



TRA Bahrain invites bids for the National Fixed Wireless Services Licenses using the 3.5 GHz spectrum range

-- Closing date for bids is 28 November 2006 --

Manama Thursday 5 October 2006 – The Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of the Kingdom of Bahrain (TRA) has published today the Invitation to Tender (ITT) document relating to the forthcoming auction of two National Fixed Wireless Services (NFWS) Licenses that will use spectrum in the 3.5 GHz range.

The two frequency licenses to be granted with the NFWS licenses authorize use of the following spectrum:

Frequency License I: 3410 MHz – 3455 MHz paired with 3500 MHz – 3545 MHz

Frequency License II: 3455 MHz – 3500 MHz paired with 3545 MHz – 3590 MHz

In accordance with the timetable for the auction process, which is set out in the ITT, Tuesday **28 November 2006** is the final date for receipt of bids from interested parties, and Wednesday 13 December 2006 is the date for the announcement of the winners.

The full ITT is available on the TRA's website (www.tra.org.bh) for download and contains all the relevant details of the auction process and guidelines on the preparation of bids and their subsequent evaluation by the TRA. In addition, the ITT contains the forms to be filled in by the bidders, and copies of the NFWS license and the associated frequency license to be granted to the successful bidders.

While the ITT is available for download via the TRA's website, interested bidders who wish to submit questions on the ITT to the TRA are required to register and pay a registration fee of BD 2,000 (approx. US\$ 5,225), which will be offset against the registration fee for the auction. The TRA will only respond in writing to questions from registered bidders, and where it deems it appropriate it may publish anonymized versions of the questions and answers on its website.

The TRA has set the starting price of the auction of each license at 20,000 BD (approx. US\$ 52,250), taking into account that the prospective licensees will also have to pay annual fees of BD 28,000 (approx. US\$ 73,200) to the Ministry of Transportation for the use of the spectrum.

The Chairman of the Board of Directors and Acting General Director of the TRA, Dr. Mohammed J.K. Alghatam, commented as follows on the publication of the ITT: “The publication of the ITT sets in motion the process for the selection and award of these two important licenses. We have made every effort to ensure that the auction process and relevant details are transparent, fair and non-discriminatory. We have modeled the auction process on international best practices and take pride in introducing the additional safeguard of the expert international panel that will be responsible for evaluating any unsuccessful bids independently.”

NOTE: This press release is issued for information purposes only. Parties interested in submitting documents and financial bids for the NFWS licenses should rely only on the ITT, being the official invitation to the auction.

Notes to Editors :

- The NFWS licenses are of particular importance to the Bahraini telecommunications market, as they will pave the way for 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 directly to the end customers. The license entitles 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. The licensing process creates the potential for the entry of two independent operators for fixed telephony and data in Bahrain.

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