



Press Release

TRA and Batelco Jointly Discuss Wholesale Services with Other Licensed Operators

--New wholesale charges anticipated to strengthen competitive supply of Broadband and lower charges for consumers--

Monday, 30 June 2008

Batelco's newly approved Reference Offer for wholesale services, offered to other Licensed Operators of telecommunications services, supports significant price reductions in many areas. TRA anticipates that other licensed operators will be able to pass a proportion of these savings to end-users.

At present, the vast majority of Bahraini broadband users subscribe to relatively low line-speed services, (typically 256k). TRA anticipates that the new charges, which have overall been reduced by in excess of 20% in the residential market and in excess of 30% in the business market, will strengthen competition particularly for higher line-speed services.

The rates Batelco charges other operators to terminate calls to Batelco subscribers that have originated on another network (Call Termination Rates) have seen further reductions. Fixed line call termination has been reduced by 5%, whereas Mobile Call Termination has been reduced by 14%.

The overall charges paid by other licensed operators for national leased line circuits was reduced by 35%, and by 25% for international private leased circuits (IPLC's) .

The newly approved Reference Offer (which come into effect on 1 July 2008) and wholesale services were discussed in detail on 26 June 2008, in a joint meeting with Batelco and the other licensed operators hosted by the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA)

The meeting was chaired by TRA's General Director Mr. Alan Horne and attended by more than 40 representatives of licensed operators. In his opening speech Mr. Horne said: "I would like to praise the TRA and Batelco teams for their efforts in working together over the past few months to ensure that the wholesale products met the requirements of the sector. We expect that the newly approved Reference Offer will provide a stimulus to the competitive supply of telecommunications

services at affordable prices for the benefits of consumers and Bahrain as a whole”.

Batelco’s Chief Executive Mr. Peter Kaliaropoulos said: “We are aiming to support the growth of the telecommunications market in Bahrain through the provisioning of better wholesale offers that support other licensed operators in providing competitive services to consumers”.

TRA’s Market and Competition Director Mr. Robert Middlehurst presented the background of reviewing the newly approved reference offer as part of TRA’s responsibility of ensuring fair and reasonable wholesale products available to other licensed operators through Batelco's network.

During the meeting, Batelco's Wholesale and Carrier Services General Manager, Mr. John Ford, stated that the new pricing should stimulate operators to take up more wholesale services and pass on the cost savings to their consumers.

TRA's Competition Manager Mr. Adel Darwish presented the next steps in reviewing the non-price items of the reference offer, such as reviewing service level agreements, general terms and conditions, forecasting and processes for ordering and reporting faults.

Throughout the meeting, senior staff from Batelco and TRA were available to answer related queries or issues licensed operators raised.

Members of the industry praised TRA for its efforts in working closely with the operators to facilitate a proper environment for better competition. The newly approved Reference Offer is considered as another achievement of collaborative working between TRA and Batelco to facilitate better wholesales offers to other licensed operators.



John Ford, Peter Kaliaropoulos, Alan Horne, Rob Middlehurst and Adel Darwish



Inset Adel Darwish. Attendees at the TRA hosted meeting on the 26th June.

Notes to the Editor

About the Reference Offer

The Reference Offer is the standard offer from Batelco for the provision of access and interconnection services to other licensed operators in accordance with the telecommunications regulations of Bahrain. The Reference Offer allows other licensed operators to provide telecommunications services to end customers over Batelco's network under commercial agreements with Batelco.

About TRA

The Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) was established by Legislative Decree No. 48 of 2002 promulgating the Telecommunications Law. TRA is an independent body and its duties and powers include, among other things, protecting the interests of subscribers and users and promoting operators effective and fair competition among existing and new licensed operators. More information regarding TRA can be viewed at www.tra.org.bh

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