

Government of India

Ministry of Communications (Sanchar Mantralaya)

Department of Telecommunications (Doorsanchar Vibhag), Gujarat LSA,
First Floor, P & T Administrative Building, Khanpur, Ahmedabad- 380001

Guj/R1/CA

Dated: 24-11-2020

Minutes of First Meeting of Gujarat State Broadband Committee held on
12.10.2020

First meeting of Gujarat State Broadband Committee (SBC) was held on 12-10-2020 under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary, Government of Gujarat. The meeting was attended by:

1. Shri Anil Mukim, Chief Secretary, Government of Gujarat & Chairman SBC
2. Dr. Rajiv Kumar Gupta, Additional Chief Secretary, Forest & Environment Department, Government of Gujarat.
3. Shri Mukesh Puri, Additional Chief Secretary, Urban Development & Urban Housing Deptt., Government of Gujarat.
4. Shri Hareet Sukhla, Secretary, Department of Science & Technology, Govt. of Gujarat.
5. Shri S B Vasava, Secretary, Roads & Buildings Department, Government of Gujarat.
6. Shri D P Parihar, Sr. DDG, DoT, Gujarat LSA.
7. Shri P K Saha, CGM, BSNL, Gujarat Circle.
8. Shri Dharmendra Sharma, CGM, BBNL, Gujarat.
9. Shri Ashish Thaker, DDG (Rural), DoT, Gujarat LSA.
10. Shri Madan Lal, Director (Rural), DoT, Gujarat LSA.
11. Dr. J Jena, Representative from COAI.
12. Shri T R Dua, Representative from TAIPA.

At the onset, Sr. DDG, DoT, Gujarat LSA and convener of the State Broadband Committee (SBC) welcomed Chairman and all the member of the committee. After brief introduction by the members, Sr. DDG, DoT, Gujarat LSA apprised the committee about the objectives of National Broadband Mission (NBM), role of SBC, actions to be taken to achieve the mission objectives. He also requested Gujarat Government to approve the Right of Way (RoW) policy for the State of Gujarat at the earliest. A brief PPT was presented by Gujarat LSA covering all the agenda points of the meeting.

Objective of National Broadband Mission is to provide Reliable, High speed (upto 50 Mbps), Affordable Broadband services to every citizen by the year 2022. Present broadband penetration (Wireline + Wireless) in the state of Gujarat is of the order of 66% with average broadband speed below 10 Mbps. To achieve the mission objective in respect of penetration, speed and reliability, deliverables are as per following details:

1. **Broadband access to all the villages:** Government of Gujarat has taken initiative to provide optical fibre connectivity to all the villages and already sent proposal to Central Government for providing optical fibre connectivity to leftover 4000+ villages in the BharatNet Project Phase-III (all the GPs are already being covered under Phase-I & II). CGM BBNL informed that laying of OFC under phase-II is likely to be completed during the current financial year.

To take care of high-speed broadband requirement of citizens living in various hamlets, data covering name of hamlet, name of parent village, latitude & longitude of hamlet, number of households and population of hamlets are required by the Department of Telecom. It was indicated by the State Government authorities that such data is available and would be shared with DoT.

2. **e-Governance initiatives:** Government of Gujarat has launched "SevaSetu" Scheme covering 8000+ villages where OFC is already laid. Chief Secretary, Govt. of Gujarat instructed CGM BBNL to not only complete the laying of OFC under Phase-II in time but also to ensure that missing links in the optical fibre connectivity provided to villages under BharatNet Phase-I are also surveyed immediately and time bound action is taken to restore connectivity to all those villages.

3. **Tower density:** At present, 36000+ towers are already operational in the state of Gujarat which amounts to about 0.6 towers per 1000 population. To increase the tower density to 1.0 per thousand population as envisaged under National Broadband Mission, 25000+ additional towers are to be erected. Chief Secretary, Govt. of Gujarat emphasized the need for time bound programme by the Telecom Service Providers & Telecom Infrastructure Providers in this regard and also desired to resolve the issues, if any, which may hamper the progress.

4. **Fiberization of Towers:** At present, about 37% towers are already having fibre connectivity. A large quantity of optical fibre is to be laid in urban as well as rural areas and also along the highways to increase the percentage of tower fiberization to 70% as envisaged under the National Broadband Mission.

5. On behalf of Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI), Dr. J Jena requested for early implementation of RoW policy aligned with RoW Rule-2016. He also suggested that:

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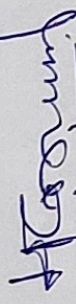
- State Discom, through a central agreement, to allow Telcos to use their LT poles for aerial OFC and mounting low power 4G/5G BTSs.
- Permissions for laying last-mile aerial OFC/Co-axial Cables in a standardized aesthetic way.
- Rationalization of Restoration/ Access Charges across the state.
- National Building Code for in-building fibre layout be adopted by new housing societies and link it to issue of completion certificate
- Penalty clause on fibre cut as standard contract clause and proceeds be used for swift restoration
- Municipal and state authorities to facilitate construction of common ducts for underground electrical cable and OFC during new/widening road construction
- A “Dig-once” and “call before you Dig” policy should be encouraged as a part of State’s policy.

6. On behalf of Towers And Infrastructure Providers Association (TAIPA), Shri T R Dua also requested for early implementation of RoW policy aligned with RoW Rule-2016. Additional suggestions from TAIPA are:

- Availability of GIDC infrastructure and Government Land & Buildings for installation of Mobile towers should be facilitated.
- Power connections to be provided within a reasonable time.
- Electricity for Telecom towers at Industrial Tariffs.
- Property Tax to be charged at standard & reasonable rate across the state.

7. Concluding the meeting, Chief Secretary, Government of Gujarat mentioned that the issues raised in the meeting are simple yet important and need to be addressed urgently. He directed concerned officers to take up the matter regarding implementation of RoW policy on priority, utilize the BhartNet network effectively, share the village & hamlet data with DoT.

8. The meeting ended with vote of Thanks by Sr DDG, DoT, Gujarat LSA. He thanked Chairman and all the members of the SBC. He also thanked officers of Department of Science & Technology for making arrangements for the meeting. The next meeting will be tentatively held during January/February, 2021.


M. Madan Lal, IAS
 IAS

Director Rural, Gujarat LSA, DoT