetings

During the discussion it was observed that Reliance Jio was not using CBuD portal for its digging activities in Sikkim. All TSPs/ISPs have been directed to get registered themselves and their contractors on the CBuD portal. They have been asked to use the CBuD portal before any digging activity.

**(Action By: TSPs/ISPs, Department of IT, Government of Sikkim)**

**6. Implementation of Policy related notification**

**(a) Directive on MTCTE (Mandatory Testing & Certification of Telecom Equipment)**

The participants were apprised about the Government of India's mandate as per Indian Telegraph (Amendment Rules, 2017) on MTCTE (Mandatory Testing & Certification of Telecom Equipment), Generic Requirements (GR), Interface Requirements (IR) for the telecom products.

The Govt. of Sikkim was requested to spread awareness about (MTCTE) for the notified products such as routers, LAN switches, IOT Gateway, smart electricity metres, WIFI Access CPES etc. among Departments of Government of Sikkim, Autonomous bodies, attached offices etc. and also, to incorporate the same in the procurement policy.

The Chief Secretary asked all Departments of Government of Sikkim to take a note of it.

**(Action By: All Departments of Government of Sikkim)**

**(b) Renewable Energy through Green open Access**

It was brought into notice Gazette Notification No.CG-DL-E-24052023-246016 dated 23.05.2023 Ministry of Power to incorporate Renewable Energy through Green open Access in the telecom sector as well. As per the Notification, the licensee shall be eligible to take power through Green Energy Open Access and there shall be no limit of supply of power for the captive consumers taking power under Green Energy Open Access.



The Chief Secretary asked the Department of Power, Government of Sikkim to take a note of it.

**(Action By: Department of Power, Government of Sikkim)**

**(c) ROW Policy:**

It was informed to the participants that the state has already incorporated the Indian Telegraph, Right of Way (Amendment) Rules 2022 in the state RoW Rules. However, the Indian Telegraph, Right of Way (Amendment) Rules 2023 is yet to be aligned with the state RoW rules.

The Chief Secretary asked the Department of IT to comply.

**(Action By: Department of IT, Government of Sikkim)**

**7. Strategy for Complete Broadband Coverage at important sites**

a. DDG Sikkim presented the vision for complete broadband coverage of following important sites in Sikkim.

- i. Public Health Centres & Sub Health Centres
- ii. District Hospitals
- iii. Police stations/Police Checkpoints
- iv. Tourist & Religious Places
- v. District Administrative Centres
- vi. Block Administrative Centres
- vii. SDM Offices
- viii. Schools/Colleges/University
- ix. Courts
- x. Sports Complex/Stadium
- xi. National Highways/ Important Roads
- xii. Gram Panchayat Kendra
- xiii. Strategic Sites (Suggested by Army)

**The Department of Forest** requested to include Forest Checkpoints as well in the list of important sites.

The Chief Secretary asked the Department of Home to write to all the concerned state departments requesting to submit a list of important locations along with lat-long information in the next 15 days and submit the same to the IT department for collation and sharing with O/o DDG, Sikkim DoT. With the help of TSPs the connectivity status of these locations to be ascertained.

**(Action By: Department of Home., Department of IT, TSPs of Sikkim, DoT Sikkim)**

b. Uncovered sites/places would be sent to USOF/TSPs for devising schemes for broadband connectivity. These important sites may require setting up small cell/micro cells.

SBC also recommends Inter-Carrier Roaming at all USOF funded sites so that subscribers of other TSPs would also be able to communicate through these USOF funded sites.

**(Action By: TSPs of Sikkim, DoT Sikkim, USOF)**



- c. **Ward-wise Coverage Data:** DDG Sikkim pointed out the presence of dark spots in the areas/villages shown as covered. Later, the Secretary, DIT pointed out the importance of ward wise connectivity instead of village wise to get the accurate connectivity status of the region. He informed the audience that a total 1199 wards and 199 GPUs are present in Sikkim, out of which lat-long information of 858 wards is available with DIT. The Chief Secretary directed the Department of IT to compile the ward details of urban & rural areas of Sikkim and share them with DoT, Sikkim.  
**(Action: Department of IT to compile the ward wise details of urban & rural areas of Sikkim)**
- d. **Revisiting the criteria for Coverage:** DDG SP USOF informed about the criteria for coverage by USOF i.e. 60 percent coverage will make the area covered. Given the mountainous region and disaster-prone zone of the State, it is recommended to revisit the criteria for the coverage by USOF.  
**(Action: USOF to reconsider the criteria for coverage in Sikkim)**

#### **8. Power related issues:**

DDG Sikkim presented to the committee the following power related issues in Sikkim raised by the Telecom industry like

- High DN charges,
- option for self-execution mode wherein TSPs can electrify the towers themselves,
- migration from commercial to industrial rates,
- use of single window clearance for a new connection and fault restoration,
- tenant wise EB billing, composite billing and
- priority connections through smart metres for simplifying the payment process.

The Chief Secretary directed the Department of Power to look into the suggestions of the Telecom Industry.

**(Action By: Department of Power, Govt. of Sikkim)**

#### **9. Latching onto Foreign Mobile Network at International Border**

The issue of latching onto Foreign Mobile Network at the International Border has been brought into notice by many quarters including the Government of Sikkim. O/o DDG Sikkim has already sent a report to O/o DG Telecom HQ with the recommendations.

The Chief Secretary also shared his experience that he was charged for International Roaming while being in Indian territories at the Nathu La International Border.

SBC has also endorsed following two recommendations to avoid latching of Indian Mobile Subscribers onto Foreign mobile network at International Border

- i. Installation of BTS near Nathula border and all such border areas will enhance the strength of the signal that will prevent Indian mobile subscribers latching into China Network while being on Indian Side of the the border.
- ii. International Roaming (especially with China) may be disabled to Indian subscribers while in Sikkim in general. International Roaming may be provided as a special case only. This would mitigate the potential security risk.

SBC has asked the TSPs/USOF to plan a mobile tower at Nathu La Border Area.

The meeting concluded with a commitment to enhance Sikkim's broadband infrastructure, ensuring robust connectivity across the state. DDG Sikkim thanked all the participants for their time and contribution in the SBC meeting.

This is issued with the approval of the competent authority.



JTO, Sikkim  
DoT, Gangtok



**Annexure:**

1. Sh. V. B. Pathak, Chief Secretary, Govt. of Sikkim (Chairman)
2. Sh. Ravindra Telang, Addl. Chief Secretary(Home & Education Dept.), Govt. of Sikkim
3. Sh. Mahmood Ur Rehman, DDG Sikkim, DoT(Member Convener)
4. Sh. M T Sherpa, Secretary UDD, Govt. of Sikkim(Member)
5. Sh. Tenzing T. Kelon, Secretary DIT, Govt. of Sikkim(Member)
6. Sh. T. T. Lepcha, Secretary Power Dept., Govt. of Sikkim(Member)
7. Sh. D.Dadul, PCE-Secretary Roads & Bridges Dept.,Govt. of Sikkim(Member)
8. Mrs Norzing Tsering Bhutia, Secretary RDD, Govt. of Sikkim(Spl. Invitee)
9. Sh. Karma R Bonpo, Secretary Commerce & Industries Dept.,Govt. of Sikkim(Spl. Invitee)
10. Sh. Thupden G. Bhutia, CEO NSCL(Spl. Invitee)
11. Sh. D. D. Manjunath, CCF(T/R)(Spl. Invitee)
12. Sh. Mukesh Kumar Gupta, DDG USOF, DoT(Spl. Invitee)
13. COAI Representative(Spl. Invitee)
14. DIPA Representative(Spl. Invitee)
15. Sh. Tsering Sandup, Director DIT, Govt. of Sikkim
16. Sh. Blen Targain, Addl. Director Forest & Environment Dept.(Spl. Invitee)
17. Sh. S. T. Wangdi, Addl. Director DIT, Govt. of Sikkim
18. Sh. P. V. Besnet, Addl. Director DIT, Govt. of Sikkim
19. Sh. Samrat Pradhan, Jt. Director DIT, Govt. of Sikkim
20. Sh. Baichung Bhutia, Dy. Director DIT, Govt. of Sikkim
21. Sh. Sisila Lama Tamang, DD(IT) RDD, Govt. of Sikkim
22. Sh. Spandan Sinha, JTO Sikkim, DoT
23. Sh. Ulhas Kakkad, DGM BSNL(Spl. Invitee)
24. Sh. Ankit Kumar, Manager Telecom, PGCIL(Spl. Invitee)
25. Sh. A. Sathish kumar, SDE BSNL(Spl. Invitee)
26. Sh. A.K. Ghosal, Consultant BBNL(Spl. Invitee)
27. Sh. Ongchu Sherpa, Network Engg BBNL(Spl. Invitee)
28. Sh. Shanabaj Alam, DT Engg, VIL(Spl. Invitee)
29. Sh. Bankim Basu, CTCL Airtel(Spl. Invitee)
30. Sh. Sayan Dhara, FMB Airtel(Spl. Invitee)
31. Sh. Sayan Ghosh, RoW Manager RJIL(Spl. Invitee)
32. Sh. S.k. Gajmer, Sr. Consultant RJIL(Spl. Invitee)