

Information note to the Press (Press Release No. 106/2007)

For Immediate release

TELECOM REGULATORY AUTHORITY OF INDIA

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Subject: TRAI has forwarded the Report on Digitalization and Introduction of Voluntary CAS to Ministry of Information & Broadcasting.

New Delhi, 27th December, 2007 - TRAI has forwarded a report on "Digitalization and Introduction of Voluntary CAS in Cable TV network in India" alongwith the comments of 16 stakeholders on this report to Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. It is expected that this report of the Group will be useful in deciding the roadmap for bringing about addressability in the cable TV sector.

2. Earlier, a round table meeting was convened by TRAI on 1st February 2007, at Delhi with various stakeholders on the subject of digitalization and Introduction of Voluntary CAS in the country. Industry experts as well as representatives of consumer organizations, multi system operators (MSOs), cable operators, DTH operators, broadcasters and equipment manufacturers participated in the round table. One of the major issues that was discussed with the stakeholders in the round table related to exploring alternative models for voluntary CAS.

3. Consequently, a small Group consisting of members drawn from TRAI, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Prasar Bharti, consumer organizations, Broadcasters, MSOs, DTH operators, Cable operator/Distributor associations and technical experts was constituted to deliberate on the issues relating to digitalization and introduction of voluntary CAS. The Group after extensive deliberations submitted its recommendations to the Authority on 12.6.2007.

4. The major recommendations in the Group's report are briefly summarized below:-

- Voluntary CAS would be a non-starter unless the date from which CAS is to be implemented is mandated by the Government.
- 55 cities in the country i.e. all state capitals, and all other cities with a population of one million and above, have been identified for this purpose.
- The dates of roll out of CAS for these identified cities to be notified in advance by the Government of India in one go.
- The 55 identified cities may be covered in phases over a time frame spread over three years from Oct 2008 to Sept 2011.
- Voluntary efforts towards digitalization and introduction of CAS ahead of the mandated date for roll out of CAS to be facilitated by extending the existing CAS regulatory framework.
- Framework to facilitate voluntary efforts for introduction of CAS in cities other than identified cities also provided.

5. The report of the group was placed on TRAI's website www.trai.gov.in on 13.06.2007 inviting comments of the stakeholders. The report (available on TRAI's website www.trai.gov.in) alongwith the comments received from 16 stakeholders has been sent to Ministry of Information & broadcasting for further action.

Authorised to issue: Principal Advisor (B&CS)

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