

Minutes of the 12th Task Force meeting, held on 2nd July 2012, for implementation of DAS

12th Task Force meeting for implementation of DAS for Cable Television Network in the four metro cities in first phase was held on 2.7.2012 under the chairmanship of Additional Secretary. From the Ministry, Joint Secretary (Broadcasting), Director (BP&L) and Advisor were present. List of members of the Task Force who attended the meeting is given in the annexure.

Add. Secretary welcomed the members. At the onset he mentioned that it has been observed that the views expressed by some of the members in the meetings are at variance with the views expressed outside. He advised that this should not repeat.

JS (B) made a presentation on the status of progress of various activities. She outlined that:

- Seeding rate of the STBs has not picked up. In fact in the week from 16th to 22nd June, seeding rate had gone down.
- One to one meetings are being held in the Ministry, first with National MSOs and then with Independent MSOs, to finalize the action plans. For this purpose formats for reporting of timelines for different activities and requirement, availability and seeding plan of the STBs have been prepared and given to all the MSOs by the Ministry.
- National level MSOSs have confirmed that STBs were being installed on Saturdays and Sundays also.
- National MSOs have published Reference Interconnect Offers. The independent MSOs had not published the RIOs up to 29.6.2010. They had assured the Ministry in the meeting held with them that they shall be publishing the same before due date.
- Independent MSOs had informed the Ministry that Aggregators were not providing them the IRDs for digitization purpose. They opined that non -fixing of channel rates by TRAI, as in the case of CAS, has resulted in negotiations with the Broadcasters/Aggregators, which they are finding it difficult stating further that Broadcasters were not responding to their requests. JS(B) pointed out that Ministry has fixed a meeting with the Broadcasters/ Aggregators on 3.7.2012 wherein this issue would also be discussed.
- Ministry has written to the Chief Secretaries of the four metros to issue necessary instructions to concerned officers to facilitate cable operators as per provisions of ROW in the Cable Act.

- Software for on-line feeding of seeding data of STBs is also being developed which would enable faster collection of data.
- Regarding publicity campaign she mentioned that three audio jingles, developed by All India radio, have already been approved for broadcast on the AIR network. DAVP was preparing a plan for publicity in print as well as the electronic media of Radio & TV. She added that a committee would be constituted to plan the publicity campaign.
- Regarding registration by MSOs, she informed that out of 35 applications received in the Ministry, letters of registration have been issued to 22. In 5 cases, approval has been received and would be issued on the receipt of Affidavit from the applicants. Shortcomings observed in 6 cases have been reported to applicants for compliance and 2 cases are under submission.

On the point of inter connect agreements with the Broadcasters, Add. Secretary mentioned that MSOs should think of signing interconnect agreements even for FTA channels to avoid any problem at a later date.

After the review of progress of the ongoing activities by the Joint Secretary, Task Force members made the following major suggestions:

- The representative of the Consumers' Forum expressed that uniform price of STBs should be fixed. He further mentioned that activity on consumer front has increased as 50 to 60 calls are being received now per week against 10 to 15 earlier but opined that seeding of STBs won't pick up unless consumers know what price to pay for the channels/bouquet.
- President COFI mentioned about the advertisement of Direct Digital Broadcast and wanted to know how it works. It was learnt that it was about the in-built STB in TV. On the objection of misnomer name, Additional Secretary assured to get it examined and take action, if required.
- Representative of the MSOs alliance mentioned that a number of have been filed in TDSAT by broadcasters, MSOs and LCOs. Hearing of these cases is scheduled on 7.8.2012 and only after that there would be clarity in the field. He was of the view that filing of these cases has adversely affected the seeding of STBs. On the point of signing of agreements with Broadcasters, he assured that agreements shall be signed before the due date. He informed that the alliance is going to fix price of STBs soon. They are also forming a sub group to check up and report the seeding in all the cities. On the query from Additional Secretary as to why expected delivery of STBs, which was earlier intimated to be 15th June, has now changed to 15th July, he replied that STBs are being received almost daily; however, bulk of STBs shall be received by 15th July.

- NBA's representative opined that all stakeholders should stick to timelines. He added that it was necessary that consumer is educated about DAS and welcomed that idea of IEC Committee
- IBF's representative said that broadcasters have not gone to TDSAT.
- DTH representative mentioned that announcement of rates to consumers was getting delayed due to non-signing of agreements between the Broadcasters and MSOs. He pointed that timelines should be fixed for broadcasters also. He suggested that Ministry should direct the parties to sign the agreements. On this point Add. Secretary said that it had been observed by the Ministry that none of the stakeholders was taking the initiative for reaching and clinching an agreement with the other resulting. What was required was a concerted action by all to complete the activities in the set time frame. Those who do not adhere to the timelines shall be running the risk of facing action as per the cable Act and Rules.
- Representative of CEAMA mentioned that production of 6 lakhs STBs would be completed by 15th Aug. He added that they have capacity to produce 6,000 STBs per day per shift but can increase it to 15,000 by working in more shifts. He however added that the STBs manufactured by them were based on one technology only.
- Representative from BECIL informed that on the advice of Ministry a plan has been prepared for deployment of teams in different cities to coordinate and collect data for DAS from the cities coming in the subsequent three phases.

Concluding the meeting Add Secretary asked the members to ensure that the seeding rate of STBs is pushed up so that seeding is completed in the month of September and the month of October is left for mop up exercise.

Meeting ended with a vote of thanks to the chair.
