

INDIA

India Issue Paper # 05

REIMBURSEMENT TO TCCS FOR NON-MOU COMMUNICATION EQUIPMENT USED DURING COMMUNICATION OUTAGES IN MISSION AREA

1. ISSUE PAPER THEME

Major Equipment and self-sustainment

2. SUMMARY / BACKGROUND / PREVIOUS HISTORY

(a) The peacekeepers continue to operate in logistically and environmentally challenging peacekeeping theatres. As a Troop Contributing Country (TCC), the contingents are deployed in remote operational areas as part of mandated tasks such as monitoring, security patrolling, and protection of civilians. In such isolated and challenging locations, prolonged communication outages often occur due to variety of technical, environmental and terrain related issues. This in addition to the lack of available communication infrastructure leads to severe impairment of operational capacity of the TCC and adversely impact their operational control & situational awareness. To ensure continuity, TCCs often deploy expensive backup communication solutions bought commercially off the shelf (COTS), which is not part of the signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and therefore is not eligible for reimbursement under standard COE framework.

(b) The communication outages frequently occur during field deployments due to factors such as :-

(i) **Environmental & Climatic Degradation.** The extremities of climate in terms of heat, heavy rains and humidity have a direct impact on the reliability of the communication system and can often lead to failures of sensitive electronics, corrosion of terminals and sand ingress which lead to outages in communication.

(ii) **Power Supply Limitations.** Due to non-availability of permanent power supply, the communication equipment is deployed using generators at most static locations. But the same cannot be used by patrols moving out to remote areas which are dependent on batteries whose efficacy is brought down due to various environmental factors thereby reducing the efficacy and reliability.

(iii) **Equipment Breakdown & Maintenance Challenges.** The COE is used across rough terrain in APCs or other vehicles which accelerate the wear and tear of the equipment often leading to broken antennas, broken mounts, snapped cables etc which render the equipment out of action with need for maintenance which is available in limited capacity only, additionally contributing to communication outages.

(c) TCCs play a pivotal role in the successful execution of the mission and in maintaining the operational integrity of the mission. During the extended communication outages the TCCs, to ensure mission success and force protection frequently deploy non-MoU listed equipment which are not under COE provisions including Commercial satellite phones and VSAT terminals, Military radios, Communication relay kits, mobile communication solutions etc. The deployment, maintaining and use of such non-MoU equipment leads to significant direct and indirect costs on the TCCs including procurement, licensing, logistics, security vetting, training, transport, maintenance and field support, none of which is reimbursed under current COE reimbursement policies, as the assets are not part of the registered MoU.

3. DETAILED PROPOSAL

(a) Given the realities of deployment and the communication outages, it is evident that the use of non-MoU equipment by TCCs is both unavoidable and essential. There is a need to have scope of flexibility to ensure mission effectiveness and troop safety. In situations where the communication failure persists beyond

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24 hours or there are communication outages in particular areas, the TCCs are compelled to use non-MoU listed equipment. This mandates a logical and fair method to implement a temporary reimbursement mechanism for the non-MoU equipment being utilized.

(b) The COE inspection process already provides a well-established framework for validating the functionality of the MoU listed equipment, recording of unserviceability and certifying mission critical gaps due to equipment failure or lack of availability. The present system can easily be leveraged to verify incidents of such communication outages where non-MoU listed equipment had to be used. The process for applying for such temporary reimbursement can be based on the following guidelines

- (i) Communication outage for more than 24 hours.
- (ii) Official utilisation records of non-MoU listed equipment.
- (iii) Functionality check of the non-MoU equipment during COE inspection.
- (iv) Time bound reporting of the incident along with all logs and paperwork.
- (v) FHQ based team to validate the timeline of outage and failure of COE systems as well as non-availability of COE alternatives.
- (vi) Cost incurred is within the cap set by the mission hierarchy.

(c) To further streamline this process of temporary reimbursement on use of non-MoU listed equipment, a clause may be added to the standard MoU as well as the COE Manual which dictates the conditions for usage of said non-MoU listed equipment and how the cost of usage as mentioned previously will be reimbursed. While there will be a minor increase in monthly reimbursements, the proposal ensures continuity of command and control in critical zones and prevents security lapses due to communication breakdowns. Furthermore, a centralized fallback framework will reduce the long-term burden of urgent mission resupply and bandwidth upgrades.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

(a) This form of temporary reimbursement should be provided to the TCC for the following situations/reasons.

- (i) Operational usage cost incurred while using the equipment in the mission.
- (ii) Procurement and deployment cost incurred in procurement, transportation and initial deployment of the equipment in the mission area.
- (iii) Cost of consumables such as batteries, fuel, generator etc.
- (iv) Maintenance & repair allowance based on life cycle and wear & tear.

(b) To prevent overuse or misappropriation and preserve the integrity of the UN reimbursement framework, certain control measures and reimbursement caps can be used. There can be a fixed daily cap per equipment, time-based cap which limits the number of days per incident that can be claimed, asset logs to be maintained for the COE inspection. This can further be ensured by following control mechanisms such as proper reporting format, UN FHQ validation, Quarterly audit, Pre deployment disclosure, and usage limitation cost.

5. PROPOSED 2026 COE MANUAL TEXT

To be added in Chapter 7/8 of COE Manual.

“TCCs to be reimbursed for provisioning of communication redundancy for satellite/ VHF/ UHF communication. In cases where UNOE/ COE communication systems suffer prolonged outage beyond 24 hours due to non-controllable mission factors (e.g. environmental, geographical, or hostile actions), and where the mission cannot restore services in a timely manner, the contingent to operate alternate commercial communication solutions. These fallback arrangements, as certified by mission IT/ engineering support and verified by the COE inspection team, shall be eligible for proportional reimbursement. Pre-approved fallback communication solutions may also be listed in the MoU annex.”