

Response by UTV News Limited on Issues for consultation:

4.1 In the present scenario how to determine the maximum number of satellite TV channels possible?

In the present scenario it would not be advisable / possible to determine the maximum number of satellite TV channels. Of the various reasons the important one being that when other countries are looking at expanding horizons by introducing various technologies and platforms so that viewers can get as much choice as possible, at such time it would not be in the interest of our country limiting launch of new channels. Instead, TRAI should support introduction of technologies which assist in launching more television channels with less requirement of spectrum..the recent one being MPEG 4. ISRO has also been launching various satellites to ensure that Indian channel do not need to depend on foreign satellites due to lack of bandwidth or poor footprint coverage. New channels also help push digitization. In the absence of voluntary / mandatory conditional access launch of new channel provide the best way for all platforms to push for digitization, through which the consumer could receive the option of viewing channels of their choice.

4.2 Is it justifiable to cap the number of channels?

It is not justifiable to cap the number of channels for reasons mentioned above.

4.3 It is desirable to cap the number, what according to you should be the number in each category?

No comments since we do not recommend capping the number of channels

4.4 Whether there is a case for putting a cap on the number of teleports/DSNG and uplink facility in other satellite based distribution networks such as DTH and HITS. If yes, please specify the number alongwith justification.

We do not see any need to cap the number of teleports / DSNG and uplink facility in other satellite based distribution networks such as DTH and HITS. In fact we should encourage more companies to provide these facilities so that broadcasters have more options on service providers. Further, uplink facilities and teleports should also be encouraged where channels do not have their own facilities. C-band frequencies should be made available to ensure that all channels would have adequate frequencies, this would offer consumers more latitude in terms of choice of content.

4.5 Should it be mandated for the broadcasters to switch from MPEG 2 to MPEG 4 encoding w.e.f. a particular date? If so, then what should be that date and if, not then why?

Broadcasters should definitely be encouraged to switch from MPEG 2 to MPEG 4, but making it mandatory is not what we recommend. However, it should be mandatory for all new channels to be on MPEG 4. Also it should be understood from various broadcasters the feasibility of switching from MPEG 2 to MPEG 4. If at all it is to be made mandatory to switch to MPEG 4 then Broadcasters should be given 5 years to ensure that they convert to MPEG 4 as it involves huge costs in equipments and decoders. Plus all receivers on the ground will have to be replaced which is time consuming.

4.6 Should networth requirement of applicant company for permission of TV channels under uplinking and downlinking guidelines be enhanced? If yes, how much it should be? Please elaborate with appropriate reasoning.

No. The present requirement is adequate. Further, as long as Applicant Company has a viable business plan and has skills to launch services, networth should not be an issue

4.7 Should experience of the applicant company be introduced in eligibility criteria? If yes, what do you suggest?

Yes. But it should definitely not be mandatory since it will hamper new upcoming companies from entering the space. However, if the promoter of an applicant company / applicant company itself has more than a decade's experience in the field of media / entertainment, then such applicant company should definitely given preference over early clearance of its application.

4.8 Should experience and expertise of the promoters of Applicant Company be introduced in eligibility criteria? If yes, what do you suggest?

As mentioned in response to 4.7 above.

4.9 Should the permission fee be enhanced to ensure participation of serious players?

No. The present permission fees are adequate.

4.10 Should one time permission fee be converted into annual permission fee? If yes, what should be the quantum?

No. The present policy is fine.

4.11 Should a commitment from the applicant company to stay in business for certain period be prescribed?

It is not right to take any commitment from the applicant company to stay in business for any period of time. It should be left to the discretion of the applicant company whether it is able to sustain the competition or not. Also equity interest may change over time.

4.12 If yes, what should be that period? Please elaborate with appropriate reasoning.

No comments, since the reply to the above issue is No.

4.13 Whether permission of a channel should be revoked in case the channel is closed down for certain fixed period. If so, what should be the period? Should this period be same or different if the non operation is continuous or intermittent?

The channel operator should be given a personal hearing to explain the reason for closing down the channel for certain fixed period. If the reasons are valid then the channel should be suspended for such fixed period of time and the operator should be able to revive it thereafter. However, if the broadcaster is not in a position to continue its operations and is desirous of surrendering its license, then the license may be revoked. Also it is imperative to understand the difference between a channel being inoperative and a channel being closed down. A channel can be termed as “closed down” when it has already been in operation and has not be able to continue broadcasting, whereas “inoperative” would be, that the license for permission to uplink / downlink the channel has already been granted but the broadcaster has yet not commenced broadcasting the channel.

4.14 What should be the policy for renewal of permission of channels under uplinking / downlinking guidelines? Please elaborate with appropriate reasoning.

There should be no laid down policy for renewal of permission of the channels and should be automatic by payment of fees to MIB for the renewed term. It would not be in the interest of the viewers as well as channel which is already in operation to apply for permission to be able to continue being operational. Also, it would add to unnecessary paper work and exercise for various government departments / authorities.

4.15 Whether transfer of permission to a TV channel under uplinking / downlinking guidelines should be permitted. If so, under what terms and conditions.

Yes definitely, as long as the prospective transferee adheres to all norms prescribed since it will encourage business,

4.16 Whether India should be developed as a Teleport / hub centre for channels uplinking, which are not meant for viewing in India. in such case, should the channels be covered under uplinking / downlinking guidelines?

Yes. India should be developed as a Teleport / hub centre for channels uplinking, which are not meant for viewing in India. However, such channels need to be kept away from

uplinking / downlinking guidelines if channel is not applicable to India, as most countries follow that policy.

4.17 If India is to be developed as a Teleport / hub centre for channels uplinking, then what facilities should be provided to the companies to make India a Teleport / hub centre for uplinking of channels? Whether this will in any way adversely affect the transponder availability for uplinking of TV channels to be viewed in India?

All facilities related to broadcast should be provided. This move should increase confidence for players to offer satellite space overall

4.18 Any other related issue, you would like to comments upon or suggest.