



पत्र सं. जीयूजे/आर-1/सी-4/2025-26/32

दिनांक: 13.04.2026

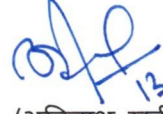
विषय: गुजरात राज्य ब्रॉडबैंड समिति (SBC) की 05.03.2026 को आयोजित 4वीं बैठक के कार्यवृत्त (Minutes of Meeting) अग्रेषित करने के संबंध में।

महोदय/महोदया,

कृपया उपर्युक्त विषयक 05 मार्च 2026 को आयोजित गुजरात राज्य ब्रॉडबैंड समिति (SBC) की 4वीं बैठक के कार्यवृत्त (MoM) जीयूजे/आर-1/सी-4/2025-26/31 दिनांक 13.04.2026 संलग्न प्राप्त करें।

संलग्न: यथोक्त

भवदीय


13-04-2026
(अविनाश खत्री)

निदेशक (ग्रामीण-2)

गुजरात एलएसए, दूरसंचार विभाग

प्रेषित प्रति (Copy to):

1. मुख्य सचिव, गुजरात सरकार
2. अतिरिक्त मुख्य सचिव, राजस्व विभाग
3. अतिरिक्त महानिदेशक दूरसंचार, दूरसंचार विभाग, भारत सरकार, गुजरात एलएसए
4. प्रधान सचिव, पंचायत, ग्रामीण आवास एवं ग्रामीण विकास विभाग
5. प्रधान सचिव, ऊर्जा एवं पेट्रोकेमिकल्स विभाग
6. प्रधान सचिव, वन एवं पर्यावरण विभाग
7. प्रधान सचिव, शहरी विकास एवं शहरी आवास विभाग
8. सचिव, विज्ञान एवं प्रौद्योगिकी विभाग
9. अपर प्रधान मुख्य वन संरक्षक (भूमि), वन एवं पर्यावरण विभाग
10. मुख्य महाप्रबंधक, बीएसएनएल, गुजरात सर्किल
11. मुख्य महाप्रबंधक, बीबीएनएल, गुजरात सर्किल
12. संयुक्त प्रबंध निदेशक, गुजरात औद्योगिक विकास निगम (GIDC)

13. निदेशक, आईसीटी एवं ई-गवर्नेंस, विज्ञान एवं प्रौद्योगिकी विभाग
14. मुख्य अभियंता, सड़क एवं भवन विभाग
15. उप महानिदेशक (ग्रामीण), गुजरात एलएसए, दूरसंचार विभाग, अहमदाबाद
16. COAI एवं DIPA प्रतिनिधि
17. निदेशक (GFGNL), गुजरात



File No. GUJ/R-1/C4/2025-26/31

Date: 13.04.2026

Subject: Minutes of 4th Meeting of Gujarat State Broadband Committee (SBC) of year 2025-26 held on 05.03.2026

The 4th State Broadband Committee (SBC) Meeting for the year 2025–26 was held on 05th March-2026 at 03:00 PM under the Chairmanship of Shri M.K. Das, IAS, Chief Secretary, Government of Gujarat at the Committee Room, 5th Floor, Block-1, Sachivalay, Gandhinagar.

The meeting was attended by officers from Department of Telecommunications (DoT), Government of Gujarat, BSNL, Telecom Service Providers (TSPs), Infrastructure Providers and other concerned departments. The list of participants is attached as Annexure-I.

At the outset, Shri S. Ajith Kumar, ITS, Additional Director General Telecom, Gujarat LSA, DoT welcomed the Chairperson and all the participants of the meeting. Shri Avinash Khatri, Director (Rural-2), Gujarat LSA, provided a briefing on the detailed agenda points. The points discussed in the meeting and action plan for the issues are as under:

1. Best Telecom District & Best Telecom Gram Panchayat Awards

As decided in the last State Broadband Committee Meeting, DoT Gujarat LSA, in coordination with the Government of Gujarat, assessed the performance of District Administrations and Gram Panchayats based on telecom and digital connectivity indicators for the period 01.04.2025 to 31.12.2025.

Based on the evaluation, the following districts were ranked as **Best Telecom Districts of Gujarat**:

1. Surat – Rank 1
2. Anand – Rank 2
3. Jamnagar – Rank 3

Similarly, the following were ranked as Best Telecom Gram Panchayats of Gujarat:

1. Waghai GP, District Dang – Rank 1
2. Vagra GP, District Bharuch – Rank 2
3. Akarund GP, Taluka Dhansura, District Arvalli – Rank 3

The Chair appreciated the efforts of the concerned District Administrations and Gram Panchayats in improving telecom infrastructure and digital connectivity. DDG (Rural) requested that the achievers may be felicitated at an appropriate event.

Action Point:

DST, Government of Gujarat to decide the event and pursue of the felicitation ceremony, in coordination with DoT Gujarat LSA, wherein all the rank holders may be invited.

2. Telecom Status in Gujarat:

The status of 5G BTS deployment in Gujarat was reviewed. It was noted that significant progress has been made in the rollout of 5G services across the State since the last SBC meeting. It was informed that the expansion of 5G infrastructure is ongoing, and coverage is continuously being enhanced across various parts of the State. In the last three months, more than 1000 5G BTSs have been rolled out.

The Chair raised concern regarding the telecom coverage issue in Dediapada Taluka of Narmada District. The Chair further instructed that tribal areas should be accorded high priority for improvement of telecom coverage.

Action Point:

- a) All TSPs to expedite the deployment of 4G/5G sites in Gujarat, with special focus on rural and tribal areas, and ensure improvement in mobile coverage in these regions.
- b) DoT to take up the mobile coverage issue in Dediapada and other tribal villages of Gujarat on priority.

3. RoW (Right of Way) Issues

The status of RoW applications pending prior to 01.01.2025 on the portal was reviewed. It was observed that 6 applications are pending with the following departments:

I. Roads & Buildings Department (R&B) – 02 applications

II. Urban Development & Urban Housing Department (UDD) – 04 applications

The Chair directed the concerned departments to expedite the disposal of the pending RoW applications in order to facilitate the timely rollout of telecom infrastructure across the State.

Action Point:

UDD and R&B assured that the pending cases will be expedited and disposed of at the earliest.

4. Samriddh Gram Panchayat project:

The status of formation of Digital Access Committees (DACs) under the Samriddh Gram Panchayat (SGP) initiative was reviewed. It was noted that 113 DACs have been formed out of 247 identified SGPs in Gujarat.

The Chair directed the Panchayat department to expedite the formation of DACs in the remaining Gram Panchayats. The Chair also emphasized the optimal utilization of the BharatNet network, stating that it is a valuable national asset.

It was informed that 4534 FTTH connections have been provided so far in SGPs against a target of 21,459 as on 28.02.2026 (approx. 21%). The Chair directed BSNL and GFGNL to expedite the implementation. The Chair also emphasized the need to create awareness among SGPs to improve the utilization of BharatNet connectivity and other digital services.

Action Points:

- A. Panchayats, Rural Housing and Rural Development Department to expedite the formation of DACs in the remaining SGPs.
- B. BSNL and GFGNL to expedite the provision of FTTH connections in SGPs.

5. 4G Saturation Project Status

The progress of the 4G Saturation Project in Gujarat was reviewed. It was informed that:

- Total Sites Planned: 864
- Sites Radiated: 633
- Remaining Category-7 Sites under Survey: 32
- Additional Category-6 Sites added in Dec-2025: 89

The Chair directed BSNL and the concerned implementing agencies to expedite the implementation of the remaining sites so that the connectivity gaps in rural and remote areas are addressed at the earliest.

Action Point:

BSNL to expedite the work for the remaining 4G saturation sites and ensure timely completion of the project in Gujarat.

6. Utilization of CBuD (Call Before U Dig) App

The status of CBuD app utilization was reviewed. It was observed that some State Government Departments are not actively using the CBuD application, including:

- Roads & Buildings Department
- Urban Development & Urban Housing Department
- Water Supply / GWSSB
- Narmada, Water Resources, Water Supply & Kalpsar Department

Furthermore, it was suggested that the use of the CBuD application be made mandatory by incorporating it as a condition in all requests for Proposal (RFPs), work Orders and agreements.

The Chair directed all concerned departments to make the use of the CBuD (Call Before U Dig) application mandatory for all digging activities in Gujarat and to sensitize and mobilize their respective field agencies for its effective implementation.

Action Point:

All concerned State Government Departments to ensure mandatory use of the CBuD application for all digging activities and sensitize their field offices and executing agencies for effective implementation across the State.

7. DLTC (District Level Telecom Committee) Meetings

It was noted that, out of 33 districts in the State, 14 districts have not yet constituted the DLTC and no DLTC meeting have been held so far in these districts namely Ahmedabad, Amreli, Aravalli, Bhavnagar, Chhota Udepur, Dang, Gandhinagar, Gir Somnath, Kheda, Morbi, Navsari, Rajkot, Sabarkantha and Tapi.

District administrations to conduct DLTC meetings regularly to resolve local telecom issues such as Mobile coverage gaps, Tower installation issues and Right of Way matters.

Action Point:

Revenue Department to issue directions to all districts to convene DLTC meetings regularly and to ensure that the 14 identified districts convene their first DLTC meeting at the earliest.

8. Sanchar Saathi Portal

The status of mobile handsets blocked, traced, and recovered through the CEIR Portal (Sanchar Saathi) in Gujarat was reviewed. As on 03.03.2026, a total of 1,69,503 mobile handsets have been blocked, 1,04,502 traced, and 47,517 recovered in Gujarat. The recovery rate in Gujarat stands at 45.47%, which is significantly higher than the All-India recovery rate of 30.81%.

The Chair appreciated the efforts of DoT Gujarat LSA and the State Police authorities for the effective implementation of the CEIR portal and recovery of stolen/lost mobile handsets.

9. Energy Related Issues of Telecom Tower

It was informed that DoT recently held a meeting with the Energy & Petrochemicals Department (EPD) regarding issues related to telecom tower electricity connections.

Regarding installation of smart meters for telecom tower sites across Gujarat, all DISCOMs informed that the smart metering process will be completed by 15 April 2026.

On the issue of composite/consolidated billing, DISCOMs stated that they are ready to provide composite billing, however the operators have not submitted the applications.

Further, regarding the feature of single login per DISCOM, it was informed that DISCOMs are working on the system and expect to provide the facility by 31 March 2026.

10. Telecom Industry Issues:

A. Issues Raised by BSNL

I. Handover of BharatNet Phase-I Network

CGM, BSNL informed that as per the agreement dated 24.06.2025, the BharatNet Phase-I network in Gujarat is to be handed over by BSNL to GFGNL, with modalities to be finalized in consultation with DBN. However, the handover/takeover process has not yet commenced.

It was also noted that DBN has extended funding for maintenance of the BharatNet Phase-I network up to June 2026. The Chair directed BBNL to ensure restoration of all down Gram Panchayat (GP) sites at the earliest.

The Chair emphasized that industries located outside urban areas may be explored for connectivity under the BharatNet project, as a large number of MSMEs and emerging startups are situated in such areas and require reliable telecom infrastructure. These units may be considered as potential users of BharatNet connectivity services.

The Chair further directed the concerned agencies to expedite finalization of modalities and initiate the handover process.

Action Points

- a) DST (GoG), DoT, DBN and BSNL/BBNL to jointly finalize a stage-wise plan for takeover of BharatNet Phase-I GPs by GFGNL, prioritizing GPs with higher uptime and Samriddhi GPs, aligned with restoration progress.
- b) BBNL to restore all down GP sites on priority and ensure that the BharatNet Phase-I network remains operational and ready for smooth handover to GFGNL.

II. Forest Permission Issues under 4G Saturation Project:

BSNL informed that survey permission has been denied for 169 proposed telecom sites located in forest areas, citing the Gir Protected Area.

The PCCF, Gujarat stated that he was not aware of the denial of survey permission, as the order had been issued by the regional authorities. However, he assured that the matter will be examined and appropriate action will be taken in accordance with the applicable rules and regulations.

Action Point:

The Forest Department to examine the matter regarding denial of survey permission for the proposed telecom sites and take necessary action in accordance with the applicable rules and regulations.

B. Issues Raised by DIPA:

I. Property Tax on Telecom Towers:

DIPA raised the issue regarding the imposition of property tax on telecom towers. It was informed that Section 14(2) & 14(3) of the Telecom Act, 2023 provides that no property tax is leviable on telecom towers or on the property where such towers are installed. It was further stated that the Hon'ble Supreme Court judgment dated 20.11.2024 in *Bharti Airtel Ltd. vs Commissioner of Central Excise, Pune* held that telecom towers are movable goods

and not immovable property. Accordingly, in view of Section 52(2) of the Telecom Act, 2023, the provisions of the Act will prevail over any conflicting State laws.

The Chair stated that the Government of Gujarat (GoG) will examine the matter and seek legal opinion, and take necessary action accordingly.

Action point:

DST to seek legal opinion regarding levy of property tax on telecom towers in view of the provisions of the Telecom Act, 2023 and relevant local laws, and take necessary action accordingly.

II. Coercive action on Telecom Infrastructure:

DIPA raised the issue of coercive actions being taken by local bodies on telecom infrastructure. It was informed that Section 14(4) of the Telecom Act, 2023 provides that no public entity shall take coercive action such as sealing, preventing access, or forcible shutdown of telecom networks without permission of the officer authorized by the Central Government, except in cases of natural disaster or public emergency. It was further informed that Principal Secretary, DST, Government of Gujarat has been designated as the Nodal Officer for the State in this regard.

The Chair directed that the provisions of the Telecom Act, 2023 be followed in such matters and all concerned departments be suitably sensitized.

Action Point:

UDD, Panchayat and Revenue department sensitize all the concerned regarding the provisions of Section 14(4) of the Telecom Act, 2023 to avoid unauthorized coercive actions on telecom infrastructure.

III. Regularisation of Existing Towers in GIDC and GDA

DIPA raised the issue regarding regularisation of existing telecom towers in GIDC and GDA areas. It was informed that GIDC has already relaxed its regularisation policy for telecom towers in line with GDCR, except in chemical factory areas.

The Chair stated that telecom towers installed without prior formal approval should not be compelled for regularisation, and such cases may be considered on a request basis. The Chair further advised GIDC to examine the possibility of further relaxation in the applicable rates.

Action Points:

- A. GIDC to examine the possibility of further relaxation in regularisation rates for telecom towers.



- B. UDD, Government of Gujarat to take necessary action regarding regularisation issues pertaining to towers under GDA jurisdiction.

IV. Application by Facility Provider and not by Owner/Lessee in GIDC

DIPA informed that GIDC presently mandates submission of applications for installation of telecom towers by the owners/lessees. However, as per the Telecom Act, 2023, intimation for installation of towers on private property and applications for installation on public property are required to be submitted by the facility providers (tower companies).

Action Point:

GIDC to take note of the regulatory provisions under the Telecom Act, 2023 and accept intimations/applications for installation of telecom towers from the concerned facility providers (tower companies).

C. Issues Raised by COAI:

I. Annual Lease Rental Charges

DIPA raised the issue that despite the provisions of the RoW Rules, 2024, which exempt annual lease rental charges for underground Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) laying, certain authorities such as AUDA and R&B Division, Vadodara continue to issue demand notes for annual charges, leading to regulatory uncertainty for the telecom industry.

Action Point:

Concerned Departments/Authorities to review the levy of annual lease rental charges for underground OFC laying in light of the provisions of the RoW Rules, 2024 and take necessary action accordingly.

II. Exorbitant Utility Duct Charges by Smart City Partners

COAI raised the issue that certain Municipal Corporations such as Surat, Vadodara and Rajkot are levying high charges for use of utility ducts, in some cases up to four times the standard rates, which is affecting affordable and rapid telecom infrastructure deployment.

Action Point:

Concerned Urban Local Bodies / Municipal Corporations to review the utility duct charges in light of applicable RoW provisions and take necessary action accordingly.

Conclusion

The Chair emphasized the importance of robust telecom infrastructure and digital connectivity for the State's socio-economic development and directed all stakeholders to work in close coordination for the timely resolution of telecom-related issues.



The meeting ended with a vote of thanks to the Chair and the participants by Director (Rural-2), Gujarat LSA, DoT.



13.04.2026

(Avinash Khatri)
Director (Rural-2),
Gujarat LSA, DoT, Ahmedabad.
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To: -

All participants

Copy to-

1. The Chief Secretary, Govt. of Gujarat.
2. Additional Chief Secretary, Revenue Department
3. Additional DGT, D.O.T., Govt. of India, Gujarat LSA.
4. Principal Secretary, Panchayat, Rural Housing & Rural Development Department.
5. Principal Secretary, Energy and Petrochemicals Department.
6. Principal Secretary, Forest and Environment Department.
7. Principal Secretary, Urban Development & Urban Housing Department.
8. Secretary, Department of Science & Technology
9. APCCF - Land, Forest and Environment Department.
10. CGM BSNL, CGM BBNL, Gujarat Circle.
11. Joint Managing Director, Gujarat Industrial Development Corporation (GIDC).
12. Director, ICT & e-Governance, Department of Science & Technology.
13. Chief Engineer, Roads & Building Department
14. DDG (Rural), Gujarat LSA, DoT Ahmedabad
15. COAI, DIPA representative
16. Director (GFGNL), Gujarat

Annexure- I (List of Participants)

1. Dr. Jayanti S. Ravi, IAS, Additional Chief Secretary Revenue Department.
2. Shri Dhananjay Dwivedi, IAS, Principal Secretary, Panchayat, Rural Housing & Rural Development Department.
3. Smt. P. Bharathi, IAS, Secretary, Department of Science & Technology.
4. Shri Rajkumar Beniwal, IAS, Secretary (Housing), Urban Development & Urban Housing Department.
5. Ms. Praveena D. K., IAS, Vice Chairperson and Managing Director, GIDC.
6. Dr. Jaipal Singh, APCCF LAND, Forest & Environment Department.
7. Shri S. Ajith Kumar, ITS, Addl. Director General Telecom, Gujarat LSA, DoT.

8. Shri. Ashish Thaker, ITS, Deputy Director General (Rural), Gujarat LSA, DoT.
9. Shri Avinash Khatri, ITS, Director (Rural), Gujarat LSA, DoT.
10. Shri. Ashutosh Gupta, ITS, Chief General Manager, BSNL Gujarat.
11. Shri. Nilesh Chauhan, ITS, Sr. General Manager (Projects), BBNL.
12. Shri. Hemantkumar Suthar, OSD Privatization, Road & Buildings Department
13. Shri. Kalpesh Patel, Deputy Director (IT), Department of Science and Technology.
14. Shri. Harshil Ranpariya, Under Secretary, Energy & Petro Chemicals Department.
15. Shri. Dipen Harsora, DE Tech GUVNL.
16. Shivang Giri Goswami, ICTO, Department of Science and Technology.
17. Shri. Himanshu Joshi Manager (Pre-allotment), GIDC.
18. Representatives from Digital Infrastructure Providers Association (DIPA) and Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) through VC.

