



Press Release

TRA Releases 1st Bahrain Telecom Consumer Survey Findings

Sunday, 19th August 2007:

In a presentation to representatives of telecommunications licensees and the media, Mr. Alan Horne, General Director of TRA gave an overview of the findings of a consumer survey of the usage of telecommunications services in Bahrain.

The consumer survey was conducted as an input into a strategic market review which TRA plan to release, by the end of August, for consultation on proposed retail market definitions and remedies to promote competition in those markets in which competition has not yet developed.

The survey showed that the adoption of mobile telephony by residential consumers is high, with mobile penetration at virtually 100% of households, and 11% of individuals having more than one phone or SIM card. At the same time, fixed telephony remains important; with approximately two thirds of surveyed households having a fixed line, and 52% having internet connection.

The survey revealed that 93 per cent of businesses consider retaining the old number when changing providers important or very important.

For Business consumers, the survey showed that 100% of businesses used a fixed line, 64% used mobile services, and 67% had internet access. The findings indicated that the data market is yet to fully develop; showing that only 9% of businesses surveyed used data services, 8% used E-applications and only 5% used information and communications technology solutions.

As far as internet is concerned, the survey showed that consumer's acquisition of internet services is slow and internet charges are still considered expensive. More importantly, the present speeds and prices will discourage the growth of more sophisticated uses of the internet.

The survey showed that most consumers are satisfied with the quality and reliability telecom services that they use, but they are considerably critical of the prices they have to pay; particularly for international calling.

The overall results of the survey show that consumers in Bahrain are still learning about the capabilities of telecommunications, and they have little awareness of the various service choices available.

Commenting on the survey findings, Mr. Alan Horne said: “it is clear from this survey that competition has developed in the mobile and international calls markets, particularly to destinations such as India. However there is still a need to increase the consumers awareness of the different alternative providers and for the take up of new innovative services which can assist in business growth. TRA supports all licensees in their educational and public awareness activities to improve the take up of services. TRA has also to address its own profile amongst consumers and explain how it can support consumers in overcoming any issues they may have with suppliers. TRA has to remove the remaining barriers to allow competition across the broad range of telecommunications markets and support this vital sector to grow. A wider choice of telecommunication services and enabling consumers to easily switch providers, will support the further development in terms of quality of service, innovation as well as competitive prices”.

The consumer survey is the first of its kind to be conducted in Bahrain, and was undertaken by the respected independent international consultants Nielsen. It showed the usage patterns and awareness of telecom services provided in Bahrain. The survey compiled important information and statistics on the usage of fixed and mobile telecom services, covering a representative sample of 1052 residential consumers and 159 business consumers. The complete and detailed results documents of the survey can be found on TRA website (www.tra.org.bh).

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