



Telecommunications Regulatory Authority issues Final Access Regulation

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

Manama – 30 April 2005 – The Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) has issued the Final Access Regulation and its related consultation report. This Regulation follows on from the draft regulation issued in February 2005, and it makes provisions to mandate when and how licensees, such as new internet service providers, can use the telecoms network and facilities of other operators to provide services to consumers and at what cost.

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

The Access Regulation also mandates that licensees declared dominant in access markets must make their terms and conditions publicly available (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's approval to their offer.

The next step in facilitating market entry for new entrant would be determining market dominance for operators in Bahrain for Access markets. The TRA aims to initiate this project soon, so that operators determined to be dominant will be required to provide the terms and conditions to access their telecommunications network and facilities by other operators.

Commenting on the final Regulation, the General Director of the TRA, Mr. A. Andreas Avgousti said: "Today we are issuing this long awaited Regulation by the industry. As we all know Access is a very important aspect for facilitating entry in a competitive market. We have gone through the usual consultation process before issuing the final regulation, as part of our ongoing commitment to hear all views before making our final decision. The responses from the industry consultation generated a wide range of views. The TRA has considered these and has made some changes in the final Regulation as appropriate. Overall, the TRA considers that the Regulation strikes the right balance between competing views while addressing the

requirements of Bahrain's liberalizing telecoms market. This Regulation is another step in facilitating market entry for new entrants, and we will be addressing all the necessary steps as we move on. Our aim is to establish a robust and effective access framework. In the meantime we would hope that licensees should be negotiating terms and conditions to reach commercial agreements."

The final Access Regulation and consultation report documents can be viewed on the TRA's website at www.tra.org.bh.

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 regulation document for those interested parties who do not have access to the Internet. Documents are also available in large print or Braille for those who are visually impaired. The TRA can be contacted on telephone number 17 520 044.

Notes to Editors :

What is Access?

Access is allowing the usage of telecommunications networks or facilities 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 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 markets 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 exiting network (e.g. calling card services).

What is an Internet Service Provider License (ISP)?

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

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