

DD e-auction process to start anew; permits film prod houses participation.



NEW DELHI: Doordarshan, which had put the initiative of the e-auction of its slots under suspension on the basis of queries and proposals, has now decided to allow renowned film production houses also to enter the fray. In a major decision to start the entire e-auction process de novo, Prasar Bharati has decided to roll out the process from 1 November

instead of 1 October.

The Prasar Bharati Board, which considered the various responses and queries to the earlier announcement on Doordarshan's website in mid-May this year, decided that the condition of applicants having at least 300 hours of TV productions may be reduced to 200 hours.

A senior Prasar Bharati official told indiantelevision.com that the earlier condition that only those who had experience in television production was being done away with and major film production houses will also be allowed to bid to take part in the auction of the prime time slots. The official said details were being finalized and would be announced shortly.

Earlier, it had been announced to invite eligible producers to create and market fresh content on the channel for a fixed tenure extending up to three years.

Encouraged by its success in e-auction slots in FM Radio Phase III, Prasar Bharati shortlisted some slots in DD prime time that will be put up for e-auction to attract high quality content on its national and regional channels.

DD sources said the policy encourages private entrepreneurs to produce cutting edge general entertainment programming with a commitment for providing wholesome family enjoyment.

The technical and financial criteria for the new policy will be notified separately. The sale of slots to be auctioned will be through e-auction mode

The roll out of the Slot Sale Policy will commence with DD's flagship channel 'DD National' on its prime time slots will then be progressively extended to other slots and channels.

The base price for DD National Prime Time is being kept reasonable keeping in view the content environment and market economics to attract bidders. In the draft notification for Sale of Slots on Prime Time of DD National (to be separately notified), the Minimum Floor Price for DD National Prime Time is proposed to be Rs Two lakh for each 30 minute time slot between 7-11 PM (excluding feature film slots).

The slot price increase is to be based on half yearly reviews through a transparent mechanism linked to the ratings achieved in the slot.

The slots available for bidding would be for a sequence of slots for daily strips on weekdays/weekends.

The aim is to follow a transparent bidding process so that opportunities are made available to all.

Give more Free Commercial Time (FCT) to the Bidder or slot holder. For Sale of Slots on Prime Time of DD National, the Free Commercial Time (FCT) will be enhanced from the existing 2.5 minutes to 4.0 minutes for every 30 minute slot.

This will ensure that there is no competition between DD and the Bidder/slot holder in vying for the same clients and advertisements. Successful bidders would be free to procure advertisements from all clients within their entitlement of FCT with the exception of Government and PSU (Public Sector Undertaking) clients.

Bids may be invited for any/various combinations of/all slots as detailed below:

- i) For a single standalone slot
- ii) For longer time durations comprising of more than one slot for catering to the needs of telecasting special events, feature films etc.
- iii) For a single slot on weekly basis
- iv) For a sequence of slots in the same time band running over certain number of days in a week (e.g. Monday-Thursday; Monday-Friday; Saturday-Sunday, etc.)

The decision regarding inviting bids in respect of slots will be at the sole discretion of Doordarshan after taking into account its programme requirements for any channel or time band.

The website www.ddindia.gov.in gives detailed information for applicants.

Earlier, Prasar Bharati Chief Executive Officer Jawhar Sircar told www.indiantelevision.com that this would bring about greater transparency and also put the onus on the successful bidder to ensure good content.

Sircar in an exclusive interview had said that the e-auction would be completely transparent, stressing that the “cost of transparency is very heavy.”

When his attention was drawn to the earlier system where renowned filmmakers were attracted by Doordarshan to make serials, he said that kind of system had led to monopolization.

He admitted that he had initially faced internal resistance to his plan for e-auction of prime time slots.

(DD has already announced that this is being done on an experimental basis and may be extended to its other channels if the scheme is accepted.)

He had said he was confident that audience loyalty, sentiment, and reach of Doordarshan would help to make the scheme a success.