

EMBARGOED UNTI 5:00 p.m. ON 27/6/06



Ministry of Transportation



**Telecommunications
Regulatory Authority**

**The Ministry of Transportation and the Telecommunications
Regulatory Authority announce the Spectrum Policy for the
Kingdom of Bahrain**

***-- The policy sets out the available spectrum for
telecommunications services --***

MANAMA – 27 June 2006 – The Ministry of Transportation (MoT) and the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) of Bahrain jointly issued today the Spectrum Policy of the Kingdom and the report on responses received with regard to the relevant document.

The Policy outlines the available spectrum in the Kingdom of Bahrain and how it will be awarded. It also identifies the available spectrum ranges, which include the uses for WiFi, WiMax and Fixed Wireless Access among others.

As regards spectrum for additional mobile licenses, the Policy confirms that there is available spectrum for both 2G and 3G. This confirmation is a prelude to the third mobile license consultation, which will discuss whether a 3rd mobile licence should be issued and the available options for such licence, ranging from the nature of the license to the award mechanism.

The Spectrum Policy issued today forms the basis for use of spectrum in the Kingdom of Bahrain. It identifies the different options available for awarding spectrum for each band. The award mechanisms vary between first come-first-served and auctions, depending on demand and availability.

In addition, the Policy includes a provision for dealing with new technologies that require access to spectrum. The Policy sets out the procedure to be followed in order to determine the allocation of spectrum for new technologies.

Following on from the publication of the Policy the next step will be to set out the detailed processes related to the actual award of spectrum licenses. This entails deciding and finalizing the award process for each license, along with the relevant requirements, licences, documentation and procedures.

When these are ready the TRA will issue public announcements to the effect that applications will be accepted for specific types of licenses, including deadlines and guidelines on how interested parties can apply for them. No applications will be accepted at any stage prior to these announcements, and those received will be rejected as being premature.

The Undersecretary of the Ministry of Transportation, HE Sh. Mohammed Bin Khalifa Bin Ali Al-Khalifa, said: "The telecommunications sector in the Kingdom of Bahrain is on the verge of significant changes that will be brought by the publication of the complete policy and strategy for spectrum. In light of this a joint document was prepared by the Ministry of Transportation and the TRA that determines the general principles for the policy of spectrum management as per the National Frequency Plan and the efficient use of this scarce resource in a manner that addresses short and long term needs for the coming era, especially with regards to new technologies such as Fixed Wireless Access (FWA) , WiFi and WiMAX.

This policy document emphasizes the future vision of the Kingdom of Bahrain for spectrum as well as specifying the mechanisms for calculating assignment fees for frequency ranges in line with the general policy of the telecommunications sector. Thus position the Kingdom of Bahrain at the forefront of renowned telecoms services provider as well as placing it as a regional model to be followed."

The General Director of the TRA, Mr. A. Andreas Avgousti, said: "The publication of the spectrum policy for the Kingdom is an important step in the development of our market. This policy is a direct result of the excellent cooperation between the Ministry of Transportation and the TRA in the area of spectrum. We have worked together to set down a policy that aims to address both the present and future needs for spectrum in Bahrain. It has been our intention all along to formulate a comprehensive policy, and we feel that today we have attained that goal. As we move forward, based on the policy statement issued today we will issue licenses for spectrum in a technology neutral, fair, transparent and non discriminatory manner. "

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The Spectrum Policy Plan and the related report on comments received with regard to the relevant consultation are available on the TRA website: www.tra.org.bh

About the Ministry of Transportation

The Ministry of Transportation was established in 1971. Its aims and purposes include providing new policies, and developing and strengthening the infrastructure of important sectors, such as Public Transport, Postal Services, Telecommunications and Civil Aviation. Through progression framework, the Ministry has been able to meet its objectives by adopting flexible strategies that fulfill local, regional and international demands. Its work on privatising Public Transport and liberalising the Telecommunications market to meet advanced customer demands is widely regarded as pioneering in the Gulf region. The developments in the Telecommunications sector culminated in the issue of Legislative Decree No. 48 of 2002 promulgating the Telecommunications Law and establishing the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA).

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