

**Information note to the Press (Press Release No. 20/ 2009)**

**For Immediate release**

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**Subject:- TRAI seeks comments on draft amendment regulation for amending the Interconnection Regulations**

**New Delhi: 26<sup>th</sup> February, 2009** - TRAI today released a draft regulation for amending the Interconnection Regulations for seeking comments of the stakeholders. The Authority had issued the Telecommunication (Broadcasting and Cable Services) Interconnection Regulation 2004 (13 of 2004) on 10<sup>th</sup> December, 2004. These regulations were issued to cover arrangements among service providers for interconnection and revenue sharing for all Broadcasting and Cable Services. These regulations have been amended four times till date to address various new issues. Due to recent technological developments in the field of broadcasting and cable TV such as voluntary CAS and entry of more DTH operators and also new emerging IPTV operators and HITS operators, new issues relating to interconnection have arisen. In order to address these issues the Authority began a process of consultation by issuing a consultation paper on December 15, 2008 seeking comments of the stakeholders on various issues related to amendment to the Telecommunication (Broadcasting and Cable Services) Interconnection Regulation, 2004. An Open House Discussion was also held in Kolkata on February 6, 2009.

2. The proposed amendments in the Interconnection Regulations are likely to have far reaching impact on the broadcasting and cable services in the country. Therefore, in line with its consultative approach, the Authority has decided to seek comments of various stakeholders on the proposed amendments in the Interconnection Regulations.

3. The main amendments proposed to be made in the Interconnection Regulations are:

- Applicability of clause 3.2 of the Interconnect Regulation should be restricted so that a distributor of TV channels is barred from seeking signals in terms of clause 3.2 of the Interconnect Regulation from a broadcaster for those channels in respect of which carriage fee is being demanded by the distributor of TV channels from the broadcaster.
- It should be mandatory for all interconnect agreements to be reduced to writing.
- It should be mandatory for the Broadcasters/ MSOs to provide signals to any distributor of TV channels only after duly executing a written interconnection agreement.
- No regulatory protection should be available to distributors of TV channels who have not executed Interconnect Agreements in writing.
- It should be mandatory for all Broadcasters to have Reference Interconnect Offers for all addressable systems.
- The broadcasters should be prohibited from compelling any distributors of TV channels employing an addressable system not to make available their services to commercial subscribers.
- Terms and conditions which should compulsorily form part of a Reference Interconnect Offer for DTH or any addressable system have been prescribed.
- Minimum specifications for Set Top Boxes, Conditional Access System and Subscriber Management System for addressable systems have been specified.

4. The draft amendment regulation is available on TRAI's website [www.trai.gov.in](http://www.trai.gov.in). The stakeholders have been requested to furnish their comments by 7<sup>th</sup> March, 2009.

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