

Quarterly Report on Cable Television Service



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Bhutan InfoComm and Media Authority

Royal Government of Bhutan

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1. Monitoring Visits

The Authority regularly takes the monitoring, inspection, and verification of cable television services visits to the Dzongkhags and Gewogs. In this quarter, the team from the InfoComm and Infrastructure Division made a field visit to Haa and Paro to check the digitization progress of Leki Cable Service and to monitor the cable services service from 7th August 2023 to 9th August 2023. Likewise the Authority also took a monitoring tour to Wangude and Punkha to monitor the ICT infrastructure, cable Services and fibre network from 11th September to 18th September, 2023.

The objective of undertaking a monitoring tour was mainly to monitor the control room of the local cable operator and to check if they have complied with the sent directives of the Authority on migration to full digital signal and removal of the local dishes.

During the entire tour, the team met with the LCOs including their technical team to discuss the status of the digitization of the CATV. The discussion mainly focused on advocating policy, rules and regulation, technical issues, and way forward to providing the best services to the customers.

1.1. Monitoring Visit to Haa Dzongkhag

Leki Cable Service in Haa.



Figure 1. Control room of Leki Cable Service

- Upon visiting the control room located in Haa town, it was found that while the analog station was removed, the signal was not provided in fully digital.
- The proprietor shared that he is yet to cover digital signal in two geogs i.e Samar and Uesu geogs due to shortage of set top boxes and currently there are about 250 analog customers.
- It has been informed that the proprietor declared both the digital and analog customers during renewal of his licence.

- The digital signal is being converted to analog and then distributed in those geogs. No other control rooms for analog stations were found.
- It has been also shared that due to scattered households and less preference from customers availing service, it hampers the reach of CATV connectivity.
- However, the proprietor promised to go fully digital by the end of December 2023. Currently, he has two technicians and four linesmen working for him.
- Upon visiting the Control room of Namkhai Cable Service located at Denchukha, it was found that the analog station was removed and the signal was provided in fully digital.
- The cable service covered Denchukha, Dorokha and Sengteng with around 20 customers at Denchukha, 70 plus customers in Dorokha and 30 plus customers in Sengteng.
- The backup dish for BBS was found to be in use while no backup battery incase of power failure was found.
- It was also observed that the cable service has enough set top boxes in stock. However, customers are reluctant to use set top boxes due to the preferences to use dish TV.
- The team also briefed on the need of SLA and its importance.

1.2. Monitoring Visit to Paro Dzongkhag.

1.2.1. The new CATV digitization set up in Naja Geog, Paro



- It has been found that there was not any control room established in Naja geog. However, Zhenphen Lhundrup Digital cable service and Dogar Cable service located in Dawakha, Paro have been sharing the control room.
- In the Dogar Cable service control room, a QAM, Transmitter, Amplifier, set top boxes and a desktop were found in place.

1.2.2. Monitoring of Dogar cable service in Dawakha, Paro.



- Upon visiting Dogar cable’s control room located in Tshongkha, Dawakha, it was found that the analog station was removed and signal was provided in fully digital.
- Currently there are 100 plus customers with Dogar cable service. However, it was shared that purchasing set top boxes in cash while customers demanding credit is hampering his service delivery.

1.3. Monitoring Visit to Wangdue Dzongkhag.

TT Cable service in Bajo, Wangdue.



- The team visited TT cable’s control room located in Bajo town and it was found that the analog station was removed and signal was provided in fully digital.
- The cable service is providing service to around 1400 customers.

- Currently, there are three technicians working with TT cable service.

1.4. Monitoring Visit to Punakha Dzongkhag.

Damchen Cable Service in Punakha :



- Upon visiting the Control room of Damchen Cable Service located at Khuruthang in Punakha which is being shared with Buddha cable service, it was found that the analog station was removed and the signal was provided in fully digital. Currently the proprietor has three staff working with him.

1.5. Awareness program on the Digitization of CATV and other ICT related services of the Authority

For this quarter, the division along with the other two divisions of the Authority also conducted awareness in Genekha Geog under Thimphu Dzongkhag on Digitization of Cable Services and other ICT related services of the Authority. The Cable Television networks in the country have undergone digitization with services from multi service operators (MSO). In this regard, a team from Bhutan InfoComm and Media Authority (the Authority) has carried out the awareness program on digitization of cable services and other ICT related services to the relevant stakeholders.

Some of the major sensitization and awareness programs were on following topic and issues;

- Importance of digitization,
- Rules and regulations on Cable Television services,
- Online Licensing System (OLS) of the Authority,
- Rural Television services permit for Ku band installation,
- Cellular Mobile Quality of Services,
- Electromagnetic Field Radiation from Mobile towers in Bhutan,

- Radio Apparatus Land Mobile Handsets

The program was mainly conducted with the following objectives;

- To advocate the relevant stakeholders on digitization of Cable television Services and to seek their support towards the Government's initiative,
- To make aware the public on the complaint redressal platform and system of BICMA
- To extend the regulatory roles of BICMA through ICTO and other relevant agencies.

2. Complaints received with and compiled by the Authority

In the event of any issues/complaints related to the cable television services, the Authority has made many platforms available for the subscribers to lodge the complaints with the Authority. The complainant can contact the Authority through our focal officers appointed for the service, the details for which, have been mentioned in the website (www.bicma.gov.bt) and social media (Facebook) page (www.facebook.com/bicmabhutan). We also have an online complaint platform on our website under the services/complaints section through which anyone can lodge the complaints. They can also write an email to bicma@bicma.bt.

In order to enhance the customer grievance redressal mechanism, the officials from the Authority also scan the social media pages on a daily basis to see if there are any complaints and issues related to the cable television services provided by the Service providers. As mentioned above, the Authority has made many platforms available from where the subscriber of cable television as well as our licensee such as local cable operators and multi-service operators can lodge the complaints with the Authority. The complaints received are well resolved and documented. The BICMA also receives the customer complaints through emails and formal letters from the public and Gewogs administrations. Particularly for the cable operators to share their challenges, issues and to submit the complaints with the Authority to take up the appropriate action, the Authority has formed the cable operators group in social media platform “Telegram”.

For the last three months (July-september, 2023) the complaints received by the Authority are:

Sl. No.	Cable TV Operator	Date of Complaint	Area/ Location	Name of Complainant	Contact Number	Issue/ Description	Remarks
1	Cable Sat	06/07/2023	Phuntsholing , kabrator		77742434	Issue with TV line and requested for re-connectivity but got delayed	Called LCO and resolved on same day

2	Sigma	07/07/2023	Paro	Ugyen Dorji, Sigma Owner	77213777	STB Interoperability with TD Metho Paro	Informed and resolved the issue saying that from authority side interoperability has work and if there is a technical issue than LCOs has to discuss with MSO
3	Kharung Cable	12/07/2023	Darla, Chukha		17626098	New Line	Called LCO and resolved the issue
4	Dawa Cable	27/07/2023	Nganglam	Kul Bdr.	17558692	Line issue	Informed LCO and issue was resolved
5	Norling Cable	27/07/2023	Thimphu, Changangkha	Gyem Tshering	77822579	Complaint on the disruption caused by Norling Cable wires and no actions taken by norling Cable despite repeated reminder.	Called Norling Cable and resolved
6	Nakchung Cable	06/08/2023	Bjemina	Dolma	17632144	Signal Issue	Resolved
7	Nakchung Cable	07/08/2023	Khariphu, Bjemina	Thinley Dorji	17249949	No TV line for almost a week	Called Nakchung Cable and resolved
8	Etho Meto Cable	07/08/2023	Changangkha, Thimphu	Leki Tshering	77760779	Interoperability Issue	Called Etho Metho and resolved
9	Norling Cable	25/08/2023	Taba, Thimphu	Dorji Wangdi	17665579	Interoperability issue	Called Norling and issue was resolved
10	DrukCom	28/08/2023	Thimphu		77352524	Line got disconnected before expiry of the date	Informed Drukcom resolved
11	Punab Cable	03/09/2023	Punakha	Namgay Dorji	17566377	September bill updated but no cable line	Resolved
12	Dragon Cable	01/09/2023	Phobjikha	17471894	17471894	Shortage of STB	Resolved

13	Norling Cable	02/09/2023	YHS, Thimphu	Tshering Dorji	17110506	Line Disturbance	Resolved
14	Tshela Cable	02/09/2023	P/ling	Tashi Namgyel	17341967	Set Top Box, Interoperability	Resolved
15	Nakchung Cable	06/09/2023	Gidhagom	Tenzin Thinley	77757642	Line got damaged due to heavy rainfall	Resolved
16	Punab Cable	06/09/2023	Gungkarmo, Punakha	Tandin Nima	17711540	Signal Issue	Restored
17	Norling Cable	06/09/2023	Babesa, Tshelu Barp	Bhimlal Suberi	17604023	Signal Issue	Resolved
18	TD Metho Paro	07/09/2023	Paro	Jigme	17525635	Interoperability Issue	Resolved
19	Punab Cable	12/09/2023	Changyuel	Ugyen Phuntsho	77656962	Line Issue	Resolved
20	Punab Cable	18/09/2023	Between Khuru and walakha	Tshering	17430883	Line Issue	Resolved
21	Tshognyi Phendey Cable Services	21/09/2023	Bangtar	Mon Bdr. Tamang	17113852	Druk MSO Signal Issue	Resolved
22	Etho Metho Cable	23/09/2023	Babena	Lobzang Nima	-	Line issue	Resolved
23	DrukCom	28/09/2023	Thimphu	Tashi Phuntsho	17697878	Interoperability issue, Subscriber got transferred from Tsirang	Issue was resolved
24	Kharung Cable	28/09/2023	Gedu, Darla	Karma	17626098	Request for New line	Resolved

3. Key Activities carried out by the Authority

- I. For this quarter (July - September,2023), the Authority conducted an awareness program on digitization of cable television services and on other services of BICMA in Genekha, Thimphu Dzongkhag.
- II. The Division also monitored the quality of cable television services and its digitization status in Haa, Paro, Wangdue and Punakha dzongkhags.
- III. A random verification of set top boxes were conducted where in few numbers of random set top boxes were collected from the customers in Thimphu, Haa, Paro, Punakha and Wangdue Phodrang Dzongkhags.
- IV. The Authority also collected data on the pole sharing charges paid by each LCOs to Bhutan Telecom Limited (BTL) and Bhutan Power Corporation (BPC) in order to facilitate the study on if the pole sharing charges can be waived off especially for the LCOs in the rural areas.

4. Findings

- I. During the monitoring visits, the team observed that with digital signals from the MSO, the sound and picture quality are good. The team was also informed that with digital signals, the complaints that LCO gets are drastically reduced.
- II. The majority of the cable operators shared to the monitoring team about the challenges they face due to the dish TV and Ku band user in the cable reached areas. Therefore, the Authority is recommended to constantly monitor the installation of Ku band and the dishes in the cable reached areas

5. Way Forward

- I. The complaints lodged with the Authority will be properly recorded and resolved.
- II. Follow up on the cable operators still operating in analog stations.
- III. Compile and publish the quarterly report for the cable television services to facilitate Authority in taking proper regulatory measures for improving the quality of cable television services.