

To,
Mr. Sanjeet Singh
Advisor (B & CS),
Telecom Regulatory Authority of India,
New Delhi.

14th October, 2015.

<u>Subj: Comments on the draft Telecommunication (Broadcasting and Cable)</u>
<u>Services (Fourth) (Addressable Systems) Tariff (Amendment) Order 2015, issued on 30th September 2015</u>

Dear Sir,

This has reference to the above captioned draft Tariff Order released by the Hon. Authority on 30th September, 2015.

That the Tariff (Amendment) Order dated 20th September 2013, was impugned by one of the DTH operator before TDSAT and this Authority has rightly upon consideration of the contentions, problems and objections to previous twin conditions laid under the previous Tariff Order/s and accordingly the Authority on its own acquiesced to keep the said Tariff Order in abeyance.

Though it is stated the intention of the Authority is to ensure availability of an effective choice to the consumers allowing them to subscribe to their desired channels on an a-la-carte basis at reasonable price, without taking away any flexibility on the part of the platform operators, to price the channels individually and as a bouquet in a manner to suit their business plans, yet we are at pain to again point out and bring in notice of Hon'ble Authority that even in proposed draft Tariff Order the earlier concerns raised by us remain unaddressed as explained hereinafter:

Snapshot of the Concerns:

1. Need to first Regulate Wholesale Tariff (RIO Rates of both SD & HD Channels):

Before regulating the a-la-carte price offered to customer, which are derived from the RIO rate of the SD Channels and HD Channels offered by the Broadcaster, the Authority should first regulate the RIO rates for both format of Channels. It should be appreciated that to offer a channel



a-la-carte to subscriber by DTH operator, if DTH operator gets the channel at reasonable RIO rate from the broadcaster then there is no need to introduce the twin conditions. In any case, the customer would get channel, a-la-carte at very reasonable price. The Authority is aware that the broadcasters now a days almost stopped offering channels in bouquet at wholesale level and on other hand the RIO price of a channel is exponentially high. It is therefore the need of the hour to first regulate the RIO rates of both SD and HD Channels and arrive at correct wholesale pricing before regulating the a-la-carte pricing of the platform operators through twin conditions.

Additionally, we would like to present the fact that the actual deals between broadcasters and distribution platforms take place at about 10-20% of the published RIO rates. The published RIO rates are often used as means to arm-twist the distribution platforms from going RIO and to dissuade the end consumer from being able to make a-la-carte choices as per his/her preferences.

Thus, it is necessary that the RIO rates of the broadcasters for both SD and HD Channels should be first streamlined and then turn to regulating the rates offered by platform operators. Unless such exercise is first carried out and TRAI comes up with fresh tariff order on fixation of wholesale rates of broadcaster, it would be a prejudicial exercise to regulate and fix the retail tariff of the platform operators. That the offering of channels and bouquets by distribution platforms to their subscribers is highly subsidized and in the interests of the subscribers, implementing the proposed twin condition under the captioned Tariff Order would compel the distribution platforms to increase the existing ala-carte and bouquet prices which would then be unaffordable to consumers at large. As such we request to the Authority that, the retail tariff rates should be left to market forces and should continue to be under forbearance as before.

2. Need to first regulate HD Wholesale Pricing to achieve object of the proposed Tariff Order

Presently the rates of HD Channels offered by Broadcaster to distribution platform are unregulated, the HD Channel RIO price ranges from Rs. 16/to Rs. 141/-. If any bouquet comprising HD channels and / or SD channel is offered to the subscriber, then due to non-regulation of HD wholesale



tariff, the implementation of twin condition in such bouquet will invariably lead to huge loss to the operator. It would be unjust to force DTH operator to price HD channel at disproportionately lesser price than the wholesale price.

Thus, in the present scenario, HD channel pricing is entirely unregulated. Broadcasters are free to ascribe any RIO rate to HD channels and change the same at any time as per their whims and fancies. The HD RIO rates of the channels are specified in **Annexure A**.

It is important to note that the Authority though has preferred to forbear from regulating wholesale tariff of HD channels, yet it has not differentiated between HD pay channel and SD pay channels in the proposed Tariff Order, which is unjust, more so because the content on both the channels are same. The comparison between SD Channel RIO rates and HD Channels RIO rates is specified in **Annexure B**.

Beside this, the chart enclosed as **Annexure C** and explained hereinafter would show that the operator ends up pricing the a-la-carte rate of HD channels lesser than RIO rate offered by the broadcaster for the same HD channel. The implementation of the formula is yet complicated and is difficult to implement at the ground level. It will force the operators to offer channels below the RIO rates. A-la-carte is stipulated by the DTH operator and it cannot be below its cost.

3. Twin Conditions force platform operators to price SD Channels below RIO rates:

The formula for deriving ala-carte value is based on wrong assumptions. The assumed maximum discount of 66.66% is without any basis/ analysis, particularly it is known fact that at the wholesale level the discount passed in fixed fee deals with package compulsion is around 85% to 95% to the RIO rates which are nothing but wholesale a-la-carte offering. The formula for deriving ala-carte value is based on wrong assumptions.

4. Flaw in twin condition:

Condition (a):

As per condition (a) of the proposed Twin Condition, offering of Channels at retail level at twice the RIO rate would not be of any help in absence of true and correct fixation of RIO price published by broadcasters for



both SD and HD Channels. If RIO rate is correctly priced by broadcaster, then there would be no necessity for such tariff order as retail a-la-carte rate would become affordable to the consumer vi-a-vis the bouquet rate.

Condition (b):

Similarly, as per condition (b) of the Twin Conditions, offering of bouquet of Channels three times the total a-la-carte price of the channels offer in such bouquet, would have the following impact:

(i) The Bouquet price would increase substantially, since it is linked to the sum of a-la-carte price of all the channels in that bouquet.

As illustrated in annexed Annexure D

(ii) Platform Operators would be forced to reduce the number of channels in the bouquet, in order to align the bouquet price with the proposed twin conditions.

As illustrated in annexed Annexure E

Twin Conditions makes offering of HD channels as part of bouquet, infeasible and impractical.

This is illustrated in the attached Annexure F

Additionally, if any channel is added to the platform, then the platform operator is forced to re-caliber the bouquet rates.

This is illustrated in the attached Annexure G

5. Loss of Flexibility to change the composition of packs:

The tariff order will take away all the flexibility of DTH operator with respect to the packaging of the channels. The addressable platforms would be forced to package the channels in such a manner where the package has less number of pay channels, less number of FTA channels with increase in the price of the package. The channels are added in particular existing bouquet as per genre of the channel. As such if DTH operator wants to add any new launched channel in particular existing bouquet then same will force it to re-shuffle the a-la-carte price of all



channels comprising in bouquet and may lead in depriving its flexibility as per business need, thus defeating the very intention of the Authority.

Thus, the Authority's objective to provide DTH operators flexibility with regard to pricing and packaging their offerings at the retail level, will not be achieved if the proposed twin condition is implemented

6. Possible breach of existing / future agreements with Broadcasters:

DTH operators get the channels from the broadcasters on 3 different terms – (i) RIO basis (ii)CPS basis and (iii)Fixed fee basis. If DTH operators offer the channels on a-la-carte basis, the DTH operators would not get the channels on Fixed fee/CPS basis from the broadcaster. If some of the DTH operators have fixed fees agreements then it has mandate to offer maximum numbers of channels in entry package, which packages cannot be altered under the agreement. In case of implementation of proposed Twin Condition, the DTH operator necessarily will have to make small bouquets with less channels and cannot be in compliance of promised packaging obligation to the broadcasters. As such a DTH operator may come in breach of the existing/future agreements.

7. Non-viable business proposition:

The Authority is aware that despite implementation of DAS in some part of the country, the competitors such as LCOs in most of the cities do not offer any package, bouquets but offer all the channels on the platform in bulk bouquet to the subscribers without any choice. If due to implementation of twin conditions, DTH operator forced to create bouquet with lesser number of channels then it would cause to great prejudice to DTH operators.

Authority's presumption that the price of bouquet should be derived from a-la-carte price of channels is grossly misconceived, illogical and irrational in nature.

The Authority needs to appreciate the fact that there exist a vast difference of Broadcaster offering their channels in bouquet to platform operators vis-à-vis platform operator offering channels to its subscribers. A platform operator while deciding composition of retail packages need



to consider various consideration in mind which is not only limited to ala-carte price of a particular nature.

Also, if the proposed twin condition is being brought in vogue then the platform operator would be forced to create the packaging keeping in mind the price of a channel and not the genre of the channel. Thus, the platform operators would be forced to move out the high value of channels which are presently made available to many customers as part of their existing bouquet.

Also it is pertinent to mention at this juncture the rate of pay channels are fixed by the Broadcasters and any change in price of a channel by broadcaster or due to change in regulatory regime for wholesale tariff would force DTH operators to recalibrate all its subscription packs and bouquet

8. Conflicting Regulatory Mandates:

Proposed Twin condition forces to recalibrate both in prices and composition of bouquet. However, Quality of Service Regulation prohibits the operators to make the changes in the price or composition of subscribed channels during first six months of the date of enrolment. Resultantly, there would be a scenario where one regulation would be complied at the cost of non-compliance of another regulation. From this view point also the proposed tariff regulation is unsustainable and impractical.

In the backdrop of the above, we suggest:

- 1. Wholesale RIO rate should be regulated and correctly priced.
- 2. SD channel RIO rate and HD channel RIO rates be linked together.
- 3. The twin conditions be dispensed with.
- 4. We may be given an opportunity of hearing to further elaborate our aforesaid facts/views.
- 5. Regulation on Retail Tariff should be continued to be forborne.

Thanking you

for Videocon d2h Limited,

Shivendra Krishna Singh

Head-Regulatory & Compliance



Annexure A The HD RIO rates of the channels

	HD RIO
Channels	(Net of all applicable taxes)
Star Plus	30.00
Zee TV	30.00
Colors	50.00
Life Ok	30.00
Sony Entertainment TV	40.00
AXN	30.00
Star World	20.00
Colors Infinity	40.00
Zee Cinema	30.00
Star Gold	30.00
&pictures	30.00
Star Movies	30.00
PIX	30.00
Zee Studio	30.00
Movies Now	30.00
CNBC TV18	40.00
Star Sports 1	119.90
Star Sports 2	141.80
Star Sports 3	50.00
Star Sports 4	50.00
Ten Sports	125.00
Sony Six	100.00
Discovery	24.15
History	35.00
National Geographic Channel	16.00
National Geographic Wild	30.00
Fox Life	30.00
TLC	24.15
MTV Indies	50.00
M Tunes	0.00
Sun TV	40.00
KTV	40.00
Sun Music	25.00
Gemini TV	40.00
Travel XP HD	31.00
Star Movies Select HD	30.00
Total	1522.00



Annexure B Chart Showing Comparison of SD and HD rate Comparison

Sr. No.	Channels	SD RIO Rate per subscriber per month (In Rs.)	HD RIO Rate per subscriber per month (In Rs.)	Difference (In Rs.)	Ratio/ Times
1	Star Plus	7.87	30.00	22.13	3.81
2	Zee TV	5.83	30.00	24.17	5.15
3	Colors	8.99	50.00	41.01	5.56
4	Life Ok	9.21	30.00	20.79	3.26
5	Sony Entertainment TV	8.99	40.00	31.01	4.45
6	AXN	6.52	30.00	23.48	4.60
7	Star World	2.05	20.00	17.95	9.78
8	Colors Infinity	8.32	40.00	31.68	4.81
9	Zee Cinema	5.83	30.00	24.17	5.15
10	Star Gold	7.42	30.00	22.58	4.04
11	&pictures	7.56	30.00	22.44	3.97
12	Star Movies	7.42	30.00	22.58	4.04
13	PIX	5.39	30.00	24.61	5.56
14	Zee Studio	3.15	30.00	26.85	9.54
15	Movies Now	7.41	30.00	22.59	4.05
16	CNBC TV18	3.82	40.00	36.18	10.47
17	Star Sports 1	14.89	119.90	105.01	8.05
18	Star Sports 2	15.12	141.80	126.68	9.38
19	Star Sports 3	12.58	50.00	37.42	3.97
20	Star Sports 4	14.89	50.00	35.11	3.36



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21	Ten Sports	6.74	125.00	118.26	18.54
22	Sony Six	14.70	100.00	85.30	6.80
23	Discovery	7.75	24.15	16.40	3.12
24	History	6.72	35.00	28.28	5.21
25	National Geographic Channel	2.58	16.00	13.42	6.19
26	National Geographic Wild	6.72	30.00	23.28	4.46
27	Fox Life	1.98	30.00	28.02	15.15
28	TLC	4.65		AND	
			24.15	19.50	5.19
29	MTV Indies	4.02	50.00	45.98	12.44
30	M Tunes	0.00	0.00	0.00	
31	Sun TV	7.11	40.00	32.89	5.63
32	KTV	8.61	40.00	31.39	4.65
33	Sun Music	4.02	25.00	20.98	6.22
34	Gemini TV	5.91	40.00	34.09	6.77

^{*} Above mentioned rates are net of all applicable taxes.



Annexure C Working to show effect on Retail Rates of HD channels vis-vis RIO Rates of HD Channels

The below-working is arrived at basis the total number of HD channels in Platinum HD pack

Channel Name	RIO Rate*	Reduced A-la-Carte due to Twin Condition*	
&Pictures HD	30.00	6.93	
AXN HD	30.00	6.93	
CNBC TV18 Prime HD	40.00	9.25	
Colors HD	50.00	11.56	
Colors Infinity HD	40.00	9.25	
Discovery HD	24.15	5.58	
Fox Life HD	30.00	6.93	
History HD	35.00	8.09	
Life Ok HD	30.00	6.93	
M Tunes HD	0.00	0.00	
MN+ HD	30.00	6.93	
MTV Indies HD	50.00	11.56	
NGC HD	16.00	3.70	
NGC WILD HD	30.00	6.93	
PIX HD	30.00	6.93	
Six HD	100.00	23.12	
Sony HD	40.00	9.25	
Star Gold HD	30.00	6.93	
Star Movies HD	30.00	6.93	
Star Movies Select HD	30.00	6.93	
Star Plus HD	30.00	6.93	
Star Sports HD1	119.90	27.72	
Star Sports HD2	141.80	32.78	
Star Sports HD3	50.00	11.56	
Star Sports HD4	50.00	11.56	
Star World HD	20.00	4.62	
Ten HD	125.00	28.89	
TLC HD	24.15	5.58	
Travel XP HD	31.00	7.17	
Zee Cinema HD	30.00	6.93	
Zee Studio HD	30.00	6.93	
Zee TV HD	30.00	6.93	

^{*}Above mentioned rates are net of all applicable taxes.



Annexure D Increase in Bouquet prices due to the proposed twin condition

Pack	Pack Price	No. of Pay Channels	No. of FTA Channels	Sum of RIO Rates (input cost) of PAY Channels	Sum of A-la- carte Rates of FTA Channels	Total A-la-Carte = 2 x RIO Rate + FTA A-la-carte Rate	Revised Pack Price to meet twin Cond.
ROI Gold	222	102	157	553	357	1,463	488
ROI Gold Maxi	247	105	157	586	357	1,528	509
ROI Gold Sports	298	115	157	722	357	1,801	600
ROI Diamond	351	148	163	874	372	2,119	706
ROI Platinum	404	153	163	903	372	2,178	726
ROI Platinum HD	531	184	164	2,280	374	4,934	1,645
Flexi Pack Tamil	126	18	142	86	319	492	164
South Silver	177	91	138	485	309	1,280	427
South Silver Maxi	204	93	138	513	309	1,335	445
South Silver Sports	230	99	138	594	309	1,498	499
South Gold	222	145	165	777	377	1,931	644
South Gold Maxi	256	147	165	805	377	1,987	662
South Gold Sports	298	157	165	945	377	2,266	755
South Diamond	351	178	166	1,060	379	2,500	833
South Platinum	404	183	166	1,090	379	2,559	853
South Platinum HD	531	218	167	2,612	382	5,605	1,868

^{*} Above mentioned rates are net of all applicable taxes.



Annexure E

Reduction in number of channel to meet the twin condition, by taking an example of d2h super Gold Pack

Total Channels in Super Gold Pack: 259

To comply with the twin condition, 147 channels need to be dropped from the Super Gold Pack. A revised package after dropping 147 channels, is captured below:

Package Name	Pay/FTA	D2H Super GOLD	RIO	Proposed A- la-Carte
Price		222	267.81	664.63
Count of Channels		112		
Star Plus	Pay	✓	7.87	15.73
Zee TV	Pay	✓	5.83	11.66
Star Utsav	FTA	✓	0.00	2.50
Zee Anmol	FTA	✓	0.00	2.50
Sony Entertainment TV	Pay	✓	8.99	17.98
SAB	Pay	✓	6.17	12.35
Colors	Pay	✓	8.99	17.98
Rishtey	FTA	✓	0.00	2.50
Sahara One	Pay	✓	10.25	20.50
Dangal	FTA	✓	0.00	2.50
DD1	FTA	✓	0.00	1.00
Bindass	Pay	✓	4.83	9.66
Channel V	Pay	✓	0.45	0.90
DD India	FTA	✓	0.00	1.00
		14		
Zee Cinema	Pay	✓	5.83	11.66
Star Gold	Pay	✓	7.42	14.84
MAX	Pay	✓	7.64	15.28
UTV Movies	Pay	✓	7.25	14.50
Maha Movies	FTA	√	0.00	2.50
Cinema TV	FTA	✓	0.00	2.50
Enterr10 Movies	FTA	√	0.00	2.50



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		-		
ABP News	FTA	✓	0.00	2.50
Zee business	Pay	✓	2.16	4.32
Zee News	Pay	✓	3.37	6.74
Aaj Tak	Pay	✓	3.15	6.29
CNBC AWAAZ	Pay	✓	2.02	4.05
IBN 7	Pay	✓	3.15	6.29
NDTV India	Pay	✓	3.37	6.74
DD Loksabha	FTA	√	0.00	1.00
DD News	FTA	✓	0.00	1.00
DD Rajyasabha	FTA	/	0.00	1.00
India TV	FTA	/	0.00	2.50
		11		
Sony Mix	Pay	/	3.15	6.30
MTV	Pay	✓	3.15	6.29
UTV Stars/ Bindaas Play	Pay	✓	8.57	17.14
M Tunes	FTA	1	0.00	2.50
Mastiii	FTA	✓	0.00	2.50
Music India	FTA	√	0.00	2.50
9X M	Pay	1	2.94	5.88
9x Jalwa	Pay	1	2.10	4.20
B4U Music	FTA	1	0.00	2.50
		9	0.00	2.00
Russia Today	FTA	✓	0.00	2.50
		1		
DD Sports	FTA	√	0.00	1.00
		1		
Cartoon Network	Pay	✓	5.62	11.23
Zee Q	Pay	/	42.00	84.00
Nickelodeon	Pay	✓	2.70	5.39
Sonic	Pay	✓	5.46	10.92
Nick Jr Teen Nick	Pay	1	5.62	11.23
	1	5 - 1		
National Geographic Channel	Pay	✓	2.58	5.17
National Geographic Wild	Pay	1	6.72	13.44



Fox Life	Pay	✓	1.98	3.96
Discovery	Pay	✓	7.75	15.50
Animal Planet	Pay	✓	2.59	5.18
History	Pay	√	6.72	13.44
Care World	FTA	✓	0.00	2.50
DD Bharati	FTA	✓	0.00	1.00
DD Kisan	FTA	✓	0.00	1.00
		9		
Living Foodz	Pay	✓	12.60	25.20
Home Shop 18	FTA	✓	0.00	2.50
Food Food	Pay	✓	8.39	16.78
NDTV Good Times	Pay	✓	4.04	8.08
Fashion Tv	Pay	✓	0.00	0.00
Shop CJ	FTA	✓	0.00	2.50
Gemporia	FTA	✓	0.00	2.50
Blue Naaptol	FTA	✓	0.00	2.50
Shop CJ 2	FTA	✓	0.00	2.50
Planet M Shopping	FTA	✓	0.00	2.50
Den Snapdeal TV	FTA	√	0.00	2.50
Best Deal TV	FTA	✓	0.00	2.50
TELEBRANDS	FTA	√	0.00	2.50
		13		
Aastha	FTA		0.00	2.50
Sanskar	FTA	√	0.00	2.50
Paras TV	FTA	√	0.00	2.50
Arihant	FTA	√	0.00	2.50
Jinvani TV	FTA	· · ·	0.00	2.50
Darshan24	FTA	· ·	0.00	2.50
Adhyatm Bhakti	FTA	· ·	0.00	2.50
Ishwar Bhakti	FTA	· /	0.00	2.50
GOD	FTA	√	0.00	2.50
Divya	FTA	· ·	0.00	2.50
Daati Ahsas	FTA	→	0.00	2.50
Mangal Kalash	FTA	→	0.00	2.50
	FTA	✓	0.00	
	FIA	4	0.00	2.50
Vision Shiksha/Peace of Mind		13		
Zee Marathi	Pay	13	3.60	7.19



Star Pravah	Pay	✓	5.04	10.08
Mi Marathi	FTA	✓	0.00	2.50
Saam TV	FTA	✓	0.00	2.50
Maiboli	FTA	✓	0.00	2.50
Zee Talkies	Pay	✓	6.96	13.93
9X Jhakaas	Pay	✓	2.10	4.20
ABP Majha	Pay	✓	4.93	9.86
Zee 24 Taas	Pay	✓	3.82	7.64
Sangeet Marathi	FTA	✓	0.00	2.50
IBN Lokmat	Pay	✓	3.30	6.60
TV9 Marathi	FTA	✓	0.00	2.50
DD10 Sahyadri (Marathi)	FTA	1	0.00	1.00
		14		
DD7 Bangla	FTA	✓	0.00	1.00
DD Punjabi	FTA	✓	0.00	1.00
DD6 Oriya	FTA	✓	0.00	1.00
DD11 Gujarati	FTA	1	0.00	1.00
DD Rajasthan	FTA	✓	0.00	1.00
DD Bihar	FTA	✓	0.00	1.00
DD UP	FTA	✓	0.00	1.00
DD MP	FTA	√	0.00	1.00
DD Urdu	FTA	✓	0.00	1.00
DD12 Kashmiri	FTA	✓	0.00	1.00
DD13 North East	FTA	✓	0.00	1.00
DD5 Podhigai (Tamil)	FTA	✓	0.00	1.00
DD8 Saptagiri	FTA	✓	0.00	1.00
DD9 Chandana (Kannada)	FTA	✓	0.00	1.00
DD4 Malayalam	FTA	✓	0.00	1.00

^{*} Above mentioned rates are net of all applicable taxes.



Annexure F

Twin Conditions makes offering of HD channels as part of bouquet, infeasible and impractical.

Under ROI Platinum pack when 31 HD channels are added, then the total a-la-carte price increases from Rs. 2178 to Rs. 4934 which will result in increase in ROI Platinum HD pack price from Rs. 531/- to Rs 1645/-.

Pack	Pack Price	No. of Pay Channels	No. of FTA Channels	Sum of RIO Rates of PAY Channels	PAY A-la-carte = 2 x RIO Rate (Cond. A)	Sum of A- la-carte Rates of FTA Channels	Total A-la- Carte = 2 x RIO Rate + FTA A- la-carte Rate	Revised Pack Price as per Twin Condition
ROI Platinum	404	153	163	903	1806	372	2178	Rs. 726/-
ROI Platinum HD	531	184	164	2280	4560	374	4934	Rs.1645/-

^{*} Above mentioned rates are net of all applicable taxes.



Annexure G Change in bouquet price due to addition of channels on the platform

Pack	Pack Price	No. of Pay Channels	No. of FTA Channels	Sum of RIO Rates of PAY Channels	Sum of A-la- carte Rates of FTA Channels	Total A-la-Carte = 2 x RIO Rate + FTA A-la-carte Rate	Revised Pack Price to meet twin Cond.
ROI Gold Maxi	247	105	157	586	357	1,528	509
ROI Gold Maxi	247	115	157	722	357	1,801	600

The above table shows that mere addition of 10 pay channels in ROI Gold Maxi Pack, would lead to increase in pack price from Rs. 509/- to Rs. 600/-.

^{*} Above mentioned rates are net of all applicable taxes.