Ministry of Human Resource Development
Department of Higher Education

Committee on DTH

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The DTH Committee, constituted by the MHRD under NME-ICT project, held its 2nd meeting at 10:00 am, on 19th July, 2011 at Deptt. Of Space, Lok Nayak Bhawan, New Delhi. The following members attended the meeting –

1. Prof. S.V. Raghavan, Chairman, DTH Committee, Scientific Secretary, Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India.

2. Mr. N.K. Sinha, Mission Director, NMEICT, Additional Secretary (TEL), MHRD, New Delhi.

3. Mr. N. Neelkanthan, Director, Satellite Communication and Navigatio Programmes, ISRO, Bangalore.

4. Mr. V.S. Palsule, Director, DECU, Space Application Centre, ISRO, Ahmedabad.

5. Mr. K. Sethuraman, Assistant Director, SATCOM Application, Sat. Communication Programmes Office, ISRO, Bangalore

6. Mr. Vikram Desai, Senior Scientist, DECU, ISRO, (member invitee)

7. Shri Pradeep Kaul, Convener, DTH Committee, Ex. Joint Director, CEC, New Delhi.

The remaining members of the committee, due to their pre occupation, could not attend the meeting.

Prof. Raghavan, Chairman DTH Committee, welcomed the members of the Committee and confirmed the minutes of the last meeting with inclusion of the comments received from Mr. K. Sethuraman of ISRO.

Mr. Neelkanthan informed the Committee that with regard to issue of booking transponders/satellite for launch of 1000 DTH channels by the MHRD, has been put before the INSAT Coordination Committee [ICC] in its meeting recently held at Delhi. The ICC has taken note of it and shall duly inform of its recommendations in next 15-20 days' time. Further requirement of two transponders for launch of 40-50 educational channels initially required by the MHRD, was also put before the ICC. The ICC also noted that MHRD is willing to use the leased transponders, in case ISRO transponders are right now not available. Mr. Neelkanthan has assured to communicate that the final decision on both the above issues shall be taken by the ICC in about 20 days and same shall be communicated to the MHRD. He informed that education is the priority sector for ISRO also.

Mr. N.K. Sinha reminded the ISRO team about a couple of letters written by the Secretary, MHRD to Secretary, DoS requesting allocation of transponders to MHRD for educational purposes, the reply of which is still pending. Mr. Sethuraman informed that probably the space was not made available due to a loss of GSLV Satellite. However, the MHRD requirement shall be kept in mind and the letters shall be replied.

The ISRO team informed that after ICC clearance, and in case the transponder is not available with the ISRO, the lease of transponders and the tender process by Antrix Corporation (of ISRO) shall take two to three months to finalise.

The issues regarding preparation for setting up of up-inking facilities for the DTH was also discussed. The ISRO team informed that as per their recent experience of acquiring Earth Stations for 3-4 channels, costs, Rs. 10-12 Crores and addition of Rs. 5-10 Lakhs is cost of each channel. It was felt that the main Earth Station should be installed by the MHRD keeping in mind the total DTH requirement. It should also be kept in mind that the content should reach the Earth Station through feeder links like satellite or fiber from the Teaching End institutions. It was recommended that content feeder received from various institutions should be centralized.

The committee felt that since the ISRO have been regularly dealing with the up-linking and the Teaching End equipment, they were, therefore, requested to provide the list of equipments for both.

Mr. Palsule has been requested to make such lists available to the MHRD and Mr. Kaul should visit DECU, Ahmedabad, discuss the requirement and both to come up with a list of equipments and the specifications in two weeks time.

Once the specifications are prepared, the MHRD may generate RFP and float tender(s) on turnkey basis and finalise the agency for supply and erection of equipments of the Earth Station.

Mr. Sinha raised an issue of reaching the education content in interactive mode to remote areas, where there is a difficult and delay in reaching through Optical Fiber. It was felt that the Satellite is the best solution for such difficulties. It was also felt that we may look into the use of IPSTAR solution and for this, may utilise the BSNL Gateways at Delhi/Mumbai. We may hire the bandwidth required and share the cost on rental basis from the BSNL. The BSNL should also be requested to provide end equipments on rental basis, for this a separate meeting by the MHRD to be held with the members from BSNL.

The ISRO team informed that as and when GSAT-11 is going to be available [likely date 2013] all the traffic of the IPSTAR shall be migrated to the GSAT-11 and at that time there will not be any difficulty for the MHRD traffic to migration from IPSTAR to GSAT platform.

It was noted that at present MHRD is providing 1Gbit capacity through fiber, to institutions of higher learning and the capacity is likely to be saturated soon. It was; therefore, felt that we need to also look into providing a return path to the students to address their questions by the experts. It was noticed that ISRO at Ahmedabad has done a lot of work in this regard and GSM technology in return path can be provided for the benefit of the students at some

prescribed time. Mr. Palsule was further requested to kindly prepare a proposal on this, for use by the MHRD.

It was reiterated that looking into the technology advantage and the Set Top Box cost trend, we should adopt MPEG-4 compression technology.

It was decided that the Next meeting in consultation with Mr. Neelakanthan shall be held in a month's time at ISRO Bangalore.

The meeting ended with vote of thanks to the Chair.

Pradeep Kaul
Convener, DTH Committee