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TELECOM REGULATORY AUTHORITY OF INDIA

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**TRAI issues Consultation Paper on “3rd Phase of Private FM Radio
Broadcasting”**

New Delhi, 8th January, 2008. Today Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) released a consultation paper on “Issues relating to 3rd Phase of Private FM Radio Broadcasting”.

Due to the huge growth of FM Radio Industry and demand for further expansion of FM Radio coverage, Government is considering expansion of FM Radio to other cities through private agencies under Phase-III. In view of this the Government has sought the recommendations of TRAI under Section 11(1) (a) of TRAI Act, 1997 on the modifications to be incorporated in the policy for FM radio broadcasting Phase-III.

FM Radio broadcasting due to its versatility is considered as main medium to provide entertainment, information and education. FM Radio broadcasting was first launched in the country in 1999 and subsequently 21 private channels became operational. Based on the popularity of FM Radio among the masses, Government offered 337 new

channels for bidding by private agencies covering additional cities and towns in the Phase –II in July, 2005. As an outcome of this, Letters of Intent (LOI) for 245 channels were issued and 136 channels have become operational. The 97 vacant slots of this phase were put on re-bid recently. It is expected that FM Broadcasting coverage will soon be extended to cover a total of 92 cities.

A consultation paper on “Issues relating to 3rd Phase of Private FM Radio Broadcasting” has been prepared to initiate consultation process. This paper analyses various issues related to FM Radio broadcasting such as expansion of FM Radio to smaller cities including migrate from city permission concept to district permission concept, number of channels to be made available in a city, FDI cap, networking guidelines, allowing news & current affairs program on FM radio, level playing field between FM broadcasters vis-à-vis Satellite Radio broadcasters, change in ownership permission and automatic renewal of permission etc. Apart from this a number of technical issues relating to co-channel spacing and collocation of FM broadcast transmitters have been raised for deliberation. The International experiences have been compiled to get better understanding of present scenario in other countries.

The full version of the consultation paper is available on TRAI web site www.traigov.in. All the stake holders are requested to send their response to TRAI by 18.1.2008.

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Authorised to issue: