



## **TRA Board approves the use of auctions for the award of Fixed Wireless Access Licenses**

Manama, 9 July 2006 – The Board of Directors of the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) has approved last Thursday the conducting of auctions for the award of the Fixed Wireless Access Licenses. The decision was made on the 25<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Board of Directors of the TRA. According to the Telecommunications Law of the Kingdom of Bahrain, the TRA may conduct auctions for the award of individuals licenses based on the approval of the Board of Directors.

This decision comes shortly after the TRA and Ministry of Transportation announced the Spectrum Policy for the Kingdom of Bahrain at the end of last month. The Policy set out the available spectrum for telecommunications in the Kingdom, including the frequency range of 3.5 GHz, which can be used for Fixed Wireless Access (FWA) Licenses. The Policy also stated that the amount of spectrum available in this band allows for the licensing of two operators. According to the decision taken by the TRA Board last Thursday, the award of Fixed Wireless Access telecommunications licenses will be made through auctions simultaneously, with the winners of the auctions being able to select one of two frequency licenses to be made available in the 3.5 GHz spectrum.

The FWA licenses are of particular interest to operators wishing to deploy telecommunications networks rapidly to offer full fixed telephony services, since they will allow their holders to reach end customers by wireless means. As such, operators will not need to lay cables in order to reach customers' premises, but will be able to do so wirelessly via the use of spectrum. The operators will have sufficient frequency spectrum to offer a full set of fixed telephony services.

The TRA anticipates that the availability of two licenses in the 3.5 GHz band for FWA will advance competition in this sector, as well as encourage the emergence of new services for customers based on wireless technology.

The TRA will be announcing details of the prequalification criteria and the auctions in due time, along with the relevant deadlines for application and of completion of the auction process as a whole.

The Chairman of the Board of the TRA, Dr. Mohammed J.K. Alghatam, made the following statement upon the announcement of the Board's decision: "We have decided today on the method of award of the FWA licenses by way of auctions. These licenses will play a significant role in fostering competition in fixed telephony services in the Kingdom. Auctions are recognized internationally as one of the methods that provide the highest levels of transparency for the award process. The TRA, in line with its transparent approach, will be publishing all the information related to the auction process and the relevant pre-qualification criteria at a later stage. This way we want to ensure that the TRA will be carrying out its duties in the best possible manner to meet its duties under the Telecommunications Law, the selection of the two companies will be totally transparent and the two companies that will be successful at the end will be able to meet the needs of the Kingdom and its people."

**Note to Editors:**

Definition of Terms:

Fixed Wireless Access(FWA): Radio link to the home or the office from a base station giving access to telecommunications services

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](http://www.tra.org.bh)