

Bharti Telemedia Ltd.

Airtel Center, Plot No. 16,
Udyog Vihar, Phase - IV,
Gurugram - 122 015
Haryana, India

www.airtel.in
call+91 124 4222222
fax +91 124 4243252

dth services



RP/FY 19-20/075/044

3rd October, 2019

To

Advisor – B & CS

Telecom Regulatory Authority of India

Mahanagar Doorsanchar Bhawan

Jawahar Lal Nehru Marg

New Delhi – 110 002

Kind Attn : Shri Arvind Kumar, Advisor - B&CS

Reference : TRAI's Consultation Paper on Platform Services dated 28th August 2019.

Dear Sir

Please find enclosed Bharti Telemedia Limited's submission on the TRAI's Consultation Paper on Platform Services.

We trust that our submissions will merit your kind attention.

Thanking You.

Yours Sincerely.

For **Bharti Telemedia Limited**


Seema Jindal
Authorized Signatory

Encl: As stated above

Bharti Telemedia Limited (“Airtel’s”) Response to TRAI’s Consultation Paper on Platform Services dated 28th August 2019.

Q 1: Do you think programmes of the PS should be exclusively available on one single DTH operators’ network only to qualify as a PS channel for the DPO? Should there be any sharing of such programmes with other DPOs? If yes, please provide justification and if no, the reasons thereof.

And

Q 2: In case answer to Question 1 is no, how it can be ensured that programmes of the PS are exclusively available only on single DTH operators’ network? What conditions are to be imposed in registration/license/guidelines?

Airtel’s Response:

The Platform Services (PS) offered by DTH operators is a unique proposition. The content for such platform services can be either exclusive or non-exclusive. As regards the exclusivity wrt content, it is the complete prerogative of the owner of such content. Therefore, if exclusivity is embedded as a pre-condition for Platform Services, the same may not be in the interest of any of the stakeholders. The mandate of exclusivity will tantamount to either denial of content or the arrangement with the content owner may result in tied-in deal. Neither of these outcomes are productive or desirable. Further, the exclusivity may pose challenges for the content owner to monetize its content and this will consequently go against the consumer interest. One of the highlights of the current tariff order is the principle of non-discrimination and therefore, the availability of the content should also be guided by the same principle.

We submit that the exclusivity should not be the defining criteria for a PS channel. The subject matter of exclusivity should be left to be guided by the mutual decision between the DPO and the content provider. The exclusivity of the content has no relevance or value addition for a channel to qualify as a PS channel.

Q 3: Is there a need to revisit/review the earlier recommendations of the Authority dated 11th November, 2014, relating to keeping recording of all PS channel programs for a period of 90 days and maintaining a written log/ register of such program for a period of 1 year by the DPO from the date of broadcast and the role of Authorised Officer and the State/ District Monitoring Committee and MIB as monitoring authorities.

Airtel’s Response:

In terms of the prevailing condition in DTH License, DTH operators are obligated upon to maintain the recordings of programmes for a period of 90 days from the day of the broadcast. A similar condition contained in the Uplinking and Downlinking Guidelines imposes an obligation upon the Broadcasters to keep a record of programmes for a period of 90 days.

Therefore, the additional requirement of written log /register of PS program for a period of one year is not aligned with the License condition and it will be onerous for the Platform Services. Hence it is

submitted that the requirement of keeping recording of all PS channel programs for a period of 90 days is aligned with the License conditions and the same should be the only condition specified wrt monitoring for PS channels.

Q 4: What should be the Registration fee/Annual fee for PS per channel? And how it is to be estimated?

Airtel's Response:

We submit that there should not be any registration fee applicable for a PS channel. The DTH operators are paying the applicable license fees, furnishing required bank guarantees towards securitization, as a part of the license condition. This is unlike the other competing distribution platforms which are not subject to such obligations. Therefore, any additional requirement for a DTH platform in the form of charges towards the registration of a PS channel is not necessary.

We therefore, request TRAI to kindly do away with the condition of prescribing any charges for a PS channel.

Q 5: How many PS channels are to be allowed to DTH operators ?and Why ?

Airtel's Response:

We submit that there should not be any restriction on the number of PS channels that can be offered by the DTH operators. In a country of multilingual, multi-cultural and multi-ethnicity, the spectrum of diversity is so huge that the customer preferences and choice is equally varied. Therefore, to cater to such diversity of customers, it is in the customer interest that the number of PS channels are not regulated.

Q 6: Whether PS channels should be placed separately on EPG to distinguish them from regular TV channels? If yes, how these channels are to be placed?

And

Q 8: Should PS channels be also categorised in specific genre such as 'Devotional' or 'General Entertainment' or 'Infotainment' or 'Kids' or 'Movies' or 'Music' or 'News and Current Affairs' or 'Sports' or 'Miscellaneous'? Please provide proper justification for your answer

Airtel's Response:

As per the current practice, the PS channels on EPG are placed genre wise and hence they are placed together with the liner channels of such genre. Such a practice offers convenience to the customers as they can locate the content of their choice. However, TRAI should not specify a condition for placement of such channels and the same should be left at the discretion of a DPO. The DTH operator should be allowed to decide the placement basis the interest of the customer and not to recommend placement of PS channels separately on the EPG. Any placement must meet the customer preference and accepted behavior.

Since the current practice of placing Platform Services basis genre is already being followed, any classification of such PS channels into genres is not desirable.

Q 7: Should there be any provision for displaying name and sequence number of PS channels in a particular font size under the heading 'PS' or 'Value Added Services' on TV screen so as to distinguish them from the regular TV channels ? If yes, please provide justification.

Airtel's Response:

The use of any different or new font size in the EPG requires an additional effort, time and also attracts a financial cost. Therefore, use of any different font size for a PS channel for display on EPG other than the font used for linear channel will not only translate into an additional cost but the same will also involve up gradation to accommodate such distinction without yielding any significant benefit. Since the objective of TRAI is to identify PS channels from the regular channels, we suggest that the same can be achieved by an addition of either a suffix or a prefix. The suggested prefix or suffix can be either the brand name of the concerned DTH operator or it can be an abbreviated form viz; PS or VAS. These will act a distinct identifier for such services and will address the objective of distinguishing it from the linear channel.

Q 9: Stakeholders may also provide their comments on any other issue relevant to the present consultation.

Airtel's Response:

No Comments