



TRA to Assist Interested Parties in Responding to the Draft Regulation on National Security

Manama – Kingdom of Bahrain, Wednesday 4 March 2009

The Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) received several comments from various sources regarding a public consultation document on a draft regulation; for providing the technical resources in support of national security requirements that was published in English on its website on 25 February 2009. The Draft Regulation arises from the requirement for Lawful Access as set out in section 78 of the Telecommunications Law (Legislative Decree No. 48 of 2002).

It was clear from the comments received that there is a misunderstanding of the purpose and requirements of the draft regulation. It is therefore important for TRA to clarify that the draft regulation is in line with the normal Lawful Access requirements for security purposes, and is also in line with the Laws of the Kingdom of Bahrain.

The draft regulation does not impose any violation to section 26 of The Constitution. It sets out the requirements for the telecommunications operators to retain all communication logs and to allow access to such information and actual call content, when required by competent authorities. The competent authorities will have to follow standard procedures as per the relevant laws to instigate access on the strength of a permit by the public prosecutor's office or by virtue of an order issued by the court of competent jurisdiction, as per section 75 of the Telecommunications Law.

Further, TRA recognizes its obligation to protect consumer rights, their personal particulars and privacy of services as per section 3 of the Telecommunications Law.

TRA encourages all interested parties to provide their comments on the draft regulation. An Arabic version of the consultation document has been published on TRA's website in addition to the English version published on 25 February 2009.

TRA's General Director Mr. Alan Horne stated "In line with international best practice this Regulation addresses Lawful Access and Data Retention in the context of the Constitution and the Telecommunications Law and strives to balance the individual right to privacy and national security requirements".

Mr. Ahmed Jaber Aldoseri, ICT Operations Manager at TRA said "On the 16th of March 2009 we will hold a workshop for all operators and interested parties in order to address any issues or provide clarifications before the final deadline of the consultation." He went on to say "It is important that parties read the draft regulation in its entirety before making their submissions, and further understand the context of the regulation in terms of the Telecommunications Law".

The deadline for receiving responses to the draft regulation is at 4:00 p.m. on the 26th of March, 2009. The full text of the regulation is available on TRA's website at www.tra.org.bh. Interested parties can also view the Telecommunications Law, which is published in both languages on the same web site.

About 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, 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 TRA can be viewed at www.tra.org.bh

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