

## **Comment of Mr. Tejas Vyas**

### **Apr 19, 2016**

My name is Tejas Vyas and I use DTH services at my residence and always thought that STB interoperability of STB is technically possible. I appreciate TRAI's initiative to seeking feedback from all stake holders.

STB inter-operability is the need for the hour and I appreciate TRAI's initiative to seek feedback from all the stakeholders including the end consumer. The consumer is most impacted entity in this big picture as he bears the cost of ownership and pays for the maintenance to the DTH service provider in form of AMC post expiry of the warranty duration. And AMC contract is offered at discounted rates if it is availed at the time of purchase of the STB.

Mostly I have observed that DTH providers like Tata Sky had changed the STBs of consumer when they changed the encoding to MPEG 4 for some cost as certain channels were not visible on the earlier STB which were without the CI and Smart Card option. So my assumption is that almost all the DTH providers are giving the CI and Smart Card based STBs to the consumers to avail their services. And consumer pays for the STB, Smart Card, 15 meters cable, disc antennae & LNBC.

My request to TRAI is to make a framework where STB with CI slot, RF Cable, disc antennae, remote control & LNBC should be allowed to be sold in the open market like internet modems used for availing broadband services or mobile handset where customer is free to buy any mobile as per his choice and plug in any service provider's SIM card to avail mobile telephony, internet mobile (2G, 3G & 4G LTE) and value added services of the telecom operator.

The STB equipment set should be such that on consumer should be able to just purchase a Smart Card and subscribe to channel packages and other value added services provided by the DTH operator and enjoy the subscribed services.

The companies and vendors manufacturing the STB equipment set should provide warranty and maintenance services against a strict SLA which can reduce consumer's hassles. The SLA should be time bound and failing to adhere should have monetary repayment to consumer which can help him avail the extension to his subscribed DTH services. Also STB manufacturers should provide replacement units in case of longer time needed to fix the equipment.

Currently the above tasks are handled by DTH providers and are chargeable. First time installation cost is included in the package when you avail the service with certain benefits for relocation if subscribed to a yearly package.

Since STB is a device which has limited interaction through the remote control as well as has a push facility wherein the DTH provider upgrades the software on it when enabled, the interoperability should be similar to cell phone number portability where consumer should be able to reset the STB and new DTH provider should be able to push his settings on the box.

Since there is 2 way communication happening on the device, there has to common standards and protocols to be followed wherein the menu options and browsing functionality of the box should be able to provide the facility for customization and branding.

Another thing to consider here is that depending the on service subscribed consumer can also record the programs for viewing later so the STB box should have option to connect external hard disk drive of his choice on a USB port wherein it provides flexibility to record as per his choice, as currently the STB which are provided by DTH operators have limited capacity which spoils the consumer's experience to record more. So if a consumer subscribes to recording of program options in his package from the DTH operator the DTH operation should not restrict it in terms of bandwidth limitation rather it should be dependent on what the capacity of drive the consumer connects.