

Comments by Mr. Manohar Prakash Rao., Indore - CP no. 11/ 2019 dtd. 28.08.2019 on Platform Services offered by DTH Operators

Q1: 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.

Response 1: TRAI in its recommendations of previous consultation in 2014 and MIB in their letter dtd. 02.07.2019 have specified PS as a service exclusive to a DTH operator and not to be shared with any other DPO., on the basis that in absence of such exclusivity it would as well constitute as a broadcaster / television channel.

However with the emerging trends of newer type of content mix on newer platforms like OTT etc with original or remixed /repackaged or curated content, this may need to be reviewed ideally to allow innovation by DTH medium and freely allow them compete with such newer types of content delivery. Hence other than a licensed broadcaster channel (which is open to all mediums to carry on their network through inter connect agreements) or a PS which is exclusive to a single DTH operator as existing currently, there could be another category which doesn't fall in either of these.

For instance, an educational or gaming or data resource content/ service, which is created by third parties and open to be carried by multiple DTH operators uniformly without any exclusivity., but falling short to qualify as a licensed broadcasting channel., which comes with a mandatory provision of being open to all types of DPOs either as a pay or FTA channel, with or without commercial advertisements. **Regulation should allow some scope for such innovations in future by DTH operators**, while applying the existing rules of PS to monitor such content by fixing responsibility to DTH operators, rather than the third party agency which is not a licensed broadcasting channel. It is a matter of regulatory control whether the PS registration in such cases need to be under a separate category or to leave it open to DTH operators.

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?

Response 2: As specified above such specified category of content would be exclusive only across multiple satellite / DTH operators subject to other regulations and not to be extended to other category of DPOs having terrestrial network in view of applicable regulations and content monitoring.

Q 3 & Response 3: No comments

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

Response 4 : Registration and annual fee should be max. half of what is applicable to a broadcasting channel if exclusivity is extended across all DTH operators. And If PS is to be limited exclusively to a single DTH operator, the fees should be lesser in proportion to the no. of DTH operators.

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

Response 5: Since different position / placement in EPG is being envisaged along with sequential numbering with a common one / two digit series prefix, a maximum of 99 channels may be allowed as PS channels.

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 ?

Response 6; Yes. PS channels should not be classified and clubbed along with the genres of regular tv channels and should be grouped under common one / two digit prefixed number series and all PS channels appearing under a single sequence grouping. Naming format of PS channel should be followed as explained at Response 7 of the following Q 7. However such PS services may be exclusively assigned to any flip button on STB or STB remote control device as the DTH operator deems fit for ready accessibility.

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.

Response 7: Subscriber should be able to readily identify distinct visual output of PS channel with an on screen water marking logo either as VAS or PS or 'on demand' etc common and uniform across all DTH operators. No font distinction different from regular TV channel name display would be necessary as viewers may not notice it readily. However if a colour highlighting or differently colored text can be provided for display name it would serve better instead of font. All PS channels should be grouped under above mentioned single heading / classification and titled in a format "<DTH operator brand name> PS <proprietary channel name or serial no if any >" . For eg: "Telenet PS Devotion-1 Hindi " . Other than generic names used in above channel water marking PS service is not to be associated with any other proprietary names such

as 'Active','Select' etc. for clarity and uniformity across DTH operators. However such services may be exclusively assigned to any flip button on STB or STB remote control device as the DTH operator deems fit for ready accessibility.

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

Response 8; Neither required nor desirable. DTH operators should be given full freedom in this regard, as such PS channels are to be grouped separately in single unique positions in EPG and without allowing them to be placed them under genres of regular tv channels.

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

Response 9; Though DTH operators are totally free to decide on Tariff & pricing aspects of PS channels, **If a PS is not offered as a free service, Tariff and Billing for such PS should invariably made on an a-la-carte Daily Burn Rate(DBR) basis - similar to other pay channels- and with a lock in period of not more than one day.**

As PS channels carry niche and targeted content, all PS channels are to be mandatorily offered on an a-la-carte basis only. Further any PS channel subscription should not be bundled with any other PS channel or Bouquet or TV channel/ Bouquet (FTA or pay) subscription or offered on a conditional basis subject to subscription of any other service/ channel/ bouquet. In no case weekly / monthly / bi-monthly /quarterly / semi-annual / annual periodicity of lockin and / or subscriptions should be allowed.