
Recent Regulatory Updates – Draft National Digital Communications Policy, 2018

May 3, 2018

In brief

The Department of Telecommunications has issued a draft of the National Digital Communications Policy, 2018 with the objective of developing robust digital communication infrastructure, enabling next generation technologies and ensuring sovereignty and safety of digital communications and simplified/ light touch licensing regime for digital communication.

In detail

The draft policy was released on 01 May, 2018. It aims to achieve the following missions by 2022.

Connect India

This mission aims to provide universal broadband access through public-private partnerships.

For this purpose, the draft proposes incentives and exemptions for the construction of mobile tower infrastructure.

In addition, emphasis is on the optimum utilisation of spectrum through spectrum sharing, leasing and trading, and making available new bands for 5G.

There is an attempt to revise licensing conditions that limit the use of satellite communications, such as speed barriers, band allocation and simplifying compliance requirements for VSAT operators. The draft also

emphasises optimising satellite communications technologies in India and streamlining administrative processes for assignment and allocations, clearances and permissions related to satellite communication systems.

Propel India

This mission aims to catalyse investments in the digital communications sector.

For this purpose, a holistic approach is provided to harness emerging technologies, i.e. high speed Internet, Internet of Things (IoT) and M2M services. This is done by –

- Rolling out 5G technologies and earmarking adequate licensed and unlicensed spectrum;
- Allocating 13-digit numbers for all M2M mobile connections; and
- Enabling light touch regulation for cloud based systems.

The policy intends to give an impetus to Industry 4.0 by developing the market for IoT/ M2M services in Agriculture, Smart Cities, Intelligent Transport Networks, Multimodal Logistics, Smart Electricity Meter, Consumer Durables, etc.

In addition, there is emphasis on strengthening R&D by simplifying approvals for R&D procurements/ imports and experimental licenses.

For Intellectual Property Rights (IPR), the Policy recognises the need to promote Indian IPR, establish a regulatory sandbox and provide financial incentives for the development of Standard Essential Patents.

The policy also focuses on local manufacturing and value addition by –

- i. Preferring domestic products and services with domestically owned IPR for procurement by

government agencies. In addition, the Policy aims at incentivising private operators to buy domestic telecom products.

- ii. Attracting global OEMs and generic component players to setup manufacturing bases in India.
- iii. Rationalising taxes and levies to incentivise local

manufacturing of equipment, networks and devices.

Secure India

Under this mission, the Policy aims to establish a comprehensive data protection regime.

For this purpose, there is significant focus on securing digital communications by developing security standards for equipment and devices, and

formulating a policy on encryption and data retention. Further, the draft proposes enforcing obligations on service providers to report data breaches to authorities and affected users.

Let's talk

For a deeper discussion of how this issue might affect your business, please contact your local PwC advisor

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