



**In an additional step to complete the Access Framework
THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS REGULATORY AUTHORITY
CONSULTS ON DECLARING BATELCO'S DOMINANCE IN
WHOLESALE MARKETS**

MANAMA – 26 October 2005 – The Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) announced today the issuance of the consultation on the dominance of Batelco in wholesale markets in the Kingdom of Bahrain. This consultation document identifies markets where Batelco may be declared dominant, such as: broadband access, access to international cables and links, as well as other areas.

The issue of access is of great importance in liberalized telecommunications markets, as new operators need to access existing telecommunications networks and facilities in order to provide services to their customers.

The TRA has issued a regulation on how new operators gain access to the services that they need, on terms and conditions that are fair and reasonable to them and to the existing operators. Under the Access Regulation, operators which are declared by the TRA to be dominant in access markets are obliged to provide certain access services and to set out these services and the terms and conditions on which they are provided – including their charges – in a reference access offer. This offer is subject to the TRA's approval.

The current consultation report is the result of a study that the TRA has undertaken in order to determine whether Batelco is dominant in relevant access or wholesale markets.

Commenting on the announcement, the General Director of the TRA, Mr. A. Andreas Avgousti, said: "This consultation is the next step that the TRA is taking in order to establish that Batelco is dominant in certain markets and as such subject to the obligations of the Access Regulation. We have already completed the first step by issuing the regulation, and now with this consultation we are working to put in place the other necessary processes for the framework to become operational in a manner that addresses the needs of the market's new and existing operators. "

The deadline for comments is 23 November 2005, and the full contents of the consultation can be viewed on the TRA's website at www.tra.org.bh.

Aided by feedback, the TRA expects to issue its final decision on the matter and a report on comments received.

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 protecting the interests of subscribers and users, and promoting effective and fair competition among established 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 consultation document for interested parties who do not have access to the Internet. In addition, the TRA is happy to provide copies in Braille or large print upon request and free of charge. The TRA can be contacted on telephone number 17 52 0044.

Notes to Editors :

What is Access?

Access means allowing a licensed telecommunications operator to use the telecommunications networks or facilities of another licensed telecommunications operator with the aim of providing telecommunications services, including the link-up of equipment . It also covers access for example to any installations that include buildings and pipes for wires and cables .

Why is Access important?

Without Access it would 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 a 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 a Relevant Market?

A relevant market is defined by the services that consumers consider substitutable for other services by reason of their characteristics, price and intended use.

What is a Value Added Service License (VAS)?

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

What is an Internet Service Provider License (ISP)?

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