



25th Sep 2012

Shri A. Robert. J. Ravi,
Advisor (CA & QOS),
The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India,
Mahanagar Doorsanchar Bhawan,
Old Minto Road,
New Delhi 110002

Sub: Idea Cellular's response to the TRAI Draft "The Standards of Quality of Service of Basic Telephone Service (Wireline) and Cellular Mobile Telephone Service (Second Amendment) Regulations, 2012"

Sir,

This is with reference to the Authority's invitation for comments on the above-mentioned Draft Regulation. In this regard, you may note that Idea Cellular endorses the views expressed by COAI on this issue. In addition, we have the following comments:

At the outset, we would like to submit that we are deeply concerned by the TRAI's proposal to implement financial disincentives for failure to comply with the various network service quality and customer service quality parameters specified in the QoS Regulations, 2009. We say this because it is our belief that in doing so the TRAI fails to appreciate the highly unique and complex environment in which the Indian operators offer services to more than a 900 Million customers, and which also arguably justifies a genuine possibility for any random "errors of omission" and "bonafide business exigencies" or delays emanating from "external dependencies".

Having said that, we have the following additional submissions in support of our belief:

- It is well known now that India which is currently the second largest and the fastest growing telecom market in the World has a network architecture that is unique across the World, because of the various layers involved and the linkages between various systems like the LIM, UCC, IN, etc. This sometimes results in situations where the same changes that need to be replicated across various systems to facilitate an action, like refund, termination of service, etc, do not get updated due to "acts of omission", resulting in inadvertent delays. However, such outcomes are very rare and as soon as any of them gets discovered by way of the checks and balances in place, corrective action is taken without delay.
- In addition, dependency on external agents like the Channel Partners may also at times interfere in compliance with some of the specified timelines.
- We feel that in prescribing financial disincentives for failure to comply with the various parameters specified in the QoS Regulation, the TRAI has therefore failed to appreciate the highly unique and complex network and logistics environment in which the Indian operators offer services to more than a 900 Million customers, that also arguably justifies a genuine possibility for any random "errors of omission" and "bonafide business exigencies" as also



Idea Cellular Ltd -Regulatory & Corporate Affairs Office
1005-6, Kailash Building, 26, K.G. Marg,
New Delhi-110 001
Registered Office : Suman Tower, Plot No. 18,
Sector-11, Gandhinagar - 382 011

Telephone +91 11 2373 0133
+91 99114 40133
Fax +91 11 2373 0135

Website www.idealcellular.com

delays emanating from “external dependencies”. We list herewith below some of the “external dependencies” for your kind consideration:

Network Service related:

- a) There are some specific areas where local bodies Regulations / Government Regulations do not permit deployment of a cell site. These coverage gaps / weak coverage areas result in call drops and also impact other KPIs like Voice quality due to call dropping. There are also instances where NOC for the sites is not issued or is delayed by the local bodies causing late deployment of new sites.
- b) We have also experienced instances where law and order issues have prevented our engineers from getting access to the sites for maintenance. This causes sites to go down and affect the KPI's
- c) Major power grid failures, shortage of fuel – The incidents of power grid failures causes mass failures and outages. Instances of shortage of diesel also in specific areas have also been recorded.
- d) Effects of Natural calamities like Floods, earthquakes, etc cannot be completely ignored as they can also cause disruption of traffic by outages.
- e) Forced network shutdowns because of security reasons – In sensitive areas like J&K, sometimes orders are issued by the Security Agencies to switch off the sites for security reasons. This causes degradation of KPI's in those areas.
- f) Operations and maintenance issues on USOF sites maintained by BSNL – USOF sites are not properly maintained. There are electrical power availability issues and consistent outages on USOF sites as have been raised many times by Idea Cellular Ltd.
- g) We have also experienced site shut downs due to issues with site-owners / EMF orders of TERM Cell / Municipal Corporations ordering shut down of site and such related actions by Local or Central Authorities.
- h) There have been several instances of unwanted interference from external unknown resources such as unauthorized usage or radiation from neighbouring countries like Idea is facing interference from Pakistan in J&K for WLL.
- i) Use of signal jammers for security concerns can also have an impact on QoS.
- j) It is unsafe to travel in naxalism affected as well as some parts of North- East States during late hours and hence the maintenance activity can only be undertaken during day hours.

Customer Service related:

- a) It has been widely experienced that customers in general dispute bills because of a lack of proper understanding of the various component of the bill. Also, in almost all such cases once the details are properly explained to the customer, the dispute gets settled. However, imposition of penalties for not being able to meet the relevant benchmark would mean that the operator gets penalized for no fault.
- b) Similarly, final reconciliation of amount that is “due to/from a customer” can only be done once the details of roaming usages on other network also become available. In some cases, such details may get delayed due to the sourcing that needs to happen from other operators thereby affecting the refunds process. Again, imposing of a financial disincentive on the operator when he is not at fault would be unjust.
- c) In respect of call centre related non-compliances, often the trigger could be high Agent absenteeism/attrition from events like examination /festivals / local events, etc. Events like

new product launches, competition activities, natural disturbances, etc can also at times result in unpredictable call flows resulting in variance against the parameters.

It is amply clear that the above mentioned issues are beyond the control of the operators and any imposition of financial disincentives for deviation from parameters would thus go against the spirit of fairness and justice.

In view of all the above, we would like to submit that in place of imposing financial disincentives, the TRAI should look at the need to strengthen self-regulation and related compliances thereof.

We are confident that the Authority will give due-consideration to our afore-mentioned comments before formalizing any guidelines on the issue.

Thanking You

Yours faithfully,

For IDEA Cellular Limited.



For **Rajat Mukarji**
Chief Corporate Affairs Officer