



TRA establishes Business Users Advisory Group

Manama, 19 February 2007 – The Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) met recently with the newly established permanent Business Users Advisory Group. This group will be tasked with providing feedback to TRA on business user - related issues.

TRA has decided to establish a separate group for the business sector, due to the different needs and concerns of business users as compared to individual consumers. Feedback from the business sector is especially important in this phase of market development, as business customers are starting to have, in some areas, more choice in terms of service provider, prices and quality of service.

This advisory group will be independent from TRA, and while TRA may offer its support on request, it will not be involved in the recommendations or decisions made by the group.

TRA has sought to include various segments of the business sector in the Kingdom, reflecting the needs of as many types of business consumers as possible. TRA has approached the major establishments and business-related societies in the Kingdom to nominate their representatives in the group. After receiving nominations from various entities, TRA established the group, which comprises the following members (listed alphabetically as per organization name):

Organization

Bahrain Aluminium Company (Alba)
Bahrain Businessmen's Association
Bahrain Chamber of Commerce &
Industry
Bankers' Society of Bahrain
Central Informatics Organization
Central Informatics Organization
Arab Banking Corporation
Gulf Petrochemical Industries Co.

Representative

Mr. Abdulhameed Husain
Mr. Ahmed Bin Hindi
Mr. Obaidly Al Obaidly
Mr. Michael B. Gehrman
Mr. Mohammed Al Yasi
Mr. Abdulraheem Al Abbasi
Mr. David Clarke
Mr. Yousif Abdulla Yousif

In line with TRA's transparent approach to providing information, a separate section on its website will be dedicated to the group. This section will contain all the information related to the group and its activities.

Alan Horne, TRA's General Director Designate, expressed his thanks to all the organizations that have named representatives in the group. Mr Horne said "The participation of these organizations reflects their awareness of the important role that consumer feedback plays and their keenness to relay concerns of the business consumer to TRA in support of assisting the competitive supply of telecommunications services".

The meeting concluded that the group would like to focus on five key areas:

- To provide a lobby group to Licensees;
- To proactively provide input to the TRA in relation to issues that may affect business users;
- To hold discussions with the TRA prior to the issuing of consultation documents.
- To improve the TRA's services;
- To provide awareness of the new services provided by operators

Initially, the group identified the key areas of concern for business users in Bahrain to be the lack of competitiveness of the prices especially for internet and mobile services, high costs of leased lines and delay in providing the service as well as the need to improve the continuity of critical services to businesses. The group also identified a need to improve the service level agreements between the operators and customers.

Mr Horne closed the meeting by saying "The meeting gave us the opportunity to listen to the key issues being faced by businesses and focused on the priority areas which need to be addressed by the telecoms operators and TRA. We will use this important input as well as the rest of the feedback we receive from our stakeholders in formulating our Work Plan. The group will carry on its work independently from the TRA, but we will be here to offer any support needed. ."

The Chairperson of the Group, Mr. Ubaidly Al Ubaidly, made the following statement: " The formation of this group is a direct indicator of the increased awareness and commitment from business sector to participate in the development of services required by the sector from the service providers. Thus we view the group's role to be a channel of communications between TRA, service providers and business sector, with a vision to improve telecoms services and therefore enabling all of us to better perform our objectives. We view the group's role to complement TRA's efforts as well as the service providers. Our primary mission is to communicate the needs of the business sector to the TRA to allow it to decide on what needs to be done to address these

needs, at the same time we will also be in communication with the service providers to ensure that they are aware of the needs of their business customers and have the opportunity to improve the existing services and provide new ones.”

Note to Editors:

The Business Users Advisory Group is one of two permanent advisory groups that TRA has established, the other being the Consumers Group. Both groups are tasked with providing consumer feedback to TRA. The Business Users Advisory Group consists of members from the business sector in the Kingdom of Bahrain. Participation in the group is on a voluntary basis and the membership period is for one year subject to renewal.

About the TRA

The Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) was established by Legislative Decree No. 48 of 2002 promulgating the Telecommunications Law. 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 existing and new licensed operators. More information regarding TRA can be viewed at www.tra.org.bh