April 15, 2024
ITU-APT/L/23-24/872

Shri Pankaj Agarwal
Secretary
Ministry of Power
Shram Shakti Bhawan
New Delhi

SUBJECT: Implementing Green Open Access Rules for the Telecom Sector in States/UTs

REFERENCE

1. Amended Green Open Access Rules, 2022 vide G.S.R. 381(E) titled "Electricity (Promoting Renewable Energy Through Green Energy Open Access) (Second Amendment) Rules, 2023
2. MoP Advisory to Energy Secretaries, CMDs/MDs of State Discoms on "Implementation of Composite Billing Scheme for Multiple connections like TSPs dated May 24, 2023
3. MoP letter to SERCs/JERC re Determination of Green Tariff under Green Open Access Rules, 2022 dated May 13, 2023
4. MoP letter to ACS/Principal Secretary/Secretary (Energy/Power) of all States/UTs re Alignment with Open Access Regulations, on aggregation basis dated Feb 12, 2024

Respected Sir,

As you are aware, the telecommunications industry has actively engaged with the Ministry of Power for an enabling policy environment for transitioning of energy used by telecom networks towards Green Open Access. This is important since telecom networks provide not just basic voice, sms and data services for consumers but also growing enterprise applications like factory automation, robotics and IoT. With connectivity becoming an essential layer for today and tomorrow's transformational applications and Industry 4.0, it is important for the Telecom industry to transition towards affordable renewable sources of energy.

The Ministry of Power in May'23 amended the Green Open Access Rules, 2022 to allow for a Green Open Access user to meet the 100kW contract demand/sanction load limit through single or multiple connections. The ground was also laid for implementation of a "One Distribution

Utility, One Bill, One Payment mechanism" solution for issuance of a single composite bill for multiple meters for payment.

The aforementioned amendment required Power Ministries and SERCs in States/UTs to amend their primary and subordinate rules in line with the Central Green Open Access Rules. As per our understanding, presently Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Uttrakhand, Punjab, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Gujarat, J&K & Ladakh, Telangana and Arunachal Pradesh have adopted the central rules. It is important that the amended State Policies and Rules provide the necessary framework under which transition to green open access is made possible.

Challenges

Policy and procedural

- With the exception of states mentioned above, SERCs may not have promulgated the Central Rules or have not held stakeholder consultations. Hence the timeframe to amended policy is unclear.
- Some states may require multiple legislative changes in their primary and secondary policies, rules that govern various aspects of the provision of Green Open Access to fully align with Central Rules e.g., in Uttar Pradesh, understandably at least five instruments[1] may need to be amended.

Operational

- **Metering regulations** – Telecom towers generally have a contract demand of 15KVA to 20KVA and are connected to LT lines. The Central Electricity Authority (CEA) metering regulations for Green Open Access require the installed meters to have the capability of recording data at 15 minute time blocks. This ABT facility is presently not available for LT consumers. It may be noted that the Central Electricity Authority (CEA) has issued the Draft Central Electricity Authority (Installation and Operation of Meters) (Amendment) Regulations, 2024[2] with the aim of allowing smart meters for consumers connected at a voltage level of 11kV and taking power through Green Open Access. Only Karnataka SERC has issues the necessary Order[3] waiving LT Consumers seeking OA from time differentiated measurement of parameters in the meter in 15 minutes' time blocks. The Order further says that, such meters shall have TOD facilities and the Distribution Licensees shall prescribe a common format in which the meter data of the LT consumer seeking open access shall be submitted to them.
- **Head-end System (HES) and Meter Data Management System (MDMS) for load aggregation** – It is understood that HES and MDMS software infrastructure is not available across all SLDCs

and Discoms that can help in aggregation of multiple meters and provide a composite billing solution.

- **Scheduling of Open Access** – State regulations require Open Access users to provide a daily schedule of OA energy that will be consumed. Since TSPs run a network of towers which count as individual connections, it is not possible to provide this on a daily basis. Furthermore, the energy consumption pattern of a telecom network is consistent and does not vary much on a day-to-day basis. It is therefore requested that the industry may get an exemption from this requirement.

Cost of Green Open Access Energy

- **Levies on Open Access** – The 2022 Rules specify[4] a range of charges and levies which are permissible on Open Access. States need to align their levies in accordance with Central Rules. Furthermore, charges and levies should be such that large scale users like TSPs find it economical to transition to Green Open Access usage.

Recommendations

As evident, the path for TSPs to run their network energy through renewable sources is not yet within their grasp until States fully adopt, and implement on ground, the Central OA Rules, 2023. In view of these, we request the following:

1. **Central and State Governments should ensure that the Electricity (Promoting Renewable Energy through Green Energy Open Access) (Second Amendment) Rules, 2023 announced on May 23, 2023 are fully adopted by all States**
2. **Central/State Governments, CEA and SERCs may amend Secondary Rules impacting Green Open Access with respect to metering, composite billing, scheduling, etc to ensure that TSPs are able to transition to Green Open Access. In particular, the following may be streamlined:**
    - **CEA to provide necessary relaxation for TSPs using Smart Meter for LT connections from need for 15-minute time block metering**
    - **SERCs may adopt the same relaxation measures in line with the Draft Central Electricity Authority (Installation and Operation of Meters) (Amendment) Regulations, 2024[5] and/or issue necessary Orders as in the case of KERC Order[6]**
    - **State governments, SERCs Discoms may ensure that the required HES and MDMS infrastructure is available to support demand aggregation and composite billing.**
    - **Scheduling and Forecasting for Open Access users may be relaxed for TSPs and tower companies**

- **Open Access levies and rates may be rationalized to ensure that transition to Open Access energy proves to be economical for TSPs.**

We look forward to your continued support in making Indian Telecom networks become one of the world's largest and greenest networks. We look forward to an opportunity to engage with you further to discuss the challenges and way forward.

Thanking you,

Yours Sincerely,

Bharat B Bhatia,
President, ITU-APT Foundation of India
Vice Chairman - Asia Pacific, World Wireless Research Forum (WWRF)
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2. Chairman – Digital Communications Commission & Secretary – Department of Telecommunications, Ministry of Communications, Sanchar Bhawan, 20 Ashoka Road, New Delhi – 110001
3. Member (T), Department of Telecommunications, Sanchar Bhawan, 20 Ashoka Road, New Delhi – 110001
4. DDG & Mission Director, National Broadband Mission, Department of Telecommunications, UIDAI Building, Bangla Sahib Road, New Delhi – 110001