CONVERGENCE POLICY

BROADCAST, TELECOM & CABLE CONVERGENCE

The convergence amidst the broadcast, telecom and cable sectors has drawn up its unique set of challenges. To address this, The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has issued a consultation paper on ‘Regulating Converged Digital Technologies and Services - Enabling Convergence of Carriage of Broadcasting and Telecommunication services’

THE (DRAFT) INDIAN TELECOMMUNICATION BILL, 2022

Recently on 21st September 2022, DoT has released the Draft Indian Telecommunications 2022 Bill for public consultation to develop a modern and future-ready legal framework in telecommunication. Though the draft bill is still in its initial phases and the text/content of the bill may undergo several changes, the key provisions of the bill that may be of some significance to convergence have been discussed here.

The draft Bill is an attempt by the DoT to consolidate various legislations presently governing the telecommunication landscape in India, i.e., the Bill consolidates three separate acts which currently govern the telecommunication sector — the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885, Indian Wireless Telegraphy Act, 1933, and The Telegraph Wires (Unlawful Protection) Act, 1950. Another key reason for bringing into force a new regulatory framework is to bring the law at par with technological advancements and remove obsolete provisions from the colonial era laws it seeks to replace. The goal is to update the extant regulatory framework in keeping with the advancements and challenges in the sector. The Bill empowers the central government to govern three key aspects of telecom:

i) telecommunication services and networks.
ii) telecommunication equipment and infrastructure; and
iii) Spectrum, including its assignment.

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A. LICENSING, REGISTRATION, AND AUTHORIZATION

Under the Bill, four types of permissions are identified - license, registration, authorization, and assignment (only for spectrum). While the Bill does not differentiate between the four types of permissions, it clarifies that a license is only required for providing telecommunication services or operating telecommunication networks. Registration must be obtained for establishing telecommunication infrastructure and an authorization is essential for the possession of wireless equipment. Assignment only applies to spectrum. The Bill also reasons that for specific cases such as establishing telecommunication infrastructure, a registration requirement has been introduced to simplify the process of setting it up. To ensure policy continuity, the Bill clarifies that entities licensed under the previous license conditions will be allowed to operate under their erstwhile licenses until migration.

B. OTT COMMUNICATION/BROADCASTING SERVICES REGULATION

The OTT Communication services offer voice, video, and messaging services, that are substitutable with similar services offered by licensed TSPs. The TSPs bear the costs for the infrastructure, spectrum management and pay license fees for use of spectrum. At the same time, they need to meet Universal Services Obligations and roll-out obligations and comply with other regulations. The counterpart OTT service providers are presently not mandated to adhere to any regulatory obligations and do not have to bear any such costs. Further, TSPs have argued that OTT communication services are grabbing their SMS and voice call businesses and, therefore, should be licensed just as they are. TSPs are also required to maintain network QoS and comply with Tariff framework and are also subjected to various Government levies. As a counter argument, big tech firms argue that the services provided by OTTs and TSPs are not similar and should ideally be regulated under separate frameworks – information technology laws for OTT services and telecom laws for telecommunication services.

At present, while telecom companies need a licence to offer services, OTT platforms do not. The
Bill’s intent in widening the definition of ‘telecommunication services’ to include OTT communication/broadcasting/messaging services may be to bring these platforms under administrative and regulatory oversight. The inclusion of such internet-based communication platforms within the regulatory ambit has been the demand of telecom, broadcasting/OTT industries in many countries on plank of level-playing field and is a contentious policy issue. In India also, it is a long-standing demand of the telecommunications industry on two key issues namely, (a) level-playing field and (b) network expansion costs.

However, the definition of 'telecommunication services', meaning any service provided through telecommunication, i.e., transmission, emission, or reception of any messages through wire, radio, optical or other electro-magnetic systems is all encompassing, and can potentially cover a wide range of digital platforms. Thus, bringing OTT telecommunication services and OTT platforms under the ambit of telecom services may mean that they will be subject to the regulatory regime as TSPs and would require a licence or registration to offer OTT services.

C. INCLUSION OF BROADCASTING SERVICES RELATED PROVISIONS IN THE DRAFT INDIAN TELECOMMUNICATION BILL, 2022

The draft Indian Telecommunication Bill, 2022 has incorporated certain provisions that are related to broadcasting services. Inclusion of following provisions can be said to be enablers for convergence of carriage of Broadcasting and Telecommunication services:

i) **Definitions:** One of the themes that emerged after examining the comments of the Consultation Paper is the need for updating the nomenclature and definitions of relevant terms in the telecommunication legal framework.

   ◆ The Bill introduces a broad definition of ‘telecommunication services’, which now includes internet-based services, in-flight and maritime connectivity, interpersonal communications services, machine to machine communication services, and over-the-top (OTT) based communication services that are made available to users by telecommunication. Other telecommunication services included in the definition are:

   करने के लिए लाइसेंस की आवश्यकता होती है, औद्योगिक प्लेटफर्म को नहीं। आयाती विकल्प/प्रसारण/मंदिर सेवाओं को आमल करने के लिए 'दूरसंचार सेवाओं' की परिभाषा का व्यापक परिभाषा तथा व्यापक वितरण के तत्त्व लाना हो सकता है। विविधता दर्शाने के लिए भी इंटरनेट आधारित संचार प्लेटफर्मों को आमल करना कई देशों में दूरसंचार, प्रसारण/आयाती उपयोगों का मांग रहा है और यह एक विवादास्पद नीतिगत मामला है। भारत में भी, ये दो प्रमुख मुद्दों (ए) सबके लिए समान अवसर और (ब) नेटवर्क वितरण लागत पर दूरसंचार उपयोग की लंबे समय में बढ़ने का आह्वान है।

हालाँकि, 'दूरसंचार सेवाओं' की परिभाषा, जिसका अर्थ है कि दूरसंचार के माध्यम से प्रदान की जाने वाली कोई भी सेवा यानि, रेडियो, टेलीफोनिक या अन्य वित्तिया दुनिया की प्रणालियों के माध्यम से किसी भी संदेश का प्रसारण, उत्पादन या व्यापक सभी आमल हैं और संचालन से विभिन्न प्रकार के इंटरनेट प्लेटफर्म की एक वित्तिया श्रृंखला को करना कर सकता है। इस प्रकार, आयाती दूरसंचार सेवाओं और आयाती प्लेटफर्म को दूरसंचार सेवाओं के अंतर्गत लाने का मालब यह हो सकता है कि ये टीवीसेरी प्रकार के रूप में वित्तिया व्यवस्था के अधीन होंगे और आयाती सेवाओं की पंजीकरण के लिए लाइसेंस या पंजीकरण की आवश्यकता होगी।

### सी. भारतीय दूरसंचार विधेयक 2022 के महत्वपूर्ण विषयों पर संबंधित मामलों को आमल करना

भारतीय दूरसंचार विधेयक 2022 के महत्वपूर्ण विषयों पर संबंधित मामलों को आमल करना है जो प्रसारण सेवाओं में सम्बन्धित है।

प्रसारण और दूरसंचार सेवाओं के वहन के कांटेंस के लिए निर्देशनीय प्रावधानों को आमल करने को समर्थक करा जा सकता है।

1) **परिभाषा:** प्रसारण के शिखर विविध को कहा के कारण उस से सीधे विवाद विविध प्रकार में एक दूरसंचार कानूनी  विलय में प्रमाणीय अवधि के नामकरण और परिभाषाओं को अपडेट करने का आवश्यकता है।

   ◆ विवेचन: 'दूरसंचार सेवाओं' की एक व्यापक परिभाषा प्रस्तुत कर्ता है जिसमें अव इंटरनेट आधारित सेवाओं, इन  फ्लाइट और मोबाइल कॉनक्लॅर्टी, पारामिटर मार्च सेवाओं, 

   मॉहीने में मॉहीन मार्च सेवाओं और ऑर-डे-डीड (ऑटोटी) आधारित संचार सेवाओं आमल हैं जो दूरसंचार द्वारा उपयोगकर्ताओं को उल्लेख करता है। परिभाषा में आमल अन्य दूरसंचार सेवाओं हैं।
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i. broadcasting,
ii. communication services including electronic mail, voice mail, voice, video, data, audiotex services, videotex services, fixed and mobile services,
iii. internet and broadband services
iv. satellite-based communication services and any other service notified by the central government to be telecommunication services.

◆ The term telecommunication is also defined as transmission, emission, or reception of any message by wire, radio, optical or other electromagnetic systems. Message is defined as any sign, signal, writing, image, sound, video, data stream or information intended for telecom.

◆ The ‘broadcasting services’ are defined as the telecommunication services that are intended to be received by the general public either directly or indirectly. Further, the definition of wireless equipment includes any wireless transmitter that is capable of use for broadcasting or emission of wireless communication.

◆ The term ‘license’ is defined as a license, approval, authorization, permission by whatever name called, granted under this Act (the Bill) for providing:
  i. telecommunication services (including only such broadcasting services as specified under sub-clause (c) below);
  ii. telecommunication network; and
  iii. broadcasting services in Schedule 2 and any other broadcasting services as may be notified by the Central Government as requiring a license.

ii) As per the Schedule 2 of the Bill, the broadcasting services requiring license as of the Appointed Date are –

i. प्रमाण
ii. इलेक्ट्रॉनिक वॉल, वॉलियूम वॉल, वीडियो, डेटा, आडियोटेक्स सेवाओं और वीडियोटेक्स सेवाओं, फिक्स्ड और मोबाइल सेवाओं सहित संचार सेवाओं,
iii. इंटरनेट व बाउडवेक सेवा
iv. सेल्टेलाइट आवार्त संचार सेवाओं और दूरसंचार सेवाओं के लिए केंद्र सरकार द्वारा अधिग्रहित कोई अन्य सेवा।

◆ दूरसंचार शब्द को तार, टैग्क, ऑटोमोटिक या अन्य विभिन्न दूरसंचार प्रणालियों द्वारा किसी ग्राहक के संचार, उत्तरदाता या स्वागत के रूप में भी परिभाषित किया गया है। संचार को किसी भी संकेत, सिग्नल, लेखन, छवि, ध्वनि, वीडियो, डेटा ड्राइम या दूरसंचार के लिए अधिग्रहित सूचना के रूप में भी परिभाषित किया गया है।

◆ प्रमाण सेवाओं को उन दूरसंचार सेवाओं के रूप में परिभाषित किया गया है जो प्रदर्शन या अन्य रूप से आम जनता द्वारा प्राप्त की जानी है। इसके अलावा, वायरलेस उपकरण की परिभाषा में कोई भी वायरलेस ट्रांसमिटर शामिल है जो वायरलेस संचार के प्रमाण या उत्तरदाता के लिए उपयोग करने में सक्षम है।

◆ ‘लाइसेंस’ शब्द को एक लाइसेंस, अनुमोदन, प्राधिकरण, अनुमोदन के रूप में परिभाषित किया गया है जिसे इस अधिनियम (विल.) के तहत पदन किया गया है:
  i. दूरसंचार सेवाओं (नीचे उप-पांड (सी) के तहत निर्देश तक केवल ऐसी प्रमाण सेवाओं सहित):
  ii. दूरसंचार नेटवर्क और
  iii. अनुमूल्य 2 में प्रमाण सेवाएं और कोई अन्य प्रमाण सेवाएं जिन्हें केंद्र सरकार द्वारा लाइसेंस की आवश्यकता के रूप में अधिग्रहित किया जा सकता है।

ii) विधेयक की अनुमूल्य 2 के अनुसार, निराकृत निर्धित तक लाइसेंस की आवश्यकता वाली प्रमाण सेवायें हैं।
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- Direct to Home (DTH) Services.
- Community Radio Stations.
- FM Radio Broadcasting Services through Private Agencies.
- Internet Protocol Television (IPTV) Services.
- Downlinking of Television Channels.
- Uplinking of Television Channels.

It is also mentioned that subject to the provisions under the Section ‘Power of Central Government to amend Schedules’, the Central Government may alter the above Schedule.

(Note: As the draft Telecom Bill is still under discussions and is in public domain for consultation, it is pertinent to note that the provisions mentioned in the bill may change subsequently, and accordingly some observations may not be applicable subsequent to changes in the draft bill.)

### LICENSING IN BROADCASTING SECTOR

Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB) is the nodal ministry responsible for the issuance of all broadcasting and cable services related licenses/permissions/registrations to broadcasters and distribution platform i.e., DTH operators.

The broadcasting services, such as satellite-based DTH and Cable TV Services, are not included in the scope of authorizations under Unified License. Although, under the scope of Access Service Authorization and Internet Service Authorization, the licensee is permitted to provide IPTV service, which is a broadcasting service. This is the only broadcasting service that is dealt under the telecom license regime. The licensing regime in the telecom sector has been discussed in detail in the preceding section.

Currently, MIB is granting license/permission/registration for the provision of the following broadcasting services:

- Direct to Home (DTH) Services.
- Community Radio Stations.
- FM Radio Broadcasting Services through Private Agencies.
- Internet Protocol Television (IPTV) Services.
- Downlinking of Television Channels.
- Uplinking of Television Channels.

### प्रसारण क्षेत्र में लाइसेंसिंग

सूचना और प्रसारण मंत्रालय ('एमआईबी') प्रसारित और वितरण लाइसेंसिंग ऑपरेटरों के सभी प्रसारण और केंद्र घोषणा के सम्बंध में लाइसेंस/अनुमति/पंजीकरण जारी करने के लिए नमूद मंजूर है।

प्रसारण सेवाओं, जैसे इंटरनेट प्लेटफॉर्म प्रसारित डीटीई और केंद्र टीवी सेवाओं, एकीकृत लाइसेंस के तहत पारिपाठिक उद्घाटन में शामिल नहीं है। हालांकि, एमआईबी सेवा प्रसारित और इंटरनेट सेवा पारिपाठिक उद्घाटन के दायरे में, लाइसेंसिंग अधिकारी की आईपीटीवी सेवा प्रदान करने की अनुमति है, जो एक प्रसारण सेवा है। यह एक मानव प्रसारण सेवा है जिन्हें दुरंश्चार युद्ध के तहत निराशाएं जाती हैं। दुरंश्चार क्षेत्र में लाइसेंसिंग युद्ध के लिए लाइसेंस/अनुमति/पंजीकरण प्रदान नहीं कर रहा है।

पुराने में एमआईबी निम्नलिखित प्रसारण सेवाओं के प्रावधान के लिए लाइसेंस/अनुमति/पंजीकरण प्रदान कर रहा है।
Table 1: Licenses/permissions/registrations related to Broadcasting and Cable services.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operator</th>
<th>Authorization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uplinking and downlinking of satellite TV channels/Set-up of Telectroports</td>
<td>Permission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct-to-Home (DTH) operators</td>
<td>License</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Headend-In-The Sky (HITS) operators</td>
<td>Permission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-system Operator (MSO)</td>
<td>Registration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Cable Operator (LCO)</td>
<td>Registration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private FM broadcasters</td>
<td>Permission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Radio Stations</td>
<td>Permission</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Uplinking and downlinking of TV channels

These are governed by the policy guidelines laid down by MIB. Satellite TV channels are being granted permissions in two categories viz. “News and Current Affairs TV channels” and “Non-News and Current Affairs TV channels”. The permission process goes through various departments and ministries after submission of the application with the prescribed processing fee, as applicable to MIB. The application processing requires checking of eligibility of the applicant company by MIB, security clearance from Home Ministry, satellite use clearance from DoS, clearance from Department of Revenue (for downlinking permission only), examination of net worth by empaneled CAs, clearances from Wireless Planning and Coordination Wing (WPC) and Network Operation and Control Center (NOCC) (for frequency assignment). Permission for teleports is also granted by MIB under the uplinking guidelines issued by MIB. The process of granting permission for setting up uplinking Hub/Teleports is quite similar to that of uplinking permission. Table 2 details out the processing fees, minimum net-worth, bank guarantee, annual renewal, permission fees and period of permission for the uplinking/downlinking of TV channels as prescribed in the guidelines.

License to Direct to Home (DTH) operators

The Government had issued policy guidelines for DTH broadcasting services in India on 15th March 2001. As of now, apart from DD Free Dish, which is a free-to-air DTH service of Doordarshan, there are 4 private pay DTH service providers in operation in the country. DTH services make use of satellites and DTH operators are allowed to use Ku band frequencies. DTH license is issued under Section 4 of the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885 by MIB after
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Table 2: Applicable fees on broadcasters/teleport operators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Broadcasters/Teleports</th>
<th>Processing Teleports</th>
<th>Minimum Fee (in Rs)</th>
<th>Bank Net-worth (in Rs)</th>
<th>Annual Guarantee (in Rs)</th>
<th>Permission Renewal Fees (in Rs)</th>
<th>Period of Permission Fees</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uplinking of TV channels</td>
<td>News and Current Affairs</td>
<td>10,000 per channel</td>
<td>1st TV Channel -20 cr Additional-5 cr</td>
<td>2 cr per channel</td>
<td>2 lakhs per channel per annum</td>
<td>NIL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-news and Current Affairs</td>
<td>10,000 per channel</td>
<td>1st TV Channel -5 cr Additional-2.5 cr</td>
<td>1 cr per channel</td>
<td>2 lakhs per channel per annum</td>
<td>NIL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downlinking of TV channels</td>
<td>10,000 per channel</td>
<td>1st TV Channel -5 cr Additional-2.5 cr</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>5 lakhs per channel per annum</td>
<td>10 lakhs</td>
<td>10 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teleports</td>
<td>10,000 per teleport</td>
<td>1st TV Channel -3 cr Additional-1 cr</td>
<td>25 lakhs</td>
<td>2 lakhs per teleport per annum</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>10 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Permission to HITS operators

Policy guidelines for HITS operators have been issued by MIB on 26th November 2009. The amendment to the guidelines has been issued by MIB on 6th November 2020, through which MIB has also permitted sharing of infrastructure by HITS operators. As of now, only one service provider distributes TV channels using HITS technology. HITS operations also use satellite-based technology (uses both C and Ku band). The process for obtaining permission is similar to that of DTH services.

Registration of MSOs and LCOs

Cable TV is a popular platform for receiving TV broadcasts. MSO receives programming services from broadcasters and re-transmits the same either directly in the form of primary subscribers or through one or more local cable operators as secondary subscribers. The signal is provided by a local cable operator (LCO) to the consumer through a cable laid up to the TV set. As on 1st March 2021, there are around 1715 MSOs registered with MIB and an estimated 1,40,000 cable operators operational in the country. The Government enacted the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Ordinance, 1994 on 29th September 1994 that set down rules for registration of cable TV operators and introduced the

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</tr>
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</table>
programming code & the advertisement code. Subsequently this ordinance was converted into the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act 1995 (hereinafter “Cable TV Act”) on 25th March 1995. Under sub-section (1) of section 4 of the cable TV Act, for operating a cable television network, a person is required to register as a cable operator with the registering authority. The head postmaster of the head Post office of the local area has been notified as to the registering authority for Local Cable Operator (LCO). With the introduction of digital addressable system (DAS), the Government has amended the Cable Television Networks (CTN) Rules, 1994 by issuing Cable Television Networks (Amendment) Rules, 2012 on 28th April 2012. Any company or individual who intends to provide cable television network services with DAS, it is mandatory for them to register from MIB. In response, the TV industry has witnessed the entry of huge Multi System Operators (MSOs). For registration of MSO, applicants are required to make an application to the MIB.

The various financial impositions on the existing DPOs are summarized in the Table 3.

### FM Radio
FM licensing process is transparently administered through auctions. For operating FM Radio stations, the eligible entity has to take part in the auction process for FM Radio Channels conducted by MIB. Only successful bidders in the auction are granted permission by MIB subject to fulfillment of terms and conditions.

### Table 3: Comparison of applicable fee structure of the DPOs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DPOs</th>
<th>Processing Fee (in Rs)</th>
<th>Entry fee (in Rs)</th>
<th>Min. Net-worth (in Rs)</th>
<th>BG (in Rs)</th>
<th>License Fees (in Rs)</th>
<th>WPC license fees and Royalty</th>
<th>Period of license</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MSO</td>
<td>1 Lakh</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>Positive, without quantification</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>10 yrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LCO</td>
<td>500 as registration fees</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>500 as renewal fees</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>1 yr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DTH</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>10 crores</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>5 crs and after, an amount equal to License fee for two quarters</td>
<td>8% of AGR</td>
<td>As prescribed</td>
<td>20 yrs (renewal -10 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HITS</td>
<td>1 Lakh</td>
<td>10 crores</td>
<td>10 crores</td>
<td>40 crores</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>As prescribed</td>
<td>10 yrs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### FM Radio
FM Radio is administered through auctions. Companies intending to provide FM Radio services are required to obtain a license from the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting (MIB). The process includes selecting suitable locations for radio transmission and bidding for radio frequencies. Companies are expected to ensure the availability of necessary infrastructure and comply with all regulatory requirements.
**CONVERGENCE POLICY**

**Table 4: Licenses/permissions/registrations related to Broadcasting and Cable services**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Provider</th>
<th>Permission required from Ministry/Department before issue of license/registration by MIB</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Multi System Operators</td>
<td>MHA for security clearance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| B DTH Operators | i. MHA for Security clearance  
ii. DoS for Satellite clearance |
| C HITS Operators | ii. DoS for Satellite clearance  
iii. Frequency authorization by WPC/NOCC  
iv. Net worth examination by empaneled CA |
| D Uplinking of TV channels/Permission for Setting up of Uplinking Hub/Teleports | i. MHA for Security clearance  
ii. DoS for Satellite clearance  
iii. Frequency authorization by WPC/NOCC  
v. DoR for examination of exclusive marketing and distribution rights with the owner of TV channels in case of TV channel uplinked from abroad. |
| E Downlinking of TV channels | i. MHA for Security clearance  
ii. DoS for Satellite clearance  
iii. Frequency authorization by WPC/NOCC  
v. Net worth examination by empaneled CA  
v. DoR for examination of exclusive marketing and distribution rights with the owner of TV channels in case of TV channel uplinked from abroad. |
| F Change in Name, Language, Logo, format of Television Channels | Before MIB grants permission, clearance required from WPC |
| G FM Radio Broadcasting and Community Radio Station | Clearance required for Frequency authorization by WPC/NOCC |

**Community Radio Stations**

To encourage radio broadcasting for specific sections of society the Government has allowed the setting up of Community Radio Stations (CRS). They address the specific information needs of far-flung and difficult areas like tribal, hilly, and remote areas and populations having similar interests like university campuses. Today there are more than 290 operational CRS. Permission for setting up a CRS is granted by MIB, whereas the frequency is assigned on an administrative basis by WPC.

Further, processes for granting various licenses undergoes through several other Ministries and Departments (DoS/MHA/WPC/NOCC) for necessary clearances and approvals etc. These processes are detailed as follows:

It can be seen from the above Table 4 that nodal wings of DoT like Wireless Planning and Coordination (WPC) and Network Operation & Control Centre (NOCC) do play integral roles in granting clearances/licenses to the different stakeholders in the broadcast television sector of India.

**CONVERGENCE TRENDS IN TELECOM AND BROADCASTING SECTORS IN INDIA**

In the cable industry, the offering of additional
services of telephony and broadband on the cable network is representative of convergence of telecom and broadcasting sector. Many telecom service providers are also bundling content and other value-added services like IPTV, video streaming, video conferencing, music, security services, etc. along with broadband services.

Most of the cable providers who have recently entered the wireless space, and incumbent wireless players are also eyeing the home broadband market, especially with the onset of 5G. Many Local cable operators and ISPs have tied up for providing broadband services and television content on fiber to the consumers. In addition, the convergence of broadcast services is provided through Hybrid Set Top Boxes which allow users to view digital cable programmes as well as videos from the Internet or local IP network.

There are many new technology choices for the consumers with the advent of OTT, Mobile TV, IPTV etc. Hybrid/IPTV Set-top boxes (STBs) have replaced certain RF STBs. Small Multi Service Operators (MSOs)/Distribution Platform Operators (DPOs) may upgrade their networks to converged hybrid or IPTV networks and offer hybrid/IPTV STBs at a subsidized cost to their subscribers.

There is an increasing trend to provide broadcasting services through IPTV by Multi-System Operators (MSOs) as well as the Internet Service providers (ISPs). Although the license to operate as MSO and ISP are being given by the respective ministries i.e. Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB) and Department of Telecommunications (DoT), however, as per their guidelines all telecom licensees/ Multi-system Operators before providing IPTV are required to submit a self-certified declaration to MIB, DoT and TRAI giving details such as license/registration under which IPTV service is proposed, the start date, the area being covered, and details of the network infrastructure etc. In the last one year around seven multi-system operators have provided intimation to the Ministry of Information and broadcasting (MIB) for providing IPTV services, but they are yet to roll out the services to their subscribers. There is a significant degree of convergence already existing in the offering of the services. Hence there is a need to align the corresponding business processes i.e., with regard to the issuance of all broadcasting and cable services related licenses/permissions/registrations by various ministries to take full advantage of convergence resulting in ease of doing business.

Convergence Policy

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