

Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Issues Guidelines for Platform Services offered by Multi- System Operators.

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1. The Cable Television Networks Rules, 1994, permit Multi-System Operators (MSOs) to transmit their own programming service, either directly to their own subscribers or through one or more Local Cable Operators. These own programming services referred to as 'Platform Services (PS)', which also include most 'local-channels', are exclusive programming services being generated at local level offered by MSOs.

2. In accordance to the Rule 6(6) of the Cable Television Networks Rules, 1994; this Ministry on 30.11.2022 has issued the guidelines in respect of 'Platform Services' provided by MSOs in India. These Guidelines provide the definition for the 'platform services' and lay down the norms for the MSOs in running the platform services which inter-alia include:

- Simple online registration process for PS channels by MSOs at nominal fees of Rs 1,000 per PS channel. The online registration portal for this purpose is under preparation and shall be notified shortly.
- Only entities registered as Companies are allowed to provide local news and current affairs. MSOs not registered as "company" and desirous of providing local news and current affairs are mandatorily required to apply within 3 months with Ministry of Corporate Affairs for conversion into "company".
- Total number of permitted PS channels per operator is to be capped at 5% of the total channel carriage capacity.
- To cater to the need of the local language and culture of the subscribers, this cap on PS channels shall be computed at the level of State/Union Territory. Also, additionally, 2 PS channels shall be permitted at the level of each District to cater to the need of local content at the District level.
- All PS channels to carry a caption as 'Platform Services' to distinguish them from the registered TV channels.
- The Content of the PS to be exclusive to the platform and is not to be shared directly or indirectly with any other Distribution Platform Operator. However, sharing of live feeds from the religious places like Temples, Gurudwaras etc. shall be permitted.
- All PS channels to be placed together under genre 'Platform Services' in the Electronic Programme Guide (EPG) along with their Maximum Retail Price and option for activation / de-activation of PS as per the applicable orders / directions / regulation(s) of TRAI.
- MSOs offering PS, to retain, recording of all PS channel programs for a period of 90 days.
- Any content related complaint shall be examined by the Authorised Officer prescribed under the CTN Act, 1995, and the State/ District Monitoring Committee.
- MSOs have been granted a period of 12 months to comply with the guidelines issued on 30th November, 2022.

3. Cable Operators are granted registration for the distribution of Registered TV Channels. The above guidelines have been issued to ensure that network capacity of Cable Operators is utilised primarily for the same. Also, sufficient provisions have been made in the guidelines for MSOs to cater to the demand of local contents by their subscribers. Further, these guidelines mandate the adherence to Programme Code and Advertisement Code in respect to content on PS channels, keeping of recording for 90 days etc. and shall help

in combating the menace of Piracy.

Saurabh singh

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