REGULATORY COMPLIANCE FOR MSOs

Q: What are the regulatory compliance for MSOs as mandated by TRAI?

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Ans.: All Distribution platform Operators (DTH/MSO/HITS/IPTV) are required to ensure the compliance to these regulations and extant regulatory framework in general. 2.25 The New Regulatory framework, together with the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995/ Cable Television Networks Rules, 1994 paved the way for evolution of the cable television services from an unregulated, unstructured sector to a structured, technology driven, vibrant sector. The regulatory framework has nudged the sector towards a new structure, wherein all the stakeholders, from content provider to distributor to end consumer, operate in a transparent, trust-based ecosystem. On the other hand, the CTN Act/ CTN Rules have been continuously evolving to provide a simple registration process for the MSOs and LCOs and to enable a business opportunity for the entrepreneurs without any deterrent entry barriers to speak of. As mentioned earlier, there are 1762 MSOs who have been provided MSO registration by MIB up to March 2022. Further, as per inputs from leading broadcasters, nearly 900 MSOs have active agreements with pay TV broadcasters. However, there is a significant gap in reporting of compliance by these MSOs despite continuous monitoring efforts by TRAI. For instance, only 363 MSOs had undergone the mandatory audit in 2021, citing miscellaneous reasons including Covid situation. Few smaller & medium MSOs have either merged their operation or formed joint venture (JV) with bigger MSOs having subscriber base more than one lakh. However, the acquired MSOs have not reported the new status to TRAI or MIB.