

ITI targets ₹7,000-crore Army project

Deal involves providing and maintaining communication equipment, network over a 13-year period

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State-owned ITI is hoping to secure a ₹7,000-crore contract from the Indian army for providing and maintaining its strategic communications network over a 13-year period, according to a top official.

"It is a 13-year-long project in which we will provide the equipment and warranty for five years and maintain it (the network) for eight years," said S. Gopu, ITI chairman and managing director.

In an interview, Mr. Gopu said "We did phase one, two and three of ASCON. We are technically qualified. Other companies including BEL and RailTel are in the fray."

Order pipeline

The struggling PSU, which currently has an order pipeline of ₹1,600 crore, is targeting ₹10,000 crore worth of deals within the



Strategic link: ASCON, the Army's backbone telecom network, is implemented in phases along the borders. ■PTI

next two years, including the ASCON project.

Army Static Switched Communication Network (ASCON) is the army's telecom network backbone implemented in phases along the borders. The network consists of a large number of voice and data switches in-

terconnected with various media types like microwave radio, optical fibre and satellites.

ASCON network is secured using bulk encryption. The project includes civil works for providing the complete infrastructure required at various stations in addi-

tion to supply, installation, commissioning and maintenance of telecom equipment, satcom equipment, optical fibre cables, and equipment.

Pan-India network

Phase-IV will be pan-India network spanning different terrains at the northern, north-eastern and western regions as well as locations in the hinterland. The network will be DWDM and IP/MPLS-based backbone network with supporting value-added services, including video conferencing, broadcast and multicast facilities.

Dense Wavelength Division Multiplexing (DWDM) is an optical multiplexing technology used to increase bandwidth over existing fibre networks by combining and transmitting multiple signals simultaneously at different wavelengths on the same fibre.

"Under the Network for Spectrum project ITI has got order worth ₹80 crore," Mr.

Gopu said. Network for Spectrum is a dedicated communications network that the Telecom Department is setting up for the defence forces on the band of airwaves vacated for civilian use "It consists of various parts, including fibre laying and equipment supply. The equipment that you are supplying to this project also needs encryption technology and that we have qualified."

As part of the project, ITI will deploy optical fibre for about 13,000 km. The firm has already completed 70% of the work and the entire project is expected to be completed by this year end.

"ITI has the highest number of approvals for encryption products from the defence," he said. "We intend to take up solutions depending on the industry and customer requirements for encryption of mobile handsets, HF radio, software defined radio, and others."