

**Consultation Paper No.: 4/2014**



**TELECOM REGULATORY AUTHORITY OF INDIA**



**Consultation Paper**

**on**

**Issues related to Community Radio Stations**

**21st May, 2014**

**Mahanagar Doorsanchar Bhawan**

**Jawahar Lal Nehru Marg**

**New Delhi-110002**

Website: [www.trai.gov.in](http://www.trai.gov.in)

**Written comments on the consultation paper are invited from the stakeholders by 11th June, 2014. Counter comments, if any, may be submitted by 18th June, 2014. The comments and counter comments may be sent, preferably in electronic form to Mr. Agneshwar Sen, Advisor (B & CS), Telecom Regulatory Authority of India, on the e-mail: [asen@traigov.in](mailto:asen@traigov.in) or [traicable@yahoo.co.in](mailto:traicable@yahoo.co.in). For any clarification/information, Mr. Agneshwar Sen, Advisor (B & CS) may be contacted at Tel. No.: +91-11-23234367, Fax: +91-11-23220442. Comments and counter comments will be posted on TRAI's website [www.traigov.in](http://www.traigov.in).**

## **Contents**

Introduction	1
Chapter I: Issues related to Community Radio Stations	4
Chapter II: Summary of Issues for Consultation	16
List of Acronyms	17
Annex-I: Reference from MIB	18
Annex-II: Interim Recommendation of TRAI dated 23rd January 2014	20
Annex III: Email dated 26th February 2014 sent to CRS permission holders	22

## **Introduction**

1. In India radio is a popular and affordable medium of mass communication. Wide coverage; variety of programs; mobility; and low cost are the reasons for its popularity. Along with the public broadcaster - private commercial radio stations (FM Radio) and Community Radio Stations (CRS) are present in India, each serving as a platform for a variety of program in this sphere. CRS serve a local and well defined community, helping focus on the day to day concerns of its audience and satisfy their specific information and entertainment needs. The world over, community radio is seen as an important instrument for empowerment and social development, that is why community radio is also referred to as the radio of the people, for the people and by the people.
  
2. The Government announced its policy for the grant of permission for setting up of CRS in December 2002. Initially, permissions were aimed at well established educational institutions, including IITs/IIMs, with certain restrictions. The first CRS in the country became operational on 1<sup>st</sup> February, 2004 at Anna University, Chennai. The permission period was fixed at three years, under this policy.
  
3. In December 2006, the CRS policy was revamped and expanded. The Government announced a revised policy for CRS, bringing non-profit community based organizations, apart from educational institutes, under its ambit. This included civil society and voluntary organisations, State Agriculture Universities (SAU), Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) institutions, Krishi Vigyan Kendras, registered societies and autonomous bodies and public trusts registered under Societies Act or any other such act relevant for the purpose. The period of permission was also enhanced from three years to five years. All the operational CRS permission holders under 2002 guidelines were permitted to migrate to new policy regime without any financial burden.

4. Till date, the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting (MIB) has issued 461 Letters of Intent (LoI) for setting up CRS in various part of the country. Out of these 461 LoI holders, 200 have signed Grant of Permission Agreement (GOPA). At present, 170 CRS are operational<sup>1</sup>, of which 101 are run by educational institutes & universities, 63 by NGOs and 6 are Krishi Vigyan Kendras. These CRS provide developmental, agricultural, health, educational, environmental, social welfare, community development and cultural programs for meeting the special interests and needs of the local communities.
5. Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) received a reference dated 08.01.2014 from MIB (**Annex I**), wherein it was informed that validity of GOPA for some of the CRS, issued under the 2006 policy guidelines, had already expired after completion of five years and 55 more CRS would complete five years by June 2014. According to existing policy guidelines for CRS, the period of validity of GOPA is five years and the guidelines contain no provisions for renewal/extension of permissions.
6. MIB requested the Authority to examine the issues arising out of the expiry of the period of GOPA and provide its recommendations, under section 11(i)(a)(ii) of the TRAI Act, 1997 on the following issues:
  - (i) Whether permission of CR stations be renewed after expiry of GOPA. If yes, for what period and what terms and conditions.
  - (ii) In the interim whether CR stations can be allowed to continue their operations. If yes, for what period and under what terms and conditions.
7. The Authority responded to the MIB reference, through letter No. 9-1/2014 B&CS dated 23rd January 2014 (**Annex II**). It was agreed that, in the interim, MIB may consider allowing the CRS permission holders, whose

---

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.mib.nic.in/WriteReadData/documents/OPERATIONAL\\_CR\\_1.pdf](http://www.mib.nic.in/WriteReadData/documents/OPERATIONAL_CR_1.pdf)

GOPAs had expired, to continue their operations on the existing terms and conditions subject to the following:

- a) The bank guarantees furnished by CRS permission holders shall remain valid for the interim period.
- b) CRS permission holders have paid due spectrum usage fee to WPC.
- c) MIB shall take a suitable undertaking from CRS permission holders, whose validity of GOPA had expired, to ensure that once the final policy in this regard is laid down by the Government, these CRS permission holders will comply with that policy for the interim period also. Any financial obligations arising from the change in policy shall also be honoured.

8. CRS also play an important role in serving the local communities by providing relevant information/alerts during emergencies. During natural calamities, such as the recent incidence of flash flooding in Uttarakhand and the Cyclone Phailin that struck the Odisha coast, they assisted in the relief and rescue work.
9. An email was sent to CRS permission holders on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2014 (**Annex III**), seeking preliminary and informal inputs on the issues relevant for growth of CRS in the country based on the experiences of the past decade. Some responses on procedural matters; technical issues; content; aid and assistance; etc. were received.
10. Before finalizing its formal recommendations the Authority has to follow a public consultative process. Accordingly this Consultation Paper has been prepared to seek the comments/views of the stakeholders on the issues related to CRS. Chapter I discuss various issues related to CRS. A summary of issues for consultation is provided in Chapter II.

## **Chapter I**

### **Issues related to Community Radio Stations**

#### **CRS Policy guidelines of 2002**

1.1 In December 2002, the Government announced the policy for the grant of Community Radio permissions to educational institutions/ organizations. The salient features of policy guidelines for CRS were as under:

- Educational institutions/organizations which are recognized by the Central Government or the State Government including the Universities and institutes of technology/management and residential schools were eligible for seeking Community Radio permissions.
- Period of permission of three years from date of operationalisation.
- No permission fee
- Performance Bank Guarantee for a sum of Rs.50,000/-.
- Spectrum usage fee, as determined by the WPC.
- Maximum 50 watt transmitter power was permitted with an antenna height of 30 meters above ground.
- News and Current Affairs, election and political broadcasts not permitted.

#### **CRS Policy guidelines of 2006**

1.2 In order to allow greater participation by the civil society on issues relating to development and social change, the Government on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2006 announced a revised policy for CRS. The salient features of policy guidelines for CRS are as under:

- Educational institutes and community based organizations including civil society and voluntary organisations, State Agriculture Universities (SAU),

Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) institutions, Krishi Vigyan Kendras, registered societies and autonomous bodies and public trusts registered under Societies Act or any other such act relevant for the purpose are eligible for seeking permissions for CRS.

- Individuals, political parties and their affiliate organizations (including students, women's, trade unions and such other wings affiliated to these parties), organisations operating with a motive to earn profit, and organisations expressly banned by the Union and State Governments are not be eligible to run a CRS.
- Period of permission of five years from date of operationalisation.
- CRS to be made operational within three months of signing of GOPA.
- No permission fee
- Performance Bank Guarantee for a sum of Rs. 25,000/- for ensuring timely establishing of CRS (within 3 months of signing GOPA).
- Spectrum usage fee, as determined by the WPC, which is Rs.19,700/- per annum.
- A transmitter having maximum Effective Radiated Power (ERP) of 100 W is permitted.
- Higher transmitter wattage with maximum ERP up to 250 Watts can be considered on a case-to-case basis, in case of a proven need where the applicant organisation is able to establish that it needs to serve a larger area or the terrain so warrants, subject to availability of frequency and such other clearances as necessary from the Ministry of Communication & IT.
- Permitted maximum antenna height is 30 meters above ground and minimum antenna height is 15 meters above ground.

- The programs should be of immediate relevance to the community and at least 50% of content should be generated with the participation of the local community, for which the station has been set up.
- Broadcast of any program, which relates to news and current affairs and is otherwise political in nature, is not permitted.
- Adhere to the provisions of the Program and Advertising Code as prescribed for All India Radio.

1.3 The policy guidelines of 2006 increased the period of permission to five years from three years earlier. Performance bank guarantee was reduced to Rs. 25000/- from Rs. 50000/- and maximum transmitter power enhanced to 100 watt from 50 watt. All the operational CRS were permitted to migrate to the new policy guidelines without any financial burden after signing the migration GOPA.

### **Pre-consultations**

1.4 TRAI had sent an email to CRS permission holders on 26th February 2014 seeking preliminary and informal inputs on the issues relevant for growth of CRS in the country. On 13<sup>th</sup> -15<sup>th</sup> March, 2014, MIB organized the 4<sup>th</sup> 'National Community Radio Sammelan' in New Delhi, wherein all the CRS were invited and various issues important for development and spread of CRS in India were discussed. TRAI participated in the Sammelan.

1.5 The main issues that were raised/ received through the afore-mentioned processes included – increase power/ transmitter height to widen the footprint of the CRS particularly in hilly/ mountainous terrain and near the sea coast; permission to move the transmitters during natural calamities, and allow mobility for on-site reporting; increase in ad-time to improve the financial viability of the CRS; assistance in procuring content and permission to broadcast news and current affairs; faster approval of WPC licences; and permitting digital transmission.

1.6 Of the issues raised by the CRS, some of them, such as mobility; power of transmitters and broadcast of external content, would tend to change the nature and the basic concept of a community based radio service. The issues to the extent they are relevant from the regulatory perspective along with the issue raised in the reference from MIB, are discussed below:

#### **A. Term of Permission**

1.7 The clause 3 of the GOPA for migration from old guidelines to new guidelines (4.12.2006) related to period of permission after migration is as under:

**“ 3. Term of Permission.**

*The Permission shall be valid for a period of five (5) years from the date of operationalization of the CRS, which should not be later than three months from the signing of GOPA, unless terminated earlier as provided hereunder.”*

- In the existing policy framework, there is no explicit provision for extension/renewal of permissions. However, the intent may not be to wind up the CRS after expiry of the permission period. As has been informed by the MIB, validity of GOPA for some of the CRS, issued under 2006 policy guidelines, has already expired after completion of five years. 55 more CRS would complete five years by June 2014. In this regard, in response to the MIB reference dated 8 January 2014, the Authority has written to MIB stating that MIB may consider allowing CRS permission holders, whose GOPAs had expired, to continue their operations on the existing terms and conditions subject to conditions mentioned in paragraph 7 of the previous chapter. A similar situation may arise in future also when the permissions will expire. Therefore, it would be appropriate to incorporate, in the existing CRS guidelines, a provision that indicates the period of extension/renewal and the procedure to be followed in future for the extension/renewal of the CRS permissions on their expiry.

1.8 Since CRS are constituted as a ‘non-profit’ organization and operate for non commercial activities, there will be a need to ensure that the terms and

conditions for renewal of CRS permissions are kept simple and should not cast additional financial burden on them. Also, a sizable investment is required in setting up a CRS and revenue generation streams are limited due to non-commercial nature of operations of CRS. While a short period of permission may create uncertainty in the CRS operators' sustainability and may deter further growth of CRS, too long a period may inhibit innovations and timely course-correction in policy framework so there is a need to strike a balance in determining the period of permission for CRS.

1.9 In UK, CRS licences are issued for an initial period of five years and the licence holders can apply for an extension of their licences for a further period of five years<sup>2</sup>. The process of licence extension commences 18 months prior to the expiry date of the existing licence, and ends six months before the expiry date. OFCOM normally extends licences for a period of five years. However, in exceptional circumstances a licence may be extended for less than five years. In these circumstances the licensee will be given a reasonable opportunity to make representations before the extension is issued. According to the Community Radio (Amendment) Order 2010<sup>3</sup>, OFCOM, on receipt of an application for the extension of a community radio licence, has to extend the licence for such a period (not exceeding five years) as it thinks fit, provided following conditions are satisfied:

- a) the ability of the licence holder to maintain the service for the period of the extension; and
- b) the likelihood of a contravention by the licence holder of a requirement imposed by a condition included in the licence by virtue of section 106 of the 1990 Act<sup>4</sup>.

1.10 In Australia, Community Radio broadcasting licences are issued by Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) for five years<sup>5</sup>. The

---

<sup>2</sup> [https://licensing.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/radio/community/extension\\_app.pdf](https://licensing.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/radio/community/extension_app.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2010/uksi\\_20100118\\_en\\_1](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2010/uksi_20100118_en_1)

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/42/section/106>

ACMA may renew a community broadcasting licence for a further period of five years, if the licensee makes an application for renewal of the licence. Application for renewal has to be made no earlier than one year before the licence is due to expire, but not later than 26 weeks before the licence is due to expire or a time that is notified in writing to the licensee by the ACMA, whichever is earlier.

- 1.11 In South Africa, Community radio licence is a renewable class licence with a maximum period of 10 years<sup>6</sup>.

### **Issues for consideration**

- 1. What should be the period of permission for CRS to be prescribed in the CRS Guidelines? Is the present 5 year period adequate?**
- 2. What should be the period of extension on the expiry of the initial period of permission for CRS?**
- 3. Should there be any additional terms and conditions of extension/renewal of the permission for CRS?**

### **B. Broadcasting of community based ‘News and Current Affairs’**

- 1.12 In response to the email dated 26th February 2014, sent to the CRS permission holders to seek inputs on the issues relevant for growth of CRS in the country, a view has been expressed that they should be permitted to broadcast community based news and current affairs. Existing guidelines do not permit a CRS permit holder to broadcast any program that is related to news and current affairs and is otherwise political in nature. Most of the content of broadcast by a CRS is expected to be self generated, i.e., with active participation from the local community it serves.
- 1.13 The situation regarding broadcast of news and current affairs programs by the FM Radio stations is similar, i.e., FM Radio operators, operating under

---

<sup>5</sup>[http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/C2013C00630/Html/Volume\\_1#\\_Toc369006445](http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/C2013C00630/Html/Volume_1#_Toc369006445)

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.doc.gov.za/a-to-z-of-establishing-a-community-radio.html>

FM Phase-II regime are not permitted to broadcast news and current affairs programs. However, MIB in the guidelines for Phase-III of FM Radio Broadcasting, issued on 25<sup>th</sup> July, 2011, has changed this and included the following provisions regarding broadcasting of news and current affairs program by FM operators:

**“11. News and Current Affairs Programs:**

*11.1 The permission holder will be permitted to carry the news bulletins of All India Radio in exactly same format (unaltered) on such terms and conditions as may be mutually agreed with Prasar Bharati, No other news and current affairs programs will be permitted under the Policy (Phase-III).*

*11.2 The broadcast pertaining to the following categories will be treated as non-news and current affairs broadcast and will therefore be permissible:*

- (a) Information pertaining to sporting events excluding live coverage. However live commentaries of sporting events of local nature may be permissible;*
- (b) Information pertaining to Traffic and Weather;*
- (c) Information pertaining to and coverage of cultural events, festivals;*
- (d) Topics pertaining to examinations, results, admissions, career counseling;*
- (e) Availability of employment opportunities;*
- (f) Public announcements pertaining to civic amenities like electricity, water supply, natural calamities, health alerts etc. as provided by the local administration;*
- (g) Such other categories not permitted at present that may subsequently be specifically permitted by Ministry of Information and Broadcasting from time to time.”*

1.14 On similar lines, CRS could also be permitted to carry the news bulletins of All India Radio (AIR) in unaltered format and community based non-news and current affairs programs for the categories permitted to FM radio stations.

## **Issue for consideration**

- 4. Should CRS permission holders be permitted to carry the news bulletins of All India Radio (AIR) in unaltered format and community based non-news and current affairs programs for the categories permitted to FM radio stations?**

### **C. Duration of Advertisements**

1.15 This was an issue raised by some CRS in context of their financial sustainability and improvement in the quality of their programming. Present CRS policy guidelines permit five minutes of advertisement per hour on CRS. Provisions mentioned in CRS policy guidelines 2006, regarding duration of advertisements, are as under:

#### ***“8. Funding & Sustenance***

- i) .....
- ii) *Transmission of sponsored programmes shall not be permitted except programmes sponsored by Central & State Governments and other organisations to broadcast public interest information. In addition, limited advertising and announcements relating to local events, local businesses and services and employment opportunities shall be allowed. The maximum duration of such limited advertising will be restricted to 5 (Five) minutes per hour of broadcast.*
- iii) *Revenue generated from advertisement and announcements as per Para 8 (ii) shall be utilized only for the operational expenses and capital expenditure of the CRS. After meeting the full financial needs of the CRS, surplus may, with prior written permission of the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, be ploughed into the primary activity of the organization i.e. for education in case of educational institutions and for furthering the primary objectives for which the NGO concerned was established.”*

1.16 The Authority in its “Recommendations on Licensing issues relating to Community Radio Stations” dated 9<sup>th</sup> December 2004, had recommended the maximum duration of advertisements of 5 minutes per hour of broadcast that can be carried by CRS and also recommended that **no** sponsored programs should be allowed. In making this recommendation the main consideration was the possible impact of permitting advertisements to CRS

on private FM radio stations and the need that the impact should be minimal. The Authority had then noted that private FM radio stations had to pay license fees for their broadcasting operations and, therefore, was of the view that it would be reasonable to ensure that the duration of advertisements that could be carried by CRS should be much less than what could be carried by private FM radio stations.

1.17 CRS are non-commercial venture and operate on non-profit basis. They are expected to have an organic relationship with the community they serve. Programs are basically required to be designed and created through the community participation and interaction. While revenue generating mechanisms are critical if the operations are to be sustained in the long run, at the same time this medium should not be envisaged to be a commercial venture based largely on advertising support. Further, as of 21<sup>st</sup> May 2012<sup>7</sup> CRS are permitted to broadcast Government sponsored programs obtained through Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity (DAVP). In addition Government has introduced a new scheme namely “Supporting Community Radio Movement in India” for providing financial assistance to CRS under the component “Community Radio Support Scheme (CRSS)”. Thus, alternative revenue options are available to the CRS.

1.18 Thus, while the need for adequate revenue generation by CRS is not disputed, it must be noted that the revenue options for CRS have expanded since the Authority’s 2004 recommendations. Further, the FM radio sector is on the cusp of a massive expansion with the auction for FM Phase-III channels likely to take place shortly in 294 towns and cities.

### **Issue for consideration**

**5. In view of the availability of alternative revenue/ funding options, is there any reason to increase the duration of advertisement beyond the**

---

<sup>7</sup> Guidelines for Empanelment of Community Radio Stations; MIB OM No. 104/102/2009-CRS dtd 21.05.2012

**5 minutes per hour limitation? If yes, please explain with full justification.**

**D. Operation of CRS during emergency situations**

- 1.19 The role played by the CRS during the recent emergencies caused by the natural disasters in some parts of India has highlighted the need for some special dispensation for them in regard to the rules on their location and transmission power. In the two specific instances, of the super Cyclone Phailin on the Odisha coast and the flash floods in Uttarakhand hills, the need for the CRS to be mobile and also to have a higher transmission power was felt. During the cyclone, the need for a longer range of transmission was to cover fishermen out into the sea and mobility was to temporarily relocate the CRS away from the path of the approaching cyclone to keep it operating. While in the Uttarakhand natural disaster given the mountainous terrain as also the washing away of buildings by mudslides/landslides, the need to relocate and be mobile and broadcast from the affected areas was felt.
- 1.20 At present, the location of CRS transmitters is fixed due to the basic nature of the CRS, i.e., they are to serve a well defined community within a specific area. Consequently, while applying for SACFA clearance to WPC, a CRS applicant has to provide information about its geographical location viz. longitude, latitude of the site of CRS and its distance from the nearest airport. This is required also to avoid the interference with other radio broadcasts in that geographical area.
- 1.21 In US, all broadcast stations, including low power FM stations, can erect an emergency antenna for temporary use in case the authorized main and auxiliary antennas are damaged and cannot be used<sup>8</sup>. Prior approval of Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is not required for erecting the emergency antenna and commencing the operations using the emergency

---

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2012-title47-vol4/pdf/CFR-2012-title47-vol4-sec73-1680.pdf>

antenna. However, an informal request has to be made to FCC within 24 hours of commencing the operations using the emergency antenna.

- 1.22 In India the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) is responsible for laying down the policies, plans and guidelines for disaster management to ensure timely and effective response to natural calamities/ disasters. One of the responsibilities of NDMA is to lay down guidelines to be followed by the different Ministries or Departments of the Government of India for the purpose of integrating the measures for prevention of disaster or the mitigation of its effects in their development plans and projects.
- 1.23 The Authority agrees that to mitigate a natural calamity/ disaster all available resources should be fully utilized. Therefore, the NDMA may, in consultation with the MIB and WPC, establish detailed guidelines for use of CRS in the disaster management operations. The guidelines shall also include procedure to be followed in case the relocation of a CRS is required. Issues like period of such relocation; the area of relocation; the frequencies to be used; and other conditions, if any may be prescribed in the said guidelines.

### **Issue for consideration**

**6. Do you agree with the above proposal for utilisation of CRS during natural calamities/ emergency situations?**

### **E. Growth and spread of CRS in India**

- 1.24 The role of CRS in community development internationally is well recognized and documented. While in developed countries CRS assists small minority groups by giving them a voice and thereby retain their cultural moorings, in developing countries they have a much wider role. Apart from empowering marginalized groups and communities, they have an important role in the developmental work by broadcasting programs on a wide range of local issues, such as agricultural issues; education; women's empowerment; health; sanitation; local culture; etc. in the local language /dialect. Thereby

also filling in a big void in the programming content of the commercial radio stations.

1.25 In India, recognising the importance of this development tool, the community radio movement was established in 2002. Initially, CRS permissions were granted only to well-established educational institutions. This changed with the CRS Policy Guidelines announced by the Government in 2006, wherein non-profit civil society and voluntary organisations were also brought into the ambit of the policy to enable use of CRS for development and social change.

<b>CRS – Facts and Figures</b> (as on 01.05.2014)		
A	No. of applications received	1348
B	Letters of Intent issued	461
C	GOPA signed	200
D	Operational CRS	170
E	Number of applications rejected	667
F	Applications under process	220

*Source: MIB website*

1.26 However, the growth of operational CRS in India is far from satisfactory. Available data shows that only 12.6% of the total applications received have actually culminated in operational CRS. Even amongst the 170 operational CRS, 101 are run by educational institutes & universities, 6 by Krishi Vigyan Kendras and the rest 63 by civil society organisations. Doubtlessly a lot could be done to promote CRS and enable it to achieve its potential, including in the remote and rural areas of India.

**Issues for consideration**

**7. What, in your opinion, are the measures required to ensure a faster growth in the number and spread of CRS in rural India?**

**F. Other issues**

**8. Stakeholders may also provide their comments on any other issue relevant to the present consultation.**

## **Chapter II**

### **Summary of Issues for Consultation**

- Q 1. What should be the period of permission for CRS to be prescribed in the CRS Guidelines? Is the present 5 year period adequate?**
- Q 2. What should be the period of extension on the expiry of the initial period of permission for CRS?**
- Q 3. Should there be any additional terms and conditions of extension/renewal of the permission for CRS?**
- Q 4. Should CRS permission holders be permitted to carry the news bulletins of All India Radio (AIR) in unaltered format and community based non-news and current affairs programs for the categories permitted to FM radio stations?**
- Q 5. In view of the availability of alternative revenue/ funding options, is there any reason to increase the duration of advertisement beyond the 5 minutes per hour limitation? If yes, please explain with full justification.**
- Q 6. Do you agree with the above proposal for utilisation of CRS during natural calamities/ emergency situations?**
- Q 7. What, in your opinion, are the measures required to ensure a faster growth in the number and spread of CRS in rural India?**
- Q 8. Stakeholders may also provide their comments on any other issue relevant to the present consultation.**

## List of Acronyms

<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Description</b>
AIR	All India Radio
CRS	Community Radio Station
DAVP	Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity
ERP	Effective Radiated Power
FCC	Federal Communications Commission
FM	Frequency Modulation
GOPA	Grant of Permission Agreement
ICAR	Indian Council for Agricultural Research
IIM	Indian Institute of Management
IIT	Indian Institute of Technology
LoI	Letter of Intent
MIB	Ministry of Information and Broadcasting
NDMA	National Disaster Management Authority
SACFA	Standing Advisory Committee for Frequency Allocation
SAU	State Agriculture University
TRAI	Telecom Regulatory Authority of India
WPC	Wireless Planning and Coordination

Reference from MIB

बिमल जुल्का  
सचिव  
BIMAL JULKA  
SECRETARY  
Tel. : 011-23382639  
Fax : 011-23383513



भारत सरकार  
सूचना एवं प्रसारण मंत्रालय  
शास्त्री भवन, नई दिल्ली-110001  
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF INFORMATION & BROADCASTING  
SHASTRI BHAWAN, NEW DELHI - 110001

D.O. No.104/103/2013-CRS

8<sup>th</sup> January, 2014

*Dear Mr. Khullar,*

As you are aware, the "Guidelines for setting up Community/Radio Stations in India" were issued on 02.12.2006. The Ministry has so far issued 438 Letters of Intent (LOI) for setting up Community Radio Stations (CRS) in various parts of the country. Till date 194 LOI holders have signed Grant of Permission Agreement (GOPA) with the Ministry, in accordance with Clause 3(vii) of the Policy Guidelines for Setting up Community Radio Stations in India, 2006.

2. Clause 4 of the Policy Guidelines deals with Grant of Permission Agreement conditions. Clause 4(i) mentions that "The Grant of Permission Agreement period shall be for five years". Since permissions were issued to some CR stations under 2006 Policy Guidelines for five years, their GOPA validity has expired. It is mentioned that 55 CR Stations would complete 5 years term by June 2014. The Policy Guidelines are silent on the course of action to be adopted after the expiry of five years of GOPA.

3. The issue has been extensively discussed in the Ministry for quite some time now. An informal discussion was also held with senior officials of TRAI on 4<sup>th</sup> October, 2013. Permissions to operate CR stations are given to educational institutions and Not-for-Profit organizations. The Policy Guidelines had not envisaged any levy of fees or sharing of any income from the Community Radio Stations. Therefore, Government does not earn any income from CR stations. A decision, however, needs to be taken about the renewal of GOPA of CR stations.

4. TRAI, vide its letter No.24-01/2013-B&CS, dated 11<sup>th</sup> September 2013, with regard to extension of DTH license period, had suggested that during the interim period, the DTH licensees may be allowed to continue their operations/services on the existing terms and conditions subject to renewal of existing bank guarantee and submission of an undertaking by the licensee. On the similar lines, can the Ministry allow CR stations to continue their operations? If so, then what should be the period of interim extension and on what terms and conditions?

5. The Authority is requested to examine these issues arising out of the expiry of the period of GOPA and provide its recommendations to the ministry as per Section 11(1)(a)(ii) of the TRAI Act, 1997 on the following issues:

- i) Whether permission of CR stations be renewed after expiry of GOPA. If yes, for what period and what terms and conditions.
- ii) In the interim whether CR stations can be allowed to continue their operations. If yes, for what period and under what terms & conditions.

*Warm regards*

Yours sincerely,

  
(Bimal Julka)

**Shri Rahul Khullar**  
Chairman  
Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI)  
Mahanagar Doorsanchar Bhawan  
Jawaharlal Nehru Marg (Old Minto Road)  
New Delhi-110 002

**Interim Recommendation of TRAI dated 23rd January 2014**



सुधीर गुप्ता  
**SUDHIR GUPTA**  
सचिव/Secretary

No.: 9-1/2014-B&CS

Dated: 23rd January, 2014

भारतीय दूरसंचार विनियामक प्राधिकरण  
महानगर दूरसंचार भवन, जवाहर लाल नेहरू मार्ग,  
(पुराना मिनटो रोड) नई दिल्ली-110002  
**TELECOM REGULATORY AUTHORITY OF INDIA**  
Mahanagar Doorsanchar Bhawan, Jawahar Lal Nehru Marg,  
(Old Minto Road), New Delhi-110002  
Tel. : 91-11-23237448, Fax: 91-11-23222816  
E-mail : secretary@traigov.in

Dear *Sh. Julka,*

Please refer to your D.O. letter No.104/103/2013-CRS dated 8<sup>th</sup> January, 2014, wherein TRAI has been requested to give its recommendations regarding the extension of permission of Community Radio Stations (CRS), whose Grant of Permission Agreements (GOPAs) have expired.

2. As you are aware, as per the TRAI Act, the Authority has to follow a public consultative process before giving its recommendations. Considering the importance of CRS in serving the local communities by providing relevant educational, developmental, social and cultural content, the Authority is of the view that, during the interim period, MIB may consider allowing the CRS permission holders, whose GOPAs have expired, to continue their operations on the existing terms and conditions subject to the following:

- a) The bank guarantees furnished by the CRS permission holders shall remain valid for the interim period.
- b) The CRS permission holders have paid due spectrum usage fee to WPC.
- c) The MIB shall take a suitable undertaking from CRS permission holders, whose validity of GOPA had expired, to ensure that once the final policy in this regard is laid down by the Government, these CRS permission holders will comply with that policy for the interim period

also. Any financial obligations arising from the change in policy shall also be honoured.

3. As per the practice, a copy of this letter is being placed on the website of TRAI [www.trai.gov.in](http://www.trai.gov.in).

*with regards,*

Yours sincerely,

  
(Sudhir Gupta)

Shri Bimal Julka,  
Secretary,  
Ministry of Information and Broadcasting,  
Shastri Bhawan,  
New Delhi - 110001

**Email dated 26th February 2014 sent to CRS permission holders**

Subject: **Issues related to Community Radio Stations**

Date: 02/26/14 05:50 PM

To: ravenshawradio@gmail.com, radiosanskar@gmail.com,  
radionamaskar@gmail.com, sova@sovakoraput.org,  
nila\_crs@sify.com, coordinator@achariya.in,  
puduvaivaani@gmail.com, maharaj-ji@nirmakuteya.com,  
gngoffice@rediffmail.com, tilonia.radio@gmail.com,  
letalwar@letalwar.com, fmradio7@icfia.org,  
info@radiomadhuban.in, radiobanasthali@gmail.com,  
eminentcampus@gmail.com, arulram@yahoo.com,  
loyolafm107.4@gmail.com, mopvcfw@eth.net,  
dme@tnau.ac.in, psgfm@psgtech.ac.in,  
pasumaifm@hotmail.com, kongucrs@kongu.ac.in,  
jsudhannandhen@yahoo.com, aecskal2@yahoo.co.in,  
srmcr90.4@gmail.com, manager@mkce.ac.in,  
kf@keystone-foundation.org, vayalagavanoli@gmail.com,  
rip@dinamalar.in, pardmadurai@hotmail.com,  
kalanjamvanoli@gmail.com

From: V K Agarwal <vk.agarwal@traf.gov.in>

Cc: Agneshwar Sen <asen@nic.in>

Ministry of Information & Broadcasting has requested TRAI to examine and give its recommendations regarding the extension of permission to Community Radio Stations (CRS).

International experience has shown that the CRSs play a very important role in serving local communities by providing programmes on agricultural, health, education, social and cultural issues; disaster management; flood information and relief; etc.

Given your experience in operating a CRS, your suggestions on how to make the CRSs more effective in India to meet the above objectives holistically, will be very useful. It is requested that your suggestions in response to this email is sent latest by **12<sup>th</sup> March, 2014**.

--  
V K Agarwal  
Jt. Advisor (Broadcasting & Cable Services)  
Telecom Regulatory Authority of India  
New Delhi -110002  
Tel: +91-11-23238381  
Fax: +91-11-23211998