Response to TRAI's Consultation Paper No. 14/2024 on Formulating a Digital Radio Broadcast Policy for Private Radio Broadcasters

I appreciate the opportunity to provide input on the selection of a digital broadcasting standard for the FM band in India. After careful consideration, I strongly support the adoption of Digital Radio Mondiale (DRM) as the sole standard for digital audio broadcasting on the FM band in India. I believe that DRM's unique advantages in terms of coverage efficiency, energy savings, cost-effectiveness, and cultural adaptability make it the ideal choice to meet India's specific broadcasting needs and objectives.

DRM's superior energy efficiency per bit of information makes it particularly well-suited to India's vast and diverse geographical landscape, where the demand for sustainable and cost-effective broadcasting solutions is paramount. Its technical flexibility allows DRM to reach both densely populated urban centers and remote rural areas with consistent quality, thereby ensuring reliable and equitable service coverage nationwide.

Moreover, DRM's architecture supports multilingual and multicontent broadcasting, which aligns perfectly with India's linguistic diversity, allowing the dissemination of content in multiple languages and formats simultaneously. Furthermore, leveraging DRM aligns with India's existing infrastructure and sustainability goals, minimizing additional investment while maximizing efficiency.

In conclusion, DRM represents the most appropriate and forward-looking choice for India's FM band digital broadcasting standard, promising widespread benefits for broadcasters, listeners, and policymakers alike. I strongly recommend DRM's adoption as a unifying standard for India's digital audio future.

The following are my responses to select questions posed by TRAI. I hope these insights contribute meaningfully to India's decision-making process in selecting the optimal digital broadcasting standard for the FM band.

Q1. Do you agree that single digital radio technology adoption is preferable for entire country? If not, support your reply with justification.

Comments:

Yes, I agree that s single digital radio technology and standard should be adopted for the entire country.

Q2. In case a single digital radio broadcast technology is to be adopted for the entire country, which technology should be adopted for digital radio broadcasting? Please give your suggestions with detailed justification.

Comments:

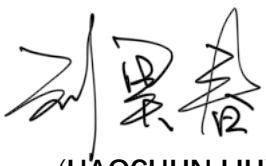
Adopting a single digital broadcasting standard nationwide is a strategic and practical choice for advancing digital audio broadcasting in India. Given India's prior adoption of DRM on the AM band and the establishment of a nationwide network using this standard, DRM is the most suitable option. Here's why:

- **Familiarity and Expertise**: India's broadcast infrastructure, engineers, researchers, and scholars are already well-versed in DRM technology due to its extensive use on the AM band. This familiarity makes DRM the logical choice for FM digital broadcasting, as it allows for a smoother transition with minimal learning curves and reduced implementation challenges.
- **Energy Efficiency and Cost Savings**: DRM is known to offer higher energy efficiency per bit of information compared to other digital standards, meaning it consumes less power while maintaining the same coverage area and broadcast quality. For a developing country like India, where sustainable and cost-effective solutions are essential, DRM's lower energy consumption directly benefits the long-term operational costs of broadcasters. This advantage is especially critical in India's rural and remote areas, where power supply can be inconsistent. By providing a high level of service at a lower operational cost, DRM makes digital broadcasting feasible for regions with limited resources, allowing stable broadcast services at reduced running costs.
- **Geographical and Demographic Adaptability**: India's vast and diverse geography, along with a mix of urban and rural populations, requires a technology that can handle such complexity. DRM's flexibility across different bands (AM and FM) enables it to cover extensive areas and densely populated cities while also delivering stable broadcasts to remote regions. This makes DRM more suitable for supporting nationwide coverage in India compared to standards limited to specific bands.

- **Support for Localization and Multilingual Content**: DRM supports transmission of multilingual and varied content types, which aligns perfectly with India's cultural and linguistic diversity. Through services like text and multimedia, DRM can deliver localized information, such as news, weather, traffic, and emergency alerts, tailored to each region's needs. This adaptability helps fulfill India's demand for diversified information and enables the government to promote essential public services.
- **Compatibility with Existing Infrastructure**: Since DRM has already been deployed on India's MW band, expanding it to the FM band allows for a seamless integration with existing DRM infrastructure. Broadcasters can transition with minimal investment, leveraging their current systems. This compatibility makes DRM the most cost-effective and practical choice for India's digital transition.
- **Support for Domestic Manufacturing and Industry Development**: India has developed significant experience in DRM chipset and receiver production. Establishing DRM as the unified national standard would further promote domestic manufacturing, supporting India's electronics industry. The open nature of DRM allows manufacturers to freely innovate and produce DRM-compatible devices, which will drive down equipment costs, increase availability, and further accelerate digital broadcast adoption.
- **Scalability and Regional Cooperation**: DRM is gradually gaining support in other countries, particularly across Asia, which creates opportunities for India to engage in regional cooperation within the digital broadcasting field. DRM's international recognition makes it an ideal choice, not only for India's domestic needs but also for future cross-border broadcasting collaborations, positioning India as a leader in this technology.

In conclusion, DRM stands out as the best choice for India's digital broadcasting standard. Its advantages in energy efficiency, coverage, localization, infrastructure compatibility, and regional collaboration potential make it the optimal solution to drive digital broadcast adoption across the country.

Respectfully submitted,



(**HAOCHUN LIU**)
Member of DRM Consortium