



Six bidders out of nine qualify for the National Fixed Wireless Services licenses auction

Manama 10 December 2006 – A total of six Bidders out of nine have met the Qualification Criteria for the National Fixed Wireless Services (NFWS) licenses auction. The Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) announced that the list of Qualified Bidders is as follows:

ATCO Clearwire Telecom Limited
Bahrain Telecommunications Company
BSC
Etisalcom Wireless Co WLL
Mena Telecom WLL
MTC-Vodafone, Bahrain BSC
Reliance Communications Limited

This announcement comes after the end of the evaluation process of the business, financial status of the company and technical aspects of the bids by the TRA's dedicated bid-evaluation team. This team was responsible for evaluating the Bids to ensure that they met the Qualification Criteria set out in the Invitation to Tender.

The TRA also prepared an independent review process for Bids deemed by the TRA's evaluation team to have not met the Qualification Criteria. Bids that did not pass the evaluation team's review were automatically re-evaluated by a panel of experts, independent of the TRA. The expert panel consisted of:

- Mr. Peter Alexiadis, a lawyer and Partner of Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher, Brussels;
- Mr. Peter Walker, a telecommunications engineer and independent consultant based in England; and
- Mr. Nigel Attenborough, an economist and Director of NERA, London, England.

Further details of the panel can be found at the TRA website, www.tra.org.bh.

The ultimate decision of which Bids met the Qualification Criteria was in all cases made by the TRA.

The six Qualified Bidders will now participate in the next stage of the auction process - the opening of the Financial Bids.

The Financial Bids of the six Qualified Bidders will be opened on 13th December 2006. The licenses will be awarded to the Qualified Bidders that have offered the two highest Financial Bids.

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

Notes to Editors

The NFWS licenses will pave the way for fixed wireless connectivity to customers for voice and data services. This in turn means that the companies which are successful in obtaining the licenses will be able to provide services to end customers. The licenses entitle the winners to offer local voice telephony, and subject to obtaining the additional relevant licenses, for which there is no limit, they can also provide internet services, international calls, etc.