

Information note to the Press (Press Release No. 25/2023)

For Immediate release

TELECOM REGULATORY AUTHORITY OF INDIA

TRAI releases Recommendations on “Issues related to Community Radio Stations”

New Delhi, 22nd March 2023 - The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has today released its Recommendations on “Issues related to Community Radio Stations”.

2. MIB vide its references dated 11.11.2021 and 17.01.2022 requested the Authority to provide its recommendations, under section 11(1)(a)(ii) and 11(1)(d) of the TRAI Act, 1997 on the following issues:

- (i) Inclusion of not-for-profit companies, registered under Section 8 of Companies Act 2013, in the list of eligible organizations
- (ii) Increasing of permission period from existing period of 5 years to 10 years
- (iii) Maximum duration of advertisement per hour of broadcast on CRS
- (iv) Number of CR Stations operated in each district of operation by Not-for-profit organizations, operating in multiple districts

3. In this regard, TRAI had issued a consultation paper on 21st July 2022 for seeking comments of the stakeholders on the issues related to CRS. The last date of submission of comments was 17th August 2022 and counter-comments was 31st August 2022, which were extended up to 31st August 2022 and 14th September 2022 respectively, on request of some stakeholders.

TRAI received 13 comments and 3 counter-comments from stakeholders. These comments are available on TRAI's website. In this regard, an Open House Discussion was also held on 11th November 2022 through online mode.

4. After considering all comments/counter-comments received from stakeholders during consultation process and further analysis of the issues, the Authority has finalised its recommendations. The salient features of the recommendations are given below:

- (i) Non-for-profit companies established under Section 8 of Companies Act 2013 are already covered in the extant eligibility criteria for CRS.
- (ii) The existing criteria prescribed in MIB guidelines barring certain type of entities for setting up Community Radio Stations are equally applicable to Section 8 companies also.
- (iii) Reiterates recommendations regarding disqualification of religious bodies from owning broadcasting channels including Community Radio Station as mentioned in its 'Recommendations on Issues relating to entry of certain entities into Broadcasting and Distribution activities' dated 12.11.2008.
- (iv) The initial period of permission should be increased from five (5) years to ten (10) years, at a time.
- (v) Present policy guidelines for extension/ renewal of CRS license are adequate and should continue to be the same.
- (vi) Community Radio Stations will be required to obtain continued service report from the SDM of the concerned District for grant of license extension.
- (vii) The duration of advertisement on a CRS should be increased from seven (7) minutes per hour to twelve (12) minutes per hour.
- (viii) Not-for-profit organizations, operating in multiple districts, should be allowed to set up multiple CRS in their area of operation.

- (ix) An organisation should be allowed to set up a maximum of six (6) CRS throughout the country.
- (x) An organisation seeking to set up multiple stations should submit an undertaking confirming that the programs will be prepared locally and not sent from other CRS.
- (xi) MIB may actively pursue with Central and State Governments to sponsor more programmes on CRS for helping CRS in their sustainability.
- (xii) All the universities of Central/ State Governments may be provided budgetary support to establish and operate Community Radio Stations. MIB may actively pursue providing license/ spectrum for such universities.
- (xiii) All the processes for granting CRS should be made online through a single window system.
- (xiv) SACFA clearance should be granted within one month of application.
- (xv) Grant of WOL license should also have a prescribed period preferably within one month of application.

5. The full text of the Recommendations is available on TRAI's website www.traigov.in.

6. For any clarification/ information, Shri Anil Kumar Bhardwaj, Advisor (B&CS) may be contacted at Tel. No. +91-11-23237922.


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