

Comments by

Ortel Communications Ltd.

5.2 Tariff fixation for DTH services

5.2.1 Whether there is a need to fix tariff for DTH?

YES there must be Fix tariff for DTH.

5.2.2 If yes, whether tariff regulation should be at wholesale level or at retail level or both, i.e., whether tariff should be regulated between broadcasters and DTH operators or between DTH operators and subscribers or at both the levels?

It should be both at wholesale and retail levels.

5.2.3 Whether tariff regulation for DTH at wholesale level should be in terms of laying down some relationship between the prices of channels/ bouquets for non-addressable platforms and the prices of such channels/ bouquets for DTH platform? If yes, then what should be the relationship between the prices of channels/ bouquets for non-addressable platforms and the prices of such channels/ bouquets for DTH platform? The basis for prescribing the relationship may also be explained.

The bouquets given for NON CAS area must be same for MSOs/LCOs and DTH operators subject to present tariff regulation. The different rates of Bouquets given to these two entities for the same business in same area may lead to complicity.

5.2.4 Whether tariff regulation for DTH at wholesale level should be in terms of fixation of prices for different bouquets/ channels? If yes, then the prices for different bouquets/ channels may be suggested. The methodology adopted for arriving at the prices for such bouquets/ channels may also be elucidated. Further, the methodology to fix price for a new pay channel may also be given.

The price for different bouquets/channel for NON CAS may be applicable for DTH operators subject to present tariff regulation.

5.2.5 Whether retail regulation of DTH tariff should be in terms of maximum retail prices of various channels or is there any other way of regulating DTH tariff at retail level?

It should be in terms of Maximum retail prices.

5.2.6 In case DTH tariff is to be regulated at both wholesale and retail levels, then what should be the relationship between the wholesale and retail tariff?

It should be in similar line as applicable to CAS area.

5.3 Comparison with CAS

5.3.1 Whether the basic features of tariff order dated 31st August, 2006 for cable services in CAS areas, namely fixing of ceiling for maximum retail prices of pay channels, at the level of the subscriber fixing of ceiling for basic service tier and standard tariff packages for renting of Set Top Boxes should be made applicable to DTH services also?

Since there is no definition of basic tier and revenue sharing arrangement, a separate tariff order may be formulated. For STB the guideline for CAS area may be adopted.

5.3.2 Whether the ceiling for maximum retail prices of pay channels for DTH should be the same as laid down for cable services in CAS areas?

No

5.3.3 Whether DTH operators should be mandated to provide a basic service tier of FTA channels and if so, what mechanism should be adopted by DTH operators to provide the service of unencrypted Basic Service Tier, which is available in CAS areas without having to invest in a Set Top Box?

No.

5.3.4 Whether the DTH operators should be required to make available the pay channels on a-la-carte basis to the subscribers as the cable operators are required to do in the CAS areas?

Yes.

5.3.5 Whether standard tariff packages for renting of Set Top Boxes should also be prescribed for DTH operators?

Yes.

5.4 Other Relevant Issues

5.4.1 Whether the carriage fee charged by the DTH operators from the Broadcasters should also be regulated? If yes, then what should be the methodology of regulation?

At present, it may be left for mutual negotiation.

5.4.2 Whether any ceiling on carriage fee needs to be prescribed? If yes, then whether the ceiling should be linked with the subscriber base of the DTH operator or should it be same for all DTH operators?

No it may be fixed later on.

5.4.3 Comments may also be offered on the prayers made in the writ petition of M/s Tata Sky Ltd.

The prayer in the writ petition in respect of provisions of service should be entertained within the prevailing guidelines of DTH.

6.1: Provisioning of new services on DTH platform

6.1.5 In view of the above situation, the following issues are posed for comments of the various stakeholders:

- a) Whether Movie-On-demand, Video-on-Demand, Pay-per-view or other Value added services such as Active Stories should be recognized as a broadcast TV channel?**

These are value added service subject to uplinking and downlinking guideline and in compliance to programme code.

- b) In case these are termed as broadcast TV channels, then how could the apparent violation of DTH license provision (Article 6.7, Article 10 and Article 1.4), Uplinking and Downlinking guidelines be dealt with so that availability of new content to consumer does not suffer for want of supporting regulatory provisions?**

No comment.

- c) What should be the regulatory approach in order to introduce these services or channels while keeping the subscriber interest and suggested alterations in DTH service operations and business model?**

Broadly uplinking, downlinking guideline and programme/content may be insisted.

- d) In case these are not termed as broadcast TV channels, then how could such a channel be prevented from assuming the role of a traditional TV channel? How could bypassing of regulatory provisions- Uplinking/ Downlinking, Programme Code, and Advertisement Code be prevented?**

No Comment.

- (e) Whether it should be made mandatory for each case of a new Value added service to seek permission before distribution of such value added service to subscribers? Or whether automatic permission be granted for new services on the basis that the services may be asked to be discontinued if so becomes necessary in the subscribers' interest or in general public interest or upon other considerations such as security of state, public order, etc.?**

No comment.

f) In view of above, what amendments shall be required in the present DTH license conditions and Uplink/ Downlink guidelines?

DTH license may be reviewed according to the suggestions made above.

g) How could the selling of advertisement space on DTH channels or Electronic Program Guide (EPG) or with Value added Service by DTH operators be regulated so that cross-holding restrictions are not violated. In this view, a DTH operator may become a broadcaster technically once the DTH operator independently transmits advertisement content which is not provided by any broadcaster. How could the broadcaster level responsibility for adherence to Program code and Advertisement Code be shifted to a DTH operator, in case the operator executes the sale and carriage of advertisements?

No comment.

h) Traditionally advertisements as well as program content fall in the domain of the Broadcasters. In case, DTH operator shares the right to create, sale and carry the advertisement on his platform, then the channels are necessarily distinguished on the basis of who has provided the advertisement with the same program feed. In what way any potential demand to supply clean feed without advertisement by a DTH operator be attended to (by a broadcaster)? Should 'must provide' provision of the Interconnect Regulation be reviewed, in case supply of clean feed is considered necessary?

No Comment.

6.2: Radio channels on DTH services

6.2.4 In view of the above, the following issues may be posed for consultation

a. Whether carriage of radio channels by a DTH operator be permitted? Should such permission cover all kind of radio channels to be carried?

Providing radio Channels thru any addressable platform (not only DTH) is a good concept but interconnection between the radio operator and distribution system owner is to be looked into.

b. In case this is permitted, whether DTH license, Uplink/ Downlink guidelines, Conflict of business interests conditions with existing radio system operators, should be amended keeping in view, the incumbent or new DTH operators?

No Comment

- c. **If so, what changes are needed in the existing regulatory provisions so that the general policy of must provide and a non-discriminatory offering of channels be extended to between radio channels and DTH operators?**

No comment.