



*News Release*

## **TRA Aims for More Choice to Consumers over Batelco Fixed Copper Network**

### **TRA Orders Batelco to Allow Other Operators to Use its Fixed Network to Provide Competing Services**

Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain – Wednesday 3 November 2010

In order to ensure fair competition and equal opportunity for all operators to deliver equivalent services of high quality to customers in the Kingdom of Bahrain over Batelco's fixed network, the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) has issued yesterday a draft order to Batelco to allow other licensed operators to use Batelco's fixed copper network on fair terms. This service is referred to as (Local Loop Unbundling or LLU). The draft order sets the prices and terms and conditions of Batelco's fixed Copper network wholesale offering.

Providing access to Batelco's fixed copper network on fair and reasonable terms will enable other operators to provide affordable and innovative telecommunications services to customers. This is done by renting the physical copper wire connection between the customer and Batelco's exchange. This circuit is known as the "Local Loop". The Local Loop is an alternate channel for delivering services to the customer which will stimulate competition between operators. This in turn will afford customers a greater degree of choice and flexibility in selecting the best services suiting their needs.

TRA's Market and Competition Manager Mr. Adel Darwish said "Unlike mobile networks, the establishment of an alternative fixed network has relatively high costs. Since TRA granted a third mobile licence last year, this has led to diverse and more competitive broadband services on mobile networks, as a result of increased competition between a number of mobile operators who have established their own network infrastructures. With the introduction of the local loop unbundling service, TRA hopes to see more competition arising in the provision of fixed services and the introduction of new innovative and affordable fixed services."

TRA has granted Batelco a period of over a month to respond to this draft order. The final response to the draft order is expected to be submitted by 9 December 2010, after which TRA will be evaluating the responses and issuing its final order. Batelco should comply with the final order and provide access to other licensed operators to its fixed Copper network within 14 days of the date of issue of the final order.

## **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](http://www.tra.org.bh)

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