



Telecommunications Regulatory Authority responds to the need to resolve access issues as soon as possible by issuing a Draft Regulation on Access

-- Final Regulation aims to facilitate market entry for new service providers--

Manama – 13 February 2005 – The Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA), has issued the Draft Access Regulation and its related report. The draft Access Regulation makes provisions to mandate when and how licensees such as new internet service providers, etc can use the telecoms network of other operators to provide services to consumers and at what cost.

The draft Access Regulation mandates that licensees declared dominant in access markets must make publicly available their terms and conditions(including tariffs) for providing service providers with access to their network. They are required to do so within specified period from the date of being declared dominant and must get the TRA approval to their offer.

Access services can include wholesale leased lines, international capacity, and wholesale DSL, dialup access to internet among other services.

The draft regulation follows on from a consultation last year, after which the TRA received comments from 4 parties; as with all other consultations, the TRA issued a report on the comments received on the Access consultation and the changes made accordingly.

Commenting on the Draft Regulation, the General Director of the TRA, Mr. A. Andreas Avgousti said: “ We realize that Access is very important for a newly opened market like Bahrain. Without Access the new operators and service providers cannot offer their services to consumers. This concern was also highlighted in the TRA Development Review Panel last month, by both the Panel members and audience. Taking the urgency of the matter into consideration, we have responded by issuing this draft regulation for comments, and planning to issue the final regulation soon after the comments deadline is over. We encourage all the relevant parties to go through the draft regulation and provide us with their feedback on this very important subject. In the meantime we would hope that licensees

should be negotiating terms and conditions to reach commercial agreements.”

The deadline for comments is 5th March 2005. The draft regulation and report documents can be viewed on the TRA’s website at www.tra.org.bh.

Based on the comments that are received, the TRA expects to issue the final Access Regulation.

About the TRA

The Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) was established by Legislative Decree No. 48 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

- The TRA will be happy to provide hard copies of the draft regulation document for those interested parties who do not have access to the Internet. Documents are also available in large print or Brail for those who are visually impaired. The TRA can be contacted on telephone number 17 540 120.

Notes to Editors :

What is Access?

Access is allowing the usage telecommunications facilities or services of another licensed telecommunications operator with the aim of providing telecommunications services, including the link up of equipment with the use of wire or wireless methods and access to any installations that include buildings and pipes for wires, cables and towers, access to mobile telephone networks etc.

Why is Access important?

Without Access it will not be possible for ISPs and VAS licensees (who do not have telecommunications networks of their own) to offer their services to customers.

What is Dominant Position?

A licensee in a dominant position is one that is able to act independently – to a material extent – of competitors, subscribers and users in a relevant market.

What is Relevant Market ?

Relevant markets are the products of services that consumers consider substitutable by reason of their characteristics , price and intended use.

What is Value Added Service Licence (VAS) ?

This license allows the provision of services over an existing network (e.g. calling card services).

What is Internet Service Provider Licence (ISP) ?

This license allows the provision of internet services but not including voice.