



News Release

TRA Consults on the Regulation of Commercial Bulk Messages

Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain - Wednesday 29 September 2010

The Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) has issued recently a consultation document on the regulation of the commercial bulk messages.

The consultation seeks views from all interested parties concerning the regulation of operators licensed in the Kingdom of Bahrain to provide bulk messaging services as well as the establishment of voluntary code of practice to which all resellers and providers of bulk messaging services are encouraged to become signatories.

Commenting on the issuance of this draft regulation TRA's Chairman Dr. Mohammed Al Amer said "In line with the principle of transparency and open dialogue followed by TRA with all relevant parties, and its keenness to the provisioning of improved telecommunications services to consumers, TRA is pleased to consult the public on the proposed regulation to manage the commercial bulk messages, and to provide an opportunity for all to participate in the discussion and development of the regulation."

TRA's Director of Communications and Consumers Affairs added that "The establishment of this regulation is based on the opinions of consumers about text messages, where some consumers see the promotional messages as a breach of their privacy and some consider it as a source of useful information. With the proposed regulatory measure TRA balances these needs and concerns by introducing some safeguards to be implemented by licensed operators and the signatories to the code of practice."

He went on to say ""TRA will be working closely with consumers and consumers' groups to ensure that consumers' interest are protected in an increasingly competitive market. We strongly encourage consumers to review this regulation and provide their feedback to assist us in protecting their interests."

The mains aspects of the proposed Regulation and Code of Practice are as follows:

- Restricting the period of time during each day in which Commercial Bulk Messages can be transmitted to between the hours of 09:00 and 20:00;
- Limiting the number of Commercial Bulk Messages received per day to 2 per recipient, though this can be increased with the agreement of the recipient;
- Making it obligatory for:
 - the identity and contact details of the sender of the Commercial Bulk Messages to be clearly stated in the message;
 - Commercial Bulk Message service providers to include a simple method for opting out of receiving Commercial Bulk Messages such as a return message containing the word "stop";

- the cost of responding to Commercial Bulk Messages, exclusive of the standard network costs for the relevant Licensed Operator, to be specified as part of the Commercial Bulk Message;
- providers of Commercial Bulk Messages to only send such messages to those subscribers that have expressly consented to receipt of such messages.
- Once established the Regulation and list of signatories to the Code of Practice will be published on the TRA website.

The draft regulation and the code of practice on bulk messages can be viewed on TRA's website at www.tra.org.bh. Interested parties are invited to submit comments by no later than 4:00 pm on 31 October 2010.

About TRA

Since its establishment in 2002 the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of the Kingdom of Bahrain (TRA) has been working with government, consumers, operators and investors to develop the Kingdom of Bahrain into the region's most modern communications hub and to facilitate the growth of the market. As an exemplary Regulator for the region, TRA independently carries out its duties in a transparent and non-discriminatory manner. More information about TRA can be viewed at www.tra.org.bh

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