



The Telecommunications Regulatory Authority Publishes the Development Review Panel 2006 Report

***-- As last year, the Authority will also publish its comments
on the report in conjunction with its Plan for 2006/2007 --***

Manama, 2 May 2006 – The Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) announced today the publication of the TRA Development Review Panel 2006 report. This report was submitted to the TRA by the Panel, after the Panel conducted its review of the regulatory state of affairs in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

The TRA Development Review Panel is a panel of independent experts, who have all built enviable reputations in the industry, both for their experience and their integrity. The members of the Panel for 2006 were:

Professor Martin Cave, Director of the Centre for Management Under Regulation, of the Warwick Business School in the United Kingdom, who specialises in Regulatory Economics, particularly in the communications sector; Mr. Robert Bruce, Senior Research Fellow at the Center for Digital Strategies of the Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth, United States of America, and Mr. Ian Martin, a banker and Senior Telecommunications Analyst at ABN Amro Bank in Australia.

The Panel report outlines the process implemented for information gathering and meetings, and highlights some of the main concerns that have arisen during these meetings. The report also discusses in detail the Panel's recommendations as to the areas that the TRA should be looking at as a matter of priority, as well as areas requiring further improvements. Among the main recommendations in the report was the need to make available access products and services to the new operators in the market including options for wireless connectivity such as WiMAX and Wifi and the possibility of implementing a fast track licensing scheme for these. The report discusses such recommendations in detail outlining the reasons behind them as well as the steps the TRA can take to make them happen.

The Chairman of the Panel, Professor Martin Cave, commented as follows on the publication of the report: "Today we have submitted the Panel's report for the second year to the TRA. As last year, the report is based on our review of the TRA and the feedback that we received during our fact-finding visit to Bahrain, most notably the feedback from the public meeting of the Panel last February. The report provides our recommendations and findings in detail. We hope that it

will be of benefit to the TRA as well as the telecommunications sector as a whole in Bahrain.”

He added: “We would like to thank the TRA, and all those individuals and organizations from whom we sought help in preparing our report. I am looking forward to next year’s review.”

The General Director of the TRA, Mr. A. Andreas Avgousti, said: “As promised, we are publishing the full contents of the Panel’s report. We would like to thank the Panel and all those who provided feedback to the Panel during their visit to Bahrain. This feedback and interaction is precisely what we had aimed for when establishing the Panel two years ago. We will be studying the Panel’s report in detail, in order to identify the most appropriate ways of addressing the priorities recognized by the Panel in our Plan for the next 12 months. In addition, we will be issuing our formal response to the report in conjunction with our forward Plan, as last year. ”

The Panel report is available for download from the TRA’s website www.tra.org.bh.

Notes to Editors:

1. About the TRA

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

2. About the TRA Development Review Panel

The TRA has always sought to carry out its duties in line with best international practices and to meet the highest standards of regulation for the benefit of the telecommunications industry and consumers alike.

With this in mind, the TRA has established, on an annual basis, the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority Development Review Panel. This is an independent panel, comprising three members, with experience in the area of telecommunications. The panel is asked to carry out a review of the developments in the market and the work of the TRA, and to listen to the views of the industry. Based on the collected information, the panel, during a public meeting, provides advice to the TRA about areas for improvement, which the TRA takes into account in planning its work and strategy for the year ahead.