



## **Internet Exchange Licenses Available in the Kingdom of Bahrain**

***-- No limits on number of licenses to be granted --***

Manama, 2 July 2006 – The Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) announced today that it is now accepting applications for Internet Exchange licenses. In accordance with the licensing regime in the Kingdom, there will be no restriction on the number of licenses granted.

The Internet Exchange license allows the license holder to establish, operate, manage and maintain an internet exchange. In other words, this license allows interested companies to establish these exchanges on a commercial basis whereby Internet Service Providers (ISPs) can connect to them for a fee. Under the Telecommunications Law there is no longer the obligation on ISPs in Bahrain to connect to any Internet Exchange. It will be left to each ISP to decide whether or not to connect to an Internet Exchange.

It should be noted that this license does not cover the provision of voice calls – a different type of license is required for providing voice services.

Currently, there is only one internet exchange in the Kingdom - the Bahrain Internet Exchange (BIX), which was established in 2003 by Decree No. 47 of 2003. BIX was established as per the requirement in the Telecommunications Law and had an exclusivity period until April 2006, up to which time no other licenses could be granted.

The initial fees for the Internet Exchange license will be BD 1,000, and 1% of the annual turnover thereafter. The TRA will be following the same process as outlined in the Telecommunications Law for assessing licensing applications and deciding on whether to grant the license or reject the application.

The TRA has also issued a guidance note together with the relevant application form on the new license which is available through its website ([www.tra.org.bh](http://www.tra.org.bh)). The generic form of the license itself is also available through the TRA's website.

**Notes to Editors:**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)