

The
Kolkata  **Gazette**

सत्यमेव जयते

Extraordinary
Published by Authority

MAGHA 9]

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 29, 2025

[SAKA 1946

PART I—Orders and Notifications by the Governor of West Bengal, the High Court, Government Treasury, etc.

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY & ELECTRONICS
MONI BHANDAR (5TH & 6TH) FLOOR, BLOCK-EP & GP,
SECTOR-V, SALT LAKE, KOLKATA-700 091.
Phone : 2357-2545, Fax : 2357-2534

NOTIFICATION

No.: 1278-Estt/ITE-20099/13/2021

Dated : 10.11.2023

WHREAS, internet data consumption in India is increasing at a rapid pace. In 2021, out of approximately 624 million internet users in the country. 572 million used to access internet on their mobile with an average per-capita monthly mobile usage of 13.5 GB. The backbone of IT&ITeS industry is thus primarily dependent on quality of connectivity.

AND WHEREAS, the lack of availability of submarine cable-driven internet backhaul in the Eastern India has remained a cause of concern while Mumbai, Kochi, Thiruvananthapuram and Chennai are the four major international Submarine Cable landing stations in the country. There is one in Tuticorin connecting India and Sri Lanka. Hence apart from Chennai, there is no Internet Cable Landing Station (ICLS) in the Bay of Bengal.

AND WHEREAS, West Bengal is strategically located to have an Internet Cable Landing Station to cater to the entire Eastern India. As Nepal and Bhutan are the land logged countries, other neighbouring countries like Myanmar, Bangladesh collectively creates a huge business opportunity. An Internet Cable Landing Station in Eastern India will directly contribute to the significant decrease in connectivity cost in the Eastern Indian region by anything between 10% and 30%. Therefore, existence of an Internet Cable Landing Station in West Bengal will make the operations cheaper for the entire IT/ITES industry and especially for the Data Centre Operators in the State and thereby giving a major boost to attract further investments.

AND WHEREAS, a carrier neutral Internet Cable Landing Station along the West Bengal coast will be the deciding factor in attracting upcoming submarine-cable providers to choose West Bengal as one of their preferred landing ports. Hence, West Bengal has now come up with a proactive policy to incentivize infrastructure providers to develop a carrier neutral Internet Cable Landing Station.

NOW THEREFORE, the Governor is pleased to notify the '**West Bengal Internet Cable Landing Station Policy, 2023**' (attached herewith) with the vision of making West Bengal, the preferred destination of Internet Cable Landing Station Industry in the country and with a mission to attract foreign and domestic investment, to mentor MSMEs and Start Ups and to create employment in order to build a complete new eco-system in the State.

The policy shall come into effect from the date of this notification and will remain operative for the next five (5) years or till that time any new policy/amendment is introduced as a replacement, whichever is earlier.

This issues with the concurrence of the Department of Finance, Government of West Bengal, vide their U.O. Nos. Revenue/2021-2022/0062 dated 22.03.2022 & Group S/2022-2023/0010 dated 16.03.2023 along with approval of the State Cabinet, obtained on 08.11.2023, vide Cabinet Sectt. U.O. No. CAB(D) 808 dated 10.11.2023.

By order of the Governor,

RAJEEV KUMAR

Principal Secretary to the Government of West Bengal

West Bengal Internet Cable Landing Station Policy 2023

Notified vide no. 1278-Estt/ITE-20099/13/2021

dated : 10.11.2023

BY

**DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY & ELECTRONICS
GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL**

**Moni Bhandar (5th & 6th) Floor, Block- EP&GP, Sector-V, Salt Lake,
Kolkata-700 091.**

Phone: 2357-2545, Fax: 2357-2534.

Table of Contents

1.	Preamble	5
2.	Vision	5
3.	Mission	5
4.	Target	5
5.	General Conditions	6
6.	Policy Promotion	6
7.	Governance	6
	7.1. Nodal Agency	6
	7.2. Advisory Group	6
	7.3. Empowered Committee	6
	7.4. Definition	7
	7.5. Extent of the Policy	7
	7.6. Scope	7
8.	Financial Incentives	7
	8.1. Stamp Duty Exemption	7
	8.2. Electricity Duty Waiver	7
	8.3. Labour Cess Waiver	7
9.	Non-Financial Incentives	7
	9.1. Power	7
	9.2. Water Supply	8
	9.3. Right of way	8
	9.4. Relaxation for Special Category	8
10.	Single Window Clearance System	8

1. Preamble

Internet data consumption in India is increasing at a rapid pace. With 624 million internet users in the country of which 572 million access internet on their mobile. Average per-capita monthly mobile usage stands at 13.5 GB. The backbone of IT & ITeS industry is primarily dependent on quality of connectivity. Available facility in Eastern Region has always been a cause of concern. Mumbai, Kochi and Chennai are three major international Submarine Cable landing stations in India. There is one in Tuticorin connecting India and Sri Lanka. Apart from Chennai, there is no Internet Cable Landing Station (ICLS) in the Bay of Bengal.

West Bengal is strategically located to have a Internet Cable Landing Station to cater to the entire Eastern India. As Nepal and Bhutan are the land logged countries and other countries like Myanmar, Bangladesh creates a huge business opportunity. An Internet Cable Landing Station in Eastern Indian can directly contribute to significant of connectivity cost in Eastern Indian region by 10-30%. Therefore, existence of an Internet Cable Landing Station will make the operations cheaper for IT, ITeS and BPO industry thereby giving a major boost to attract investments.

This will also be a great boost to the overall positive sentiment for industrialization as this will extend the capacity of the State to host industries which use IT and ITeS for running their business. And it will also attract private players to invest in West Bengal.

Traditionally, submarine cable systems were invested by consortium of global telecommunication carriers. The cable landing party in each location was dominated by the local carrier incumbent from the cable consortium. This model is not preferred in terms of public resources allocation as other carriers would avoid using the facilities operated by a competitor.

Global tech giants such as Google, Facebook, Microsoft and Amazon are now actively deploying and making heavy investments on submarine cable systems themselves.

Also new submarine cable investors such as Google, Facebook, Microsoft and Amazon are more inclined to choose a carrier-neutral ICLS for greater control of their data, as well as for a higher flexibility on connectivity options. They would prefer to collaborate with multiple carriers instead of being bounded by a single carrier ICLS owner.

A carrier neutral Internet Cable Landing Station along the West Bengal coast can be the deciding factor in attraction upcoming submarine cables providers to chose West Bengal as one of their landing ports. West Bengal can come up with a proactive policy to incentivise infrastructure providers to develop a carrier neutral Internet Cable Landing Station.

2. Vision

To make West Bengal, the preferred destination for Internet Cable Landing Station.

3. Mission

3.1. To build a world class cable landing ecosystem in the State of West Bengal by attracting foreign and domestic investments.

3.2. To mentor MSMEs/ Start-ups leverage the new ecosystem.

3.3. To generate employment opportunities and provide critical skill-based training to increase employability.

4. Target

4.1. To have Ten (10) cable landing stations in West Bengal by 2025, along the coastal line.

4.2. To attract investment of around INR 19,000 Crores to support this growth.

5. General Conditions

- 5.1. Policy will be valid for 5 years from the date of its notification or till that time any new policy/ amendment is introduced as a replacement, whichever is earlier.
- 5.2. The ICLS, by virtue of being IT units and would serve clients on 24x7x365 basis, shall be classified under "Essential Services".
- 5.3. Self-Certification under various Acts to be notified by Empowered Committee will exempt these from inspections under those Acts except inspections arising out of specific Complaint.

6. Policy Promotion

WBEIDC Limited (Webel) shall promote this policy at various national/ international forums attracting investment in the State. The major promotional tasks are as follows.

- i. Promoting the State as preferred destination for attracting investment in setting up of carrier neutral ILS.
- ii. Organising and participating in national and international conferences, summits, road shows and events to promote this policy.
- iii. Use of print, electronic and social media to create awareness about this Policy.

7. Governance

7.1. Nodal Agency

The Department of Information Technology and Electronics (DoIT&E) shall perform the role of the State Nodal Department in its implementation. Webel, under the aegis of the DoIT&E shall be responsible for creating a conducive policy environment for sustained growth of ICLS ecosystem in the State. The "ShilpaSathi portal shall be used for all single window clearances.

7.2. Advisory Group

To attract new ICLS(s) and encourage Start-ups and MSMEs to grow around this ecosystem, an Advisory Group shall be constituted under Chairmanship of Minister-in-Charge, IT & Electronics involving experts with domain knowledge, industry representatives and other stakeholders with Principal Secretary, IT&E as Vice-Chairman and MD, WBEIDC as Convenor.

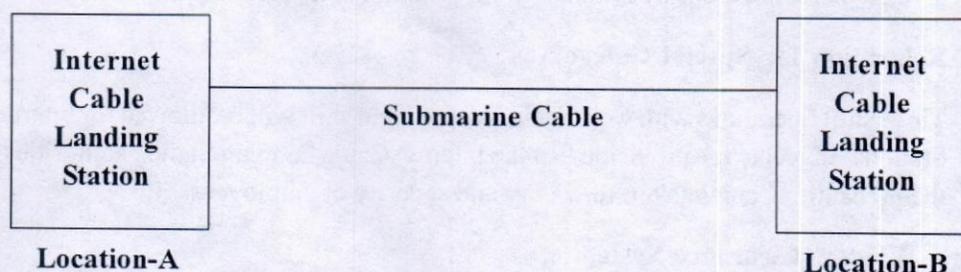
7.3. Empowered Committee

A State level Empowered Committee under the Chairmanship of the Chief Secretary shall be set up to monitor the effective implementation of this policy. The Committee shall be responsible to remove any impediment pertaining to the effective implementation of the policy. It shall also be responsible for inter-departmental coordination with respect to timely resolution of investor issues at all levels. Representatives from Departments such as IT&E, IC&E, Fire & Emergency Services, Public Works, Planning & Statistics and Environment etc. They will study the emerging trends in the industry and formulate requisite technical standards for improving the regulatory norms governing setting up Internet Landing Stations in the State, so that the regulations are kept in line with the industry best practices and conform to international standards. Recommendations given by the empowered committee shall be implemented by the Nodal Agency under guidance of the Nodal Department following due diligence.

7.4. Definition.

The private players who will qualify the guidelines and general information for setting up of submarine cable landing stations for international gateways for internet issued by the Ministry of Communications, Government of India from time to time will be considered as ICLS in West Bengal.

A submarine cable system consists of a communication cable laid on the seabed between Internet cable landing stations (ICLS) on the land to carry telecommunication signals across stretches of ocean. A block diagram of submarine cable system is as follows:



7.5. Benefits under this policy shall be available to all carrier neutral ICLSs, setting up in the geographical jurisdiction of West Bengal.

7.6. Scope:

The scope of the Internet Cable Landing Station developer is the following:

- Terminates an international cable or spur off an international cable.
- Provides powering for the cable or spur.
- Provides a location for the Submarine Line Terminating Equipment (SLTE).
- Provides a location for domestic and/or international interconnection.

The developer will build and own the ICLS, as well as other civil works such as ducts to the Beach Manhole (fronthaul) and backup power system.

8. Financial Incentives

8.1. Stamp Duty Exemption

To provide 100% exemption of stamp duty and registration fees for any transaction related to setting up ICLS(s) in the State.

8.2. Electricity Duty Waiver

To provide waiver of Government electricity duty, on the electricity tariffs on the actual electricity consumption for 5 years, from the date of start of commercial operations.

8.3. Labour Cess Waiver

The labour cess in this regard will be waived.

9. Non-Financial Incentives

9.1. Power

9.1.1. Government shall term electricity used by the ICLS (s) to be industrial irrespective of their establishment and location.

9.1.2. Government shall establish dual power grid networks to ensure uninterrupted supply of electricity.

9.2. Water Supply

24×7 uninterrupted and high-speed water supply to the ICLS(s) will be facilitated by Government.

9.3. Right of way

Laying of underground optical fibre networks, to and from the ICLS(s) will be provided with the Right of way as per West Bengal Broad Band Policy 2020. However, Empowered Committee may give further relaxations by issuing a notification, if such need is felt.

9.4. Relaxation for Special Category

Three shift operations with women even in the night shift will be allowed for Internet Cable Landing Stations subject to the provision that the Internet Cable Landing Station authorities shall self-certify the precautions being taken for safety and security of employees.

10. Single Window Clearance System:

In order to provide seamless experience to the applicants to seek timely clearances for all Telecom Infrastructure deployments for creating a Internet Cable Landing Station, a Single Window Clearance System can be set up.

The following approvals may be under the scope of the Single Window Clearance System:

Sr. No.	Permit Name/Subject Matter of the Permit
1.	Permission from Public Works/ P&RD/ UDMA Departments
2.	Building Plan Approval
3.	Fire NoC
4.	Coastal Regulation Zone Clearance
5.	State Maritime Board approval (Cable Route Approval.)
6.	Consent to establish and operate from Environment point of view
7.	Permission from Fisheries Department
8.	Shops and Establishment Registration