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TELECOM REGULATORY AUTHORITY OF INDIA

For Immediate release

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TRAI releases consultation paper on Headend-In-the-Sky (HITS) to promote digital transmission

New Delhi, 24th July 2007 - TRAI has today released a consultation paper on Headend-In-The-Sky (HITS). HITS is a satellite based delivery platform for delivering multi channel television signals to cable operators across the country. It is capable of delivering TV signals in digital form with addressability feature. The HITS operator uplinks signals of TV channels of different broadcasters to his HITS satellite in the sky. The cable operators across the country then downlink these TV channels from this HITS satellite for further distribution to the subscribers through their cable network in digital form.

Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India has requested TRAI to formulate and recommend the policy guidelines for HITS operation.

Digitalization and addressability in transmission of broadcasting and cable services through HITS have numerous advantages over analogue transmission. These advantages include increased channel carrying capacity over cable; better reception quality and value added features like programme guide, multi view etc. However, perhaps the most important aspect of HITS operation is that it can provide effective choices of channels to consumers throughout the country through the cable operators at one go by virtue of the fact that HITS satellite would have country-wide footprints.

At present, such features are available only to a limited number of cable subscribers residing in Conditional Access System(CAS) notified area of Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata and Chennai, as well as to subscriber of DTH services. The HITS operation has the potential to spread digitalization and Conditional Access (CA) feature in cable services across the country at an accelerated pace. In a very large but fragmented market with 60,000 cable operators serving 70 million cable homes, this may be one of the efficient means to digitalize the cable operations in India.

The consultation paper on HITS seeks views from various stakeholders on various policy issues such as-

- Scope of HITS operation
- Spectrum band for its operation
- FDI Limit
- Entry fee, annual fee and spectrum fee
- Uplinking restrictions
- Cross holding restrictions

The Authority has invited all stakeholders to respond to the issues raised in this consultation paper by 10th August 2007. The full text of the consultation paper is available on TRAI's website: www.trai.gov.in.

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