



Telecommunications Regulatory Authority Publishes Development Review Panel Report

***-- Authority will also publish its comments on report
shortly --***

Manama 7 March 2005 – The Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) announced today the publication of the TRA Development Review Panel 2005 report. This report was submitted to the TRA by the Panel, after the Panel had studied the development of the regulatory environment in the telecommunications sector in Bahrain, and held independent meetings with various entities from the industry, official organizations and consumer representatives. The Panel also held a public meeting on 30th January 2005, where they presented their initial findings and had a chance to engage in an open discussion with interested parties.

The panel of independent experts, who have all built up enviable reputations in the industry, both for their experience and integrity are:-

Professor Martin Cave, Director of the Centre for Management Under Regulation, Warwick Business School in the United Kingdom, who specialises in Regulatory Economics, particularly the communications sector; Mr. Christopher Wright, a Special Advisor on Regulated Industries at the lawyers Slaughter & May also from the United Kingdom, and Mr. Ian Martin, a banker and Senior Telecommunications Analyst at ABN Amro Bank from 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 priority areas that the TRA should be looking at, and areas requiring further improvements.

The Chairman of the Panel, Professor Martin Cave commented on the publication of this report saying: “ We have now submitted our report to the TRA. The panel has taken evidence from all sides in the telecommunications sector in the Kingdom of Bahrain but has reached its conclusions in a wholly independent manner. We trust that the Review will be helpful to the TRA in the conduct of its business.”

He also added : “ Finally we would like to thank the TRA, and all those individuals and organizations to whom we spoke for help in preparing our report. I am looking forward to conducting this exercise again for next year’s review”.

The General Director of the TRA, Mr. A. Andreas Avgousti stated that: “ We are publishing the Panel’s report, in line with our commitment to the transparent approach the TRA has adopted from day one. The Panel’s findings and recommendations will be of great help to us, while setting our forward plan for the next twelve months. In doing this we will ensure that it will address the points highlighted by the Panel; having said that, we have already started taking steps to improve on some of the areas identified during the public meeting last January, the results of which will be seen shortly. The TRA will be publishing its response to the Panel’s report in the near future and in combination with the forward plan for the 2005/2006 period; which will enable the Panel next year to have a benchmark to assess whether these targets have been met.”

The Panel report is available for download from the TRA’s website in English, and the Arabic version will be added on shortly as well.

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.

As part of its efforts in doing so and so that the way TRA formulates the way forward, within the parameters of the law and the telecommunications plan, are effective and foster the development of a

healthy telecommunications sector, the TRA established a system of independent reviews of the way forward for the TRA.

With this in mind, the TRA established, on an annual basis, the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority Development Review Panel. This panel will be an independent panel, comprising of three members, with experience in the area of telecommunications. The panel will be asked to carry out a review of the developments in the market, the work of the TRA and listen to the views of the industry. Based on these the panel will, during a public meeting, provide advice to the TRA about areas of improvement, which the TRA will be taking into account in planning its work and strategy for the next twelve months.