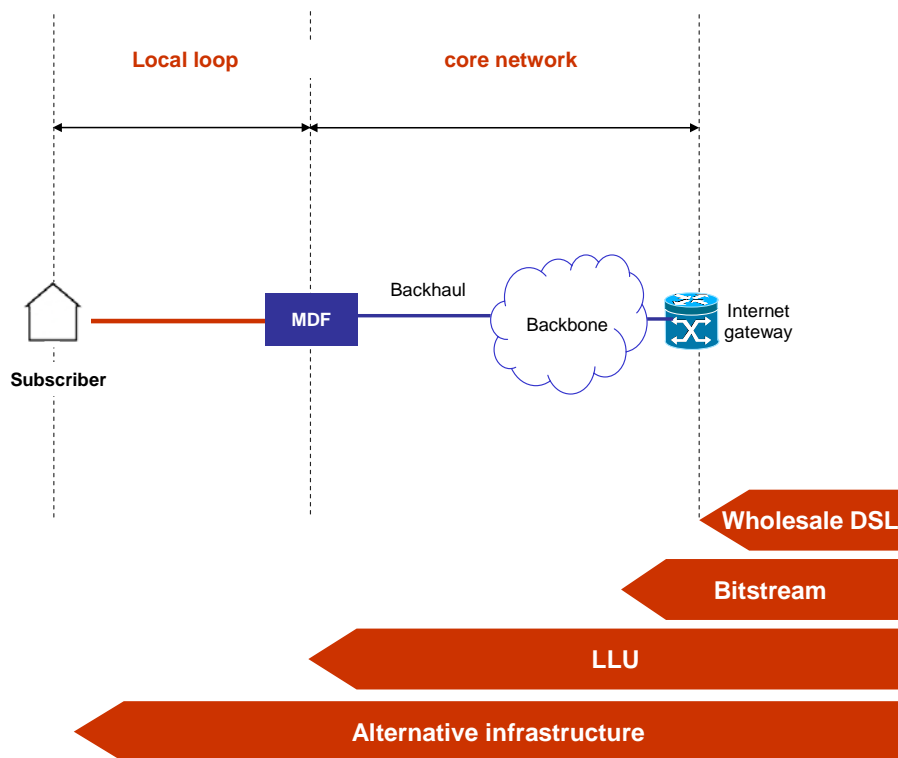


3.3 Starting point for the definition of relevant wholesale markets

29. In the 2006 Dominance Determination,¹⁰ TRA defined the “wholesale market for fixed access to customer premises (including high-bandwidth, broadband and narrowband access)” as a relevant market. Unbundled local loops, Wholesale DSLs and main distribution frames or concentrators for Bitstream or DSL collocation were considered as “relevant access inputs”.
30. In the telecommunications sector, there are typically two main types of relevant markets to consider: retail markets, i.e. the markets for services or products provided to end-users; and wholesale markets, i.e. the markets for the input which are necessary for operators to provide services and products to end-users.¹¹
31. Having regards to the broadband value chain and the different functional levels and wholesale inputs (See Figure 1 below) that can be used to offer services at the retail level, the general approach for the definition of relevant wholesale markets for broadband is to take as a starting point two separate markets: the wholesale physical network infrastructure access market and the wholesale broadband access market.

Figure 1 - Positioning of the different “broadband inputs” in the xDSL value chain



¹⁰ TRA, “Determination of dominance in wholesale markets”, Determination 1 of 2006, 22 January 2006.

¹¹ European Commission, “Commission Recommendation on Relevant Product and Service Markets within the electronic communications sector susceptible to ex ante regulation in accordance with Directive 2002/21/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on a common regulatory framework for electronic communications networks and services”.

- Batelco has been found to have SMP in the retail market for broadband internet access services from a fixed location, and Batelco uses its local loop as an input for the provision of broadband services.
 - The local loop had also been considered as a relevant input of the wholesale broadband market in the previous Determination on Dominance in Wholesale Markets.¹⁸
43. TRA also notes that there is demand for LLU. Interviews conducted by TRA with alternative operators in November 2008 have indicated that there is potential demand from alternative operators for having access to the local loop: five operators have expressed their interest in LLU, and four of them expressed their wish to see an LLU product available as soon as possible.
44. TRA observes also that such a definition of notional markets has been used in other countries, including Malta and Ireland for example:
- The Malta Communications Authority (MCA) in Malta has defined a “wholesale unbundled access to the local loop” market despite the absence of Internet Service Providers (ISPs) purchasing wholesale unbundled access in Malta.¹⁹
 - In its 2004 analysis of the wholesale broadband access market in Ireland, ComReg has considered notional markets.²⁰
45. For all the above reasons, TRA defines as a starting point a notional LLU market. Based on the set of technologies available in the Kingdom of Bahrain for the provision of broadband internet access services from a fixed location, TRA considers that, for wholesale customers, potential substitutes to the LLU product are:
- upstream: building a new alternative local loop or access to ducts;
 - downstream: Bitstream and Wholesale DSL;
 - at the same functional level: access to existing alternative local loops (NFWS or others).
46. Therefore, in its analysis of demand- and supply-side substitutability to define the boundaries of the relevant market, TRA needs to consider the following questions:
- Would wholesale customers substitute the LLU product by building their own local loop?
 - Is access to ducts a substitute to the LLU product?
 - Is wholesale access to the existing NFWS local loops a substitute to the LLU product?
 - Is wholesale access to the existing fibre local loops a substitute to the LLU product?
 - Is Bitstream a substitute for LLU?
 - Should self-provision of access to the copper local loop be part of the relevant market?

¹⁸ TRA, “Dominance in Wholesale Markets by Batelco A Determination issued by the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority”, 22 January 2006.

¹⁹ MCA, Wholesale Unbundled Access to the Local Loop, Identification and Analysis of Markets, Determination of Market Power and Setting of Remedies, 27th November 2006.

²⁰ ComReg, “Market analysis: wholesale broadband access. Consultation paper”, Document No: 04/25, 2004.

47. TRA has analysed each of these questions below through:

1. reviewing TRA's position taken in the Draft Dominance Determination;
2. reviewing the responses received to the Draft Determination; and
3. providing TRA's analysis and conclusions.

Responses to the Draft Dominance Determination

48. In its response to the Draft Determination, Batelco submits that TRA has not considered whether there was "consumer harm" before considering a notional market for LLU when TRA quoted in the Draft Determination the European Commission stating that "[w]here there is no merchant market and where there is consumer harm, it is justifiable to construct a notional market when potential demand exists".²¹ Batelco considers that "TRA should focus on any possible identified market failure at the retail level that causes substantial consumer harm absent regulation and should only then commence a sequence of market analyses".²² It also argued that "if EC principles were followed, regulatory intervention could not be justified as the three-criteria-test would not be fulfilled, given that barriers to entry had already been remedied on the basis of availability of duct access, Bitstream, WSDSL and alternative competition".²³

TRA analysis and conclusion

49. TRA is of the view that the reasons set out in the Draft Determination (and in particular at Paras 42-43 above) fully justify taking a notional market for LLU as a starting point.

50. There is no explicit legal requirement in Bahrain to identify consumer harm and/or to apply the three-criteria-test used in the EU. However, TRA considers that consumer harm in the retail broadband market has been articulated in its 2008 SMP Determination in which Batelco was determined to have SMP and in which TRA determined that there is insufficient competition. The nature of the consumer harm in the retail broadband market highlighted by TRA included for example:

- "the persistence of high retail broadband tariffs by international standards and prices well in excess of cost";
- The low broadband penetration and service offerings.

51. As explained in the Draft Determination, TRA is of the view that the conclusions of the 2008 SMP Determination remain relevant today.²⁴

52. The legal framework applicable in Bahrain for telecommunications services does not include the three-criteria-test of the EU regulatory framework. Regarding the three-criteria-test as applied to the wholesale markets, TRA notes that the EC included in its 2007 Recommendation on Relevant Markets the wholesale (physical) network

²¹ See European Commission, 2007, "Commission Recommendation on Relevant Product and Service Markets Within the Electronic Communications Sector Susceptible to *ex ante* Regulation in Accordance with Directive 2002/21/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on a Common Regulatory Framework for Electronic Communications Networks and Services".

²² Batelco, Submission to TRA Consultation on the Determination of Dominance in Wholesale Broadband Markets, 7 May 2009, Para 4.

²³ Batelco, Submission to TRA Consultation on the Determination of Dominance in Wholesale Broadband Markets, 7 May 2009, Para 7.

²⁴ See Para 18 of the Draft Determination.

infrastructure access (including shared or fully unbundled access) at a fixed location and wholesale broadband access markets precisely on the basis of the three cumulative criteria test. At the retail level, TRA explained in the 2008 SMP Determination (Para 222-225) that neither the availability of Wholesale DSL and Bitstream products nor market entry by the two NFWS operators would address consumer harm fully and effectively constrain Batelco's market power. For example, NFWS operators have difficulties in offering download speeds superior to 8 Mbps without threshold²⁵. Bitstream, Wholesale DSL and NFWS technologies do not offer the ability to provide services such as triple play, video on demand, etc. Further Bitstream and Wholesale DSL do not enable significant product differentiation in the retail market from the products of the incumbent. This contrasts with LLU which enables OLOs to sell products with different and higher download/upload speeds, contention ratios which it can determine and with new services such as triple play, video on demand, voice over IP, etc. Hence, LLU can be seen as a key enabler for competition in the medium term for such services.

53. TRA therefore remains of the view that it is appropriate to define, as a starting point, a notional market for LLU.

Would wholesale customers substitute the LLU product by building their own local loop?

The Draft Dominance Determination

54. TRA is of the view that in response to a SSNIP on the LLU price, wholesale customers would not be in a position to build their own alternative local loop and thereby defeat the SSNIP in the relevant timeframe of the analysis.
55. The local loop is the "last mile" of an operator's telecommunications network that connects the customer premises to the operator's core network (in which switching, routing and intelligent equipment are connected to each other).
56. The local loop is "a highly capital-intensive business".²⁶ They are two main types of local loop: wired local loops and wireless local loops.
57. Building a wired local loop, be it copper or fibre based, involves very substantial civil works and cable costs in order to reach all targeted customer premises. The capital requirement, coupled with the sunk nature of the costs involved in deploying a wired local loop, and demand conditions make the duplication of wired local loops on a significant scale particularly challenging and highly unlikely on a commercial basis.²⁷
58. In addition to sunk cost, economies of scale and scope constitute another considerable barrier to entry. Batelco benefits from significant economies of scale (or density) and economies of scope, as Batelco provides voice and internet access services through its copper local loop. An operator building an alternative local loop would be unlikely to benefit from the same level of economies of scale and would have to offer the same suite of services to reach a similar level of economies of scope.

²⁵ Maximum amount of data which can be downloaded per month and per user, in GBytes for example.

²⁶ Cf. TRA, "Dominance in wholesale markets: a consultation issued by the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority on dominance in wholesale markets", 27 October 2005, page 34."

²⁷ Copper local loops are considered as essential facilities in some countries, such as France. See Conseil de la Concurrence, Avis No 04-A-01 du 8 janvier 2004.

59. TRA also considers that the deployment of an alternative wired local loop would be particularly time-consuming.
60. While the investment required for building a wireless local loop is lower than for a fixed local loop, wireless local loops are also capital-intensive: they require the roll-out of a capillary mast and transmitter network to address end-users. Further, sunk cost represents a large proportion of the cost of the deployment of wireless loops and this constitutes a significant barrier to entry.
61. Building a wireless local loop with significant coverage is time-intensive. For Mena Telecom, which operates such a wireless local loop, almost two years has elapsed between the granting of its NFWS licence in January 2007 and the commercial launch of its broadband services. Zain, the holder of the other NFWS licence, was able to deploy its network more quickly by leveraging its existing mobile network (i.e. Zain already had in place a certain number of masts and a backhaul network from which it could build its NFWS network).
62. Notwithstanding this, TRA considers that wireless loops are not substitutable for fixed wired loops. In fact the range of services that can be provided based on LLU is much wider than the effective range currently achievable by wireless networks.
63. In addition to the above mentioned wired local loops and wireless local loops, satellite can also be used to provide broadband services in Bahrain. However, satellite currently accounts for less than 1% of the broadband market. The marginal market share of satellite reflect the significant cost and quality disadvantages of this access technology which make it an ill-suited technology to compete in the mass retail broadband market.²⁸ TRA is of the view that satellite should be excluded from the market analysis on the basis that it is not a substitutable product for LLU.
64. For the reasons set out above, TRA is of the view that it would not be possible for a wholesale customer to substitute the LLU product by building its own local loop with significant coverage in the Kingdom of Bahrain within the timeframe of the analysis because of the high sunk costs involved and high entry barriers. In response to a SSNIP, supply-side substitution would be inoperative.

Responses to the Draft Determination

65. Lightspeed agrees with TRA's view.
66. Batelco disagrees with TRA's analysis and argues that the fact that Mena Telecom and Zain have built wireless local loops quickly (especially Zain) and have gained market shares of [•] in one year or less shows that the barriers to entry are not insurmountable, even in the medium term. Batelco adds that the argument from TRA that Zain had an advantage given its existing mobile infrastructure is not a valid argument and does not prove that wireless local loops are not a substitute for Batelco's fixed local loops.

²⁸ See also TRA, SMP Determination in certain Retail Markets, 3 June 2008, page 49.

TRA analysis and conclusion

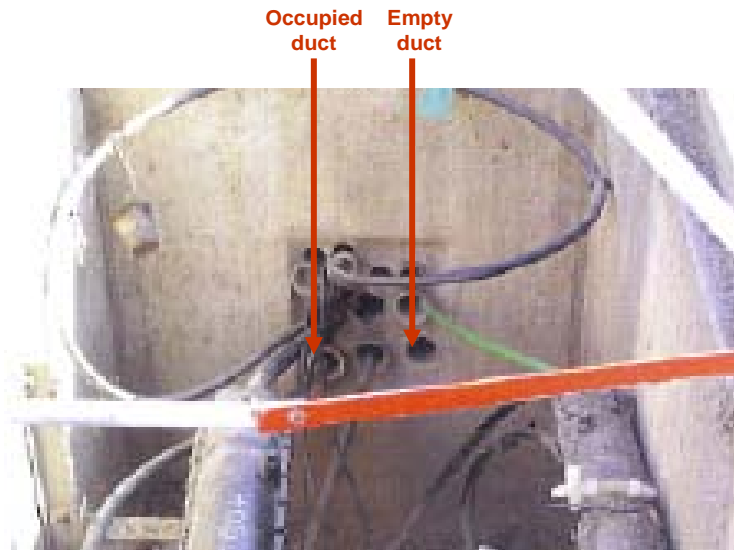
67. TRA observes that Batelco does not disagree with the fact that building a wired local loop is not a substitute for LLU but disagrees with the fact that building a wireless local loop is not a substitute for LLU.
68. TRA notes that Batelco's arguments about wireless local loops are based on the observation that building a wireless local loop and achieving a [•] market share in the broadband market has been achieved by Zain and Mena Telecom. However, TRA is still of the view that building a wireless local loop takes significant time, as it took almost two years for Mena Telecom to deploy its network. TRA remains of the view that, if Zain achieved a deployment of its network more rapidly, this is due to the fact that it previously owned a mobile network (with available masts, antennas, etc.). Batelco disagrees with this latter opinion but does not justify why it disagrees.
69. Even if TRA were to agree that Mena Telecom and Zain's NFWS deployments show that the barriers to build a wireless local loop are not insurmountable in the medium term, TRA remains of the view, as explained in the Draft Determination and the 2008 SMP Determination, that the range of services that can be provided based on copper cables is much wider than the effective range currently achievable by wireless networks. The offers provided by NFWS operators in Bahrain currently include download speeds of up to 8 Mbps with a limited download of data per month and the provision of voice services, while copper networks enable the provision of download speeds up to 20 Mbps with unlimited download plans, voice services, video on demand services, TV services, interactive TV services, etc. TRA observes that Batelco does not dispute this point. As a consequence, for a wholesale operator, building its own wireless local loop does not offer the same range of possibilities as purchasing LLU. It is therefore not possible for a wholesale customer to substitute the LLU product by building its own wireless local loop. This is in part due to the fact that wireless networks share capacities between many end-users while the copper network offers one dedicated link for each user.
70. Having considered the views of respondents, TRA remains of the view that it would not be possible for a wholesale customer to substitute the LLU product by building its own wired or wireless local loop with significant coverage in the Kingdom of Bahrain within the timeframe of the analysis because of the high sunk costs involved and high entry barriers and, in the case of wireless local loops, mainly because of the difference in the range of services that can be offered by LLU compared to wireless local loops.

Is access to ducts a substitute for LLU?

The Draft Dominance Determination

71. Access to ducts enables OLOs to deploy cables without having to dig trenches or to deploy poles. In general, when an incumbent deploys its local loop for the first time, it digs trenches, lays ducts and pulls cables into the ducts. To avoid having to reopen trenches in the future, it lays spare ducts. After that, as a general rule, the incumbent does not have to reopen trenches to lay additional cables; it simply lays cables into spare ducts (this is done by opening chambers at each side of the ducts). Thus, compared to a situation where the deployment of a wired local loop is completed without access to ducts (which has been dealt with above), the deployment of a wired local loop with access to ducts is less capital- and time-intensive. Nevertheless, the incumbent would still have to undertake a thorough assessment of the effective availability of ducts and then to select those to be made available to OLOs.

Figure 3 - Picture showing empty and occupied ducts



Source: TRA (from ARCEP pictures)

72. While effective access to ducts would improve somewhat the economic equation for the deployment of fixed local loop compared to the case without access to ducts analysed above, TRA considers that supply-side substitution based on the availability of access to ducts will be insufficient in the relevant timeframe to warrant a broadening of the market definition, i.e. access will not be sufficient to make a SSNIP on the LLU price unprofitable.
73. Despite access to ducts, the deployment of a wired local loop involves substantial capital requirements, in terms of civil works costs (notably for laying cables into these ducts), material and equipments (e.g. fibre or copper cables). Further the processes for obtaining access to ducts are in practice very long, even though TRA is currently involved in easing these. Barriers to entry remain considerable. Even if some OLOs may have the intention to deploy wired local loops, it would be limited to very small areas.
74. Nevertheless, TRA notes that access to ducts is an important remedy to address problems associated with physical network access.
75. For the reasons set out above, TRA concludes that access to ducts will not be a close substitute to LLU within the timeframe of the current analysis and is therefore excluded from the market definition.

Responses to the Draft Dominance Determination

76. Lightspeed agrees with TRA's view.
77. Batelco disagrees with TRA's analysis and considers that duct access appears to be "a very near substitute to LLU". It argues that since duct access has been part of the

Reference Access Offer in 2003, “duct access should be part of the same product market and should be regarded as a substitute to LLU”.²⁹

78. Batelco considers that LLU will not enable increased competition in residential PSTN or broadband markets because margins are low and there is little incentive for OLOs to enter those markets, and they will thus be focused on the business broadband market. Batelco adds that duct access is also focused on the broadband business market. As a consequence, both duct access and LLU focus on very similar targets.
79. Batelco comments also that the number of subscribers reached by LLU or duct access is similar, since they target either high-density areas or high-value customers. Batelco explains that, in high-density areas, the amount of digging from the duct to the end-user is low, which allows a high number of customers to be reached in a cost-effective way.
80. Batelco believes that LLU will leave Batelco with non-profitable or low-margin customers and will leave some villages with low-speed broadband.
81. Batelco concludes that LLU and access to ducts should be in the same market and that LLU is therefore unnecessary.

TRA analysis and conclusion

82. The arguments presented by Batelco are not directly relevant for the purposes of defining relevant markets.
83. Notwithstanding this, TRA disagrees with Batelco’s view that both LLU and access to ducts will focus on the broadband business market. LLU is not intended to focus only on the broadband business market, on the contrary, and because of economies of scale, LLU is inherently intended to address the mass market. Addressing the mass market indeed allows OLOs to benefit from greater economies of scale. In many other countries where sufficient history of LLU roll-out is available, such as France, Germany and the United Kingdom, and also smaller countries such as Cyprus, LLU does not only address the business market. If the ten biggest exchanges were unbundled in Bahrain, around 50% of copper lines would be available to LLU, which indicates that LLU can easily address the mass market.
84. While TRA concurs with Batelco that access to ducts is likely to be more focused on business customers (provided that they are located close to each other), TRA is of the view that LLU and access to ducts do not necessarily address the same type of customers and markets. This is due to the fact that access to ducts requires laying fibre cables in ducts and is therefore more capital-intensive and time-consuming. Thus the needs of the mass market are unlikely to be addressed by OLOs using access to ducts, at least in the medium term.
85. TRA disagrees with Batelco’s statement that the number of subscribers reached by LLU and access to ducts is the same. Even if this might be correct in the long term in a market where available download speeds would be much higher than they are currently, this is not possible in the medium term due to the fact that access to ducts is much more capital-intensive than LLU. TRA would also like to remind that ducts are subject to duct availability.

²⁹ Batelco, Submission to TRA Consultation on the Determination of Dominance in Wholesale Broadband Markets, 7 May 2009, para15.

86. TRA agrees with Batelco about the fact that access to ducts is less costly in high-density areas because the distance between end-users and ducts is shorter and, consequently, the costs of digging are lower. However, this indicates only that access to ducts is an option that is more cost-effective in high-density areas. It does not indicate that access to ducts is as cost-effective as LLU.
87. Further even if access to duct and LLU were addressing the same markets as suggested by Batelco, but with which TRA disagrees, this would not be sufficient to conclude that access to ducts and LLU are in the same market. Indeed, as explained in the Draft Determination, access to ducts and LLU have different characteristics:

“Despite access to ducts, the deployment of a wired local loop involves substantial capital requirements, in terms of civil works costs (notably for laying cables into these ducts), material and equipment (e.g. fibre or copper cables). Further the processes for obtaining access to ducts are in practice very long, even though TRA is currently involved in easing these. Barriers to entry remain considerable.”³⁰

88. Finally, regarding Batelco’s statement that LLU is unnecessary because LLU and access to ducts should be in the same market, TRA underlines that it is not necessarily the case that because two wholesale products fall within the same market only one of them is necessary. These wholesale products can be complementary in a specific context. For example, ARCEP, in its decision no. 2008-0835,³¹ considered that access to ducts and LLU were in the same relevant market and were both necessary. These two remedies were imposed on France Telecom.
89. Having considered the views of respondents, TRA remains of the view that access to ducts and LLU are not substitutes.
90. With regards to Batelco’s statement that LLU will leave Batelco with non-profitable or low-margin customers and will leave some villages with low-speed broadband, TRA observes that this statement is outside the scope of the this Determination. However, based on the observation in other jurisdictions, it is TRA’s expectation that OLOs will tend to compete with Batelco wherever Batelco has an ADSL service available, using either LLU or Bitstream for the reasons stated in the Study on the Regulation of Wholesale Broadband Markets.³² The issue of some villages remaining with low-speed broadband, meaning that neither the ADSL services of Batelco nor NFWS services are available, is a policy question that TRA intends to address under a Universal Service Strategy, with special emphasis on broadband services. Furthermore, as the price of LLU will enable the recovery of the efficient costs of Batelco’s access network in areas where Batelco will compete with LLU-based offerings, this will induce competition on merits to the benefits of consumers. TRA finds it difficult to understand why such competition on merits would imply that Batelco would lose all of its broadband customers in such areas.

³⁰ Cf. para. 57 of the Draft Determination.

³¹ Décision no. 2008-0835 de l’Autorité de Régulation des Communications Électroniques et des Postes en date du 24 juillet 2008 portant sur la définition du marché pertinent de gros des offres d’accès aux infrastructures physiques constitutives de la boucle locale filaire, sur la désignation d’un opérateur exerçant une influence significative sur ce marché et sur les obligations imposées à cet opérateur sur ce marché.

³² TRA, “Study on the Regulation of Wholesale Broadband Markets”, 14 September 2009 (Annex B to Access Order 1 of 2009 Reference MCD/09/09/065).

Is wholesale access to the existing NFWS local loops a substitute for the LLU product?

The Draft Dominance Determination

91. TRA seeks here to determine whether a purchaser of the LLU product would consider switching to an unbundled access based on one of the two fixed wireless local loops in response to SSNIP on the LLU price.
92. Currently, NFWS operators do not offer any unbundled access to their wireless local loops.
93. TRA considers that it is not technically feasible to provide unbundled access to NFWS local loops at present. Whereas the copper local loop offers a dedicated pair per end-user, the NFWS local loop is shared between multiple end-users and the active equipment (as opposed to passive) that allocates the capacity between end-users is managed by the NFWS operator. As a consequence, unbundling of the NFWS local loop does not appear to be feasible.
94. While access to the copper local loop has been successfully implemented in many countries and is therefore proven to be technically feasible,³³ TRA is not aware of any wireless local loop having been unbundled for the reasons mentioned above. This is consistent with the recent review of ComReg which stated that it is:³⁴

“not aware of any wholesale physical service (as opposed to virtual) which is made available on other access networks such as fixed wireless or mobile. Based on ComReg’s investigations and information provided by operators, it is not clear that a form of physical access is technically or commercially viable over alternative network infrastructure.”

95. TRA also notes that the range of services that can be provided based on LLU is much wider than the effective range currently achievable by wireless networks. TRA observes in particular that while LLU-based operators can, without particular challenges, develop triple-play offerings and offer television over IP services, it may in practice be very difficult to offer similar television over IP services on wireless networks.
96. Finally, leaving aside the question of the technical feasibility by NFWS operators (which have began their operations only recently) to offer wholesale access to their local loop, the demand from wholesale purchasers would be unlikely until NFWS operators have established a successful track record in the medium term.
97. TRA also considers that access to NFWS cannot be included in this market on the basis of the analysis of indirect pricing constraints (see paragraphs 192-196 below for an explanation of the concept and mechanism in the context of the wholesale broadband access market). In other words, TRA does not consider that a 10% increase in the price of LLU could result in a price increase of LLU-based retail offers of a sufficient magnitude to lead to a sufficient number of retail customers to switch to retail offers based on NFWS licenses and hence to render the SSNIP in the wholesale LLU price unprofitable.

³³ See TRA, Study on the Regulation of Wholesale Broadband Markets, Consultation Document, March 2009.

³⁴ ComReg, “Market review: wholesale physical network infrastructure access (Market 4). Response to ComReg Document 08/41 and Draft Decision Document No: 08/104”, 2008.

98. For the reasons set out above, TRA is of the view that access to the NFWS local loop is not a substitute to access to the copper local loop because of constraints on supply-side substitution which would render a SSNIP profitable.

Responses to the Draft Dominance Determination

99. Lightspeed agrees with TRA's view.
100. Zain agrees with TRA's point of view and explains that:
- a) The technology for offering access to the NFWS local loop is not mature.
 - b) The available bandwidth is limited, especially when taking into account future demands.
 - c) It would be difficult to add new equipment to towers in order to serve OLOs' requirements for a hypothetical NFWS local loop access product because towers are already used to support GSM equipment, UMTS equipment, microwaves and Wimax equipment.
 - d) For technical reasons, the provision of services to high buildings is difficult.
101. Batelco disagrees with TRA's point of view and quotes Cave, Stumpf and Valletti, who have stated that "where a new access technology replicates or replaces, but does not extend the scope of existing loops, it should be included in the definition".³⁵ On the basis of this statement, Batelco considers that NFWS local loops should be included in the same market as LLU.
102. Batelco further explains that evidence of direct supply-side substitutability between access to the NFWS local loop and LLU do not exist because, with access to the NFWS local loop not being regulated, there are few applicants for this service.
103. Batelco also considers that self-supply for NFWS operators should be considered because:
- a) Wholesale supply substitution is possible. Batelco considers that Mena and Zain have ubiquitous networks with sufficient capacity to absorb additional traffic and to provide wholesale services to third parties.
 - b) Retail demand substitution is important. Batelco explains that there is significant indirect pricing constraint from NFWS operators. Based on Cave, Stumpf and Valletti who said that "[i]f the indirect pricing constraint from the retail demand substitution is found to be strong enough, self-supply of competitors and the incumbent should be included in the relevant wholesale market"³⁶, Batelco concludes that self-supply from NFWS operators should be included. Batelco justifies the significant indirect pricing constraint by referring to recent figures which, according to Batelco, are due to the launch of NFWS services in 2008:
 - (i) The monthly churn rate for broadband customers sits between [●] and [●] with an increasing trend.
 - (ii) The decrease by more than [●] between February 2008 and March 2009 of the level of new residential customer acquisitions by Batelco.
 - (iii) The fact that the number of ceased orders of Bitstream and Wholesale DSL has increased since the beginning of 2008.

³⁵ Cave, Stumpf and Valletti, "A Review of Certain Markets Included in the Commission's Recommendation on Relevant Markets Subject to *ex ante* Regulation" (July 2006).

³⁶ Cave, Stumpf and Valletti, "A Review of Certain Markets Included in the Commission's Recommendation on Relevant Markets subject to *ex ante* Regulation" (July 2006).

104. Batelco concludes that excluding wireless local loop on the one hand and regulating LLU on the other hand is not appropriate. Batelco believes that TRA should consider several technologies in its market definition because of the importance of inter-platform competition and that TRA should have a forward-looking view and consider:

- The development of Long-Term Evolution (LTE).³⁷
- Ofcom's recent statements³⁸ that next-generation wireless technologies have continued to develop and grow in importance.
- ComReg's statements³⁹ considering that the provision of wireless broadband services is essential for the future of Ireland as a modern, competitive society, as it will increase the level of competition between platforms, improve rural broadband coverage and deliver next-generation broadband services across Ireland.

TRA analysis and conclusion

105. TRA agrees with Zain's statement that, because of technical constraints (capacity, maturity of the technology, etc.), access to the NFWS local loop is not feasible.

106. TRA points out that Batelco's quotation to Cave, Stumpf and Valletti's statement is taken out of context and it therefore not relevant. The statement that "where a new access technology replicates or replaces, but does not extend the scope of existing loops, it should be included in the definition" is related to technologies such as cable networks but not to NFWS technology. Four paragraphs before Batelco's quotation, Cave, Stumpf and Valletti indeed state that their discussion does not apply to fixed wireless broadband (i.e. NFWS) but only to cable technologies⁴⁰:

"The discussion below will focus on ADSL and cable technologies, on the footing that 3G and other mobile services (as noted above) fall in a separate retail market (although they use similar network elements at higher levels in the hierarchy) while fixed wireless broadband is regarded as a technology in the same market, for which (however) market share and other projections are highly doubtful."

107. The reason why Cave, Stumpf and Valletti explicitly excluded fixed wireless broadband is because "market share and other projections are highly doubtful".⁴¹ TRA agrees with Cave, Stumpf and Valletti that it is difficult to make projections about NFWS. While TRA acknowledges that NFWS have increased their market share significantly during recent months (between 30% and 40% of in April 2009) the evolution of NFWS market share should be considered not only in the short term but also in the medium to long term. NFWS may have difficulties competing with DSL, since the technology of NFWS does not allow the provision of higher speeds services similar to those xDSL is capable of. In Ireland, for example, NFWS (called Fixed Wireless Access) has also had a quick start but is currently losing market share compared to DSL due to its limited capacity: NFWS held a 22% market share 18 months after the launch of NFWS services (at the end of 2005) but had fallen to a 10% market share at the end of 2008 (see Figure 4).

³⁷ LTE is a wireless broadband technology that is the next step in the evolution of UMTS (3G), now known as 4G. Compared to currently used wireless mobile radio technologies, LTE is expected to achieve better spectral efficiency, lower costs, higher transfer speeds, improved services, etc.

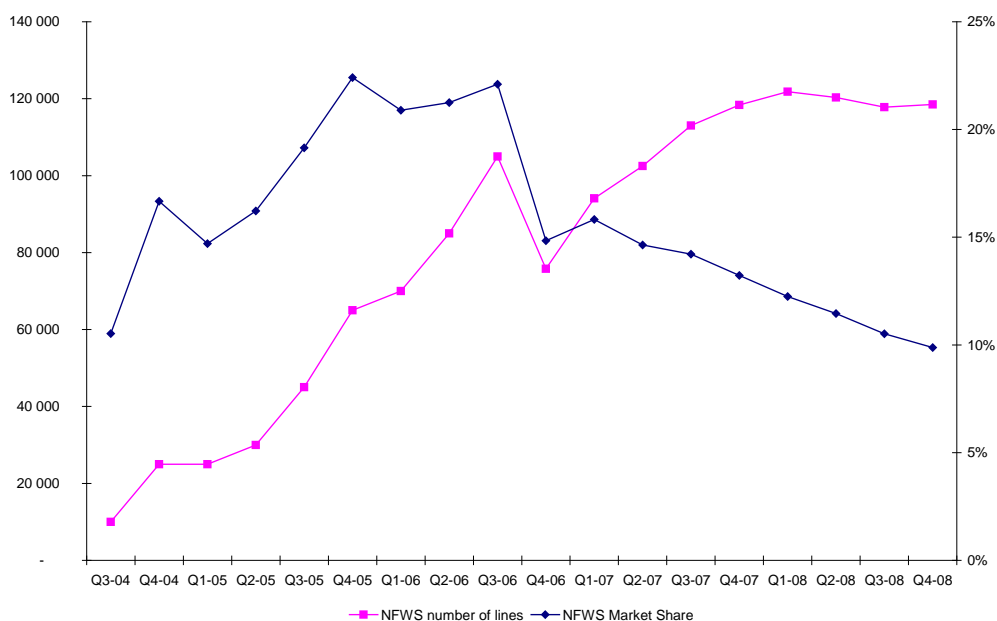
³⁸ Ofcom, "Application of Spectrum Liberalisation and Trading to the Mobile Sector: a Further Consultation" (13 February 2009).

³⁹ ComReg, "Regulatory Principles Applied in Ireland to Successfully Promote", November 2005.

⁴⁰ Cave, Stumpf and Valletti, "A Review of Certain Markets Included in the Commission's Recommendation on Relevant Markets Subject to *ex ante* Regulation", July 2006, page 76.

⁴¹ Cave, Stumpf and Valletti, "A Review of Certain Markets Included in the Commission's Recommendation on Relevant Markets Subject to *ex ante* Regulation", July 2006, page 76.

Figure 4 - Evolution of the NFWS market share and the NFWS number of broadband lines in Ireland (source: ComReg)



108. With regards to Batelco's comment that there is no evidence of direct supply-side substitutability between access to the NFWS local loop and LLU, TRA considers this comment to be irrelevant in so far as unbundling of NFWS local loop is not technically feasible.
109. In relation to Batelco's comment that wholesale substitution is possible, the above paragraph demonstrates that it is not technically feasible to unbundle a wireless local loop, which means that wholesale substitution is not possible. Furthermore, TRA notes that Batelco merely states, without justification, that Mena Telecom and Zain's NFWS networks have sufficient capacity to absorb wholesale customers' traffic.
110. TRA is of the view that the figures put forward by Batelco do not provide evidence that NFWS operators provide a significant indirect pricing constraint that would justify including them in the relevant market because:
- a) The recent figures from NFWS operators must be considered with caution. These are figures corresponding to NFWS operators' commercial launch period. During commercial launch, new entrants can benefit from a very positive impression on customers. The Irish case shows that it is important to be cautious with figures from the early stages of activity of NFWS (see above).
 - b) Regarding paragraph 103 b) (i) above, while Batelco's churn rate has increased, it remains low (see Table 3 below). The level of churn reported by Batelco appears in line with benchmark based on publicly available information.

132. Considering that the Wholesale DSL product is lower than the Bitstream product in the investment ladder and that Bitstream and LLU are not substitutable, TRA also concludes that the Wholesale DSL product is not a part of this relevant market.

Responses to the Draft Dominance Determination

133. Lightspeed agrees with TRA's view.

134. Batelco disagrees with TRA's view that LLU and Bitstream are in separate markets. Batelco states that both the LLU market and the wholesale broadband access market are not genuine markets and that, according to the best practices such as in the EU, a market is included in the set of *ex ante* regulated markets only when it satisfies the three-criteria test of:

- High non-transitory barriers to entry,
- Not tending over time towards effective competition,
- Insufficiency of competition by itself to deal with the market failure without *ex ante* regulation.

135. Batelco therefore submits that TRA has not applied this three-criteria test. Batelco believes that TRA ignores the fact that Bitstream already constitutes a remedy to an identified market failure — retail broadband competition — and that this market failure does not exist anymore:

- a) Batelco states that, if Bitstream is available and allows competitors to enter the market, the market failure is remedied.
- b) Batelco considers that Bitstream is an alternative to LLU.
- c) Batelco reminds that TRA accepted in 2004 that Bitstream was an alternative to LLU.
- d) Batelco explains that it has improved the Bitstream product since it was launched in 2007.
- e) Batelco states that it has lost between [•] and [•] of its residential broadband customer base each month to NFWS operators, with an increasing trend.
- f) Batelco's Wholesale DSL and Bitstream products have been successfully increasing their market share during the last 15 months.

136. Batelco suggests that TRA should analyse countries that have recently considered the regulation of LLU and Bitstream (and not European Union countries, where regulation was considered two decades ago) because it will ensure that the chosen regulation is relevant to today's telecommunications environment and because these countries have learnt from the experience of other countries. Batelco refers to Malaysia, New Zealand and Jordan.

TRA analysis and conclusion

137. With respect to Batelco's view that TRA should apply the three-criteria test as per the EU regulatory framework, TRA would like to remind that there is not such test and/or requirement in the Telecommunications Law of the Kingdom of Bahrain. The relevant tests in considering whether an Access Obligation should be imposed are found in the Access Regulation and in particular article 3.7 of that Regulation. TRA has applied these. TRA also notes that the market definitions adopted by TRA coincide with those of the EC for which the EC has found that the three criteria test is met. Notwithstanding this TRA's view is that the two wholesale markets fulfil these three criteria.

- includes LLU (access to the copper local loop and all the ancillary services listed above);
- includes self-supply by Batelco;
- excludes wholesale access to existing NFWS local loops and fibre local loops;
- excludes wholesale access to other local loop infrastructure (satellite);
- excludes Bitstream (as well as the Wholesale DSL product);
- excludes access to ducts.

178. The geographic dimension of the market is the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Responses to the Draft Determination

179. Lightspeed agrees with TRA.

180. Batelco disagrees with TRA for the reasons set above, i.e. because Batelco is of the view that LLU and Bitstream are substitutable and that NFWS local loops should be included in the market.

TRA analysis and conclusion

181. Having considered the view of the respondents and in particular having analysed above Batelco's comments regarding the substitutability between LLU and Bitstream and the inclusion of NFWS in the wholesale physical network infrastructure market, TRA remains of the view that the relevant market is the wholesale physical network infrastructure access market, which:

- includes LLU (access to the copper local loop and all the ancillary services listed above);
- includes self-supply by Batelco;
- excludes wholesale access to existing NFWS local loops and fibre local loops;
- excludes wholesale access to other local loop infrastructure (satellite);
- excludes Bitstream (as well as the Wholesale DSL product);
- excludes access to ducts.

182. The geographic dimension of the market is the Kingdom of Bahrain.

3.5 Wholesale broadband access market

Product dimension

The Draft Dominance Determination

183. In Section 3.3 above, two wholesale markets related to the retail market for broadband internet access services from a fixed location in the Kingdom of Bahrain have been taken as a starting point. They are the wholesale physical network infrastructure access market and the wholesale broadband access market. There is de facto a wholesale broadband access market in Bahrain, because one OLO has concluded an agreement with Batelco for purchasing Bitstream. This OLO provides retail broadband services to end-users on the basis of this wholesale product. Other OLOs can purchase the Bitstream services of Batelco should they wish to.

184. Batelco’s Bitstream product is an access service that enables OLOs to provide high-speed services to end-users via a digital pathway – made of an ADSL link and an aggregation link (backhaul) – across Batelco’s network. A total of eight different Bitstream products with different download speeds and contention ratios are available (see Figure below). One way for OLOs to differentiate their retail services from those of the incumbent is to propose different thresholds for data volumes (maximum amount of data in Gbps that can be downloaded per month). With Bitstream, OLOs are responsible for the provision of internet connectivity.

Figure 4 - Batelco’s Bitstream products

Bitstream Access Speed	Residential Packet Access Contention Ratio	Business Packet Access Contention Ratio
256kbps	15:1	8:1
512kbps	10:1	8:1
1Mbps	10:1	8:1
2Mbps	10:1	8:1

Source: Batelco’s reference offer

185. Contrary to Bitstream products available in larger countries, the broadband traffic is delivered at a single point in Bahrain.

186. Only Batelco offers a wholesale broadband access product. NFWS operators or fibre-based operators do not provide Bitstream products.

187. Consistent with the market definition principles set out above, the identification of the relevant market begins with the smallest service or set of services possible, in this case Batelco’s Bitstream product. Then, TRA considers potential substitutes in order to set the boundaries of the market. TRA is of the view that the following questions need to be analysed:

- Should NFWS access be included in the relevant market?
- Should self-provision of Bitstream by Batelco be part of the relevant market?
- Is LLU a substitute for Bitstream?
- Is Wholesale DSL a substitute for Bitstream?

Should NFWS access be included in the relevant wholesale broadband access market?

188. This question needs to be analysed from two angles:

- whether NFWS access provides a direct pricing constraint on Bitstream; and
- whether NFWS access provides an indirect pricing constraint on Bitstream.

189. With regards to the first angle, TRA observes that NFWS operators are not currently providing any wholesale access in the form of a Bitstream product to third parties. Therefore NFWS access does not constitute a direct pricing constraint and cannot be

included in the relevant market on this basis. For the purposes of this Determination and having regards to TRA's conclusion on the indirect pricing constraints provided by NFWS access on Bitstream (see below), it is not necessary for TRA to carry out a forward-looking analysis of the direct pricing constraint.⁶⁵

190. Before analysing indirect pricing constraints, TRA notes that there is no wide consensus regarding whether indirect constraints should be taken into account at the market definition stage or at the competition analysis stage even though the particular route chosen should not lead to conclusions materially different.
191. For example, while the EC generally advocates taking into account indirect pricing constraints at the competition analysis stage in the field of telecommunications, it commonly factors indirect pricing constraints at the market definition stage in its antitrust work. Similarly, regulators such as Ofcom, Comreg and the New Zealand Commerce Commission use the latter approach.
192. In this instance, TRA has decided to factor the indirect pricing constraints at the market definition stage.
193. The operation of indirect pricing constraints can lead to products which do not directly compete to fall in the same market. At the retail level, Batelco's services compete mainly with OLO's services either based on Batelco's wholesale products or based on NFWS. To define the wholesale broadband access market, it is appropriate to analyse whether substitution at the retail level provides an indirect constraint on the pricing of wholesale products. This is done by asking whether Batelco (absent regulation) could profitably sustain a SSNIP at the wholesale level. Batelco's Bitstream is used by certain OLOs and notionally by Batelco's retail arm as an input to construct retail offers.
194. Hence, a 10% increase in the price of Bitstream could be expected to result in a price increase of retail prices, as operators, seeking to avoid a margin squeeze for example, will need to pass through the increase in input price. While the hypothetical price increase of 10% can be expected to be diluted, a reasonable approximation of the likely resulting price increase at the retail level can be derived from the proportion of the input price in the end-to-end price of retail offers. Based on Batelco's current retail and Bitstream tariffs, a 10% increase in Bitstream could be expected to lead to an increase of 5% to 8% in retail prices, assuming that the rise of the input price is entirely passed on to end-users.⁶⁶
195. TRA is of the view that an increase in the retail prices of offers based on Bitstream of this magnitude could lead to a sufficient number of retail customers to switch to retail offers based on NFWS licenses to render the SSNIP in the wholesale Bitstream price unprofitable.
196. On the basis of the indirect pricing constraints provided by NFWS licenses via the retail level, TRA therefore concludes that NFWS access should be included in the wholesale

⁶⁵ Such an analysis would need to consider elements such as: whether it is technically feasible to offer Bitstream on NFWS, the systems (e.g. wholesale billing and accounting management) required, whether the two NFWS licencess would be interested in and have the incentives to offer Bitstream access, whether existing wholesale customers would be interested in switching and the switching cost they would face as well as whether all the above would be feasible in the relevant timeframe.

⁶⁶ In other words, Bitstream prices represent 50% to 80% of the retail prices of Batelco.

broadband access market. No other OLOs are included in the market definition on the basis of indirect pricing constraints.⁶⁷

Responses to the Draft Determination

197. Lightspeed agrees with TRA.

198. Batelco agrees with TRA's view.

TRA analysis and conclusion

199. Having considered the views of respondents, TRA concludes that NFWS access should be included in the wholesale broadband access market.

Should self-supply of Bitstream by Batelco be part of the relevant market?

The Draft Determination

200. TRA seeks here to determine whether Batelco's self-supply of Bitstream should be included in the relevant market. Having included self-supply of NFWS licensees (which do not provide wholesale broadband access to third parties), TRA is of the view that it is appropriate to include self-supply by Batelco. The exclusion of Batelco's self-supply would be inconsistent with the treatment of self-supply for NFWS. And this would produce a distorted view of competitive constraints and market shares.

Responses to the Draft Determination

201. Lightspeed and Batelco agree with TRA's view. Batelco refers to its answer to Question 5 and adds that both the self-supply of the incumbent and the self-supply of alternative operators should be included.

TRA analysis and conclusion

202. Having considered the views of respondents, TRA remains of the view that self-provision by Batelco (but also by NFWS operators, as detailed in the question above) should be included in the wholesale broadband access market.

Is LLU a substitute to Bitstream?

The Draft Determination

203. This question has already been addressed above in the analysis of the wholesale physical network infrastructure access market. As per the arguments set out above, TRA is of the view that LLU is not substitutable to Bitstream.

⁶⁷ Other potential candidates were satellite and fibre-based operators. However they account for less than 1% of the retail market. Further TRA considers that indirect pricing constraints via the retail level will be inoperative owing for example to capacity expansion constraints over the timeframe of the analysis.

Responses to the Draft Determination

204. Lightspeed agrees with TRA's view.

205. Batelco disagrees with TRA's view and refers to its comments on Question 5.

TRA analysis and conclusion

206. Having considered the views of respondents and in particular having considered Batelco's comments on Question 5 of the Draft Determination (see Para 135 and 136), TRA remains of the view that LLU and Bitstream should not be included in the same relevant market.

Is Wholesale DSL a substitute for the Bitstream product?

The Draft Determination

207. Wholesale DSL is typically no longer regulated in many countries. Generally it is not considered to be in the same wholesale market as Bitstream and no specific market for Wholesale DSL is identified.

208. For example, the European Regulatory Group ("ERG") states that Bitstream and Resale products are not substitutable, the main reasons being that Bitstream allows OLOs to differentiate their services from those of the incumbent and that Bitstream requires OLOs to build their own networks.⁶⁸

209. TRA observes that the difference between the Bitstream product and the Wholesale DSL product is narrower in Bahrain. First of all, the level of additional differentiation offered by the Bitstream product is currently limited compared to the Wholesale DSL product (See Figure below):

- download speeds offered are the same: 256 kbps, 512 kbps, 1 Mbps and 2 Mbps;
- any threshold value can be proposed with the two products.

210. As a consequence, it would appear to be difficult for an OLO which relies on the Bitstream product to differentiate significantly its services compared to an OLO which uses the Wholesale DSL product.

⁶⁸ ERG, "Bitstream access: ERG common position", 2 April 2004.

Figure 5 - Batelco's wholesale DSL products

Access Speed for Residential Customers	Included Usage (Upload and download)	Increment for usage above threshold
265kbps downstream / 64kbps upstream	5 GB	1 MB
512kbps downstream / 128kbps upstream	8 GB	1 MB
1 Mbps downstream / 256kbps upstream	15 GB	1 MB
2Mbps downstream / 512kbps upstream	20 GB	1 MB

- Does not include an ADSL modem.
- Includes one email account with 10Mb storage limit.
- Recommended modems and suppliers are:
 1. **INMA:** GreatSpeed USB
 2. **A. Rashid Est:** Aztech USB
 3. **Intercol:** SpeedTouch USB

Access Speed for Business Customers	Included Usage (Upload and download)	Increment for usage above threshold
265kbps downstream / 64kbps upstream	2.5 GB	1 MB
265kbps downstream / 64kbps upstream	5 GB	1 MB
512kbps downstream / 128kbps upstream	10 GB	1 MB
1 Mbps downstream / 256kbps upstream	15 GB	1 MB
2Mbps downstream / 512kbps upstream	20 GB	1 MB
265kbps downstream / 64kbps upstream	N/A	N/A
512kbps downstream / 128kbps upstream	N/A	N/A
1 Mbps downstream / 256kbps upstream	N/A	N/A
2Mbps downstream / 512kbps upstream	N/A	N/A

Source: Batelco's reference offer

211. Also, in the particular case of Bahrain, the Bitstream traffic is delivered at a single point, which means that OLOs do not need to deploy a national backbone which OLOs would have to do if the Bitstream traffic was delivered at a regional level as in larger countries. As a consequence, the level of investment required by the Bitstream product is not significantly higher than the level of investment required for the Wholesale DSL product. Compared to Wholesale DSL, an OLO that wishes to provide services based on Bitstream needs to source international connectivity.
212. On the wholesale demand side, TRA is of the view that a 10% increase in the Wholesale DSL product price would make OLOs based on the Wholesale DSL product switch towards the Bitstream product and vice versa, because of the low differentiation offered by the two products and because of the low level of investment required. Interviews conducted by TRA with alternative operators in November 2008 have indeed indicated that OLOs consider that the main advantage of the Bitstream product compared to the Wholesale DSL product in the particular case of Bahrain is essentially the higher flexibility offered thanks to the absence of threshold values in the Bitstream product.
213. On the wholesale supply side, the question of substitutability between the Bitstream and Wholesale DSL products is purely theoretical: would a Wholesale DSL product provider decide to provide Bitstream in the case of hypothetical monopolist providing Wholesale DSL product increases its Wholesale DSL product prices by 10%? The Wholesale DSL product provider would provide Bitstream, because the level of

investment required to allow provision of Bitstream is not significant for a Wholesale DSL provider.

214. TRA concludes here that the Bitstream product and the Wholesale DSL product are in the same wholesale market.

Responses to the Draft Determination

215. Lightspeed and Batelco agree with TRA's view.

TRA analysis and conclusion

216. Having considered the views of respondents, TRA remains of the view that the Wholesale DSL product is a substitute for the Bitstream product.

Functional dimension

The Draft Determination

217. The relevant functional dimension of the market definition is the wholesale level, as Bitstream is an input provided by operators to other operators.

Responses to the Draft Determination

218. No comments were received on this point

TRA analysis and conclusion

219. The relevant functional dimension of the market definition is the wholesale level.

Geographic dimension

The Draft Determination

220. The reasoning and arguments put forward above regarding the geographic dimension of the wholesale physical network infrastructure access market, apply equally for the wholesale broadband access market. They are therefore not repeated here.

Responses to the Draft Determination

221. Lightspeed agrees with TRA's view.

222. Batelco disagrees with TRA's view and refers to its response to Question 7.

TRA analysis and conclusion

223. Having considered the views of respondents and in particular having considered Batelco's answer to Question 7 above, TRA remains of the view that the geographic dimension of the market is national.

Conclusion on the relevant wholesale broadband access market

The Draft Determination

224. For the reasons set out above, TRA considers that the relevant market is the wholesale broadband access market, which:

- includes Batelco's Bitstream product;
- includes NFWS access ;
- excludes access to other local loop infrastructure access (fibre, satellite);
- includes self-supply by Batelco;
- includes Batelco's Wholesale DSL product;
- excludes LLU.

225. The geographic dimension of the market is the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Responses to the Draft Determination

226. Lightspeed agrees with TRA's view.

227. Batelco is not able to agree with TRA's market definition because it disagrees with many elements.

228. Batelco also made other comments not related to the definition of the relevant market. For example it mentioned that alternative infrastructures do not have similar obligations to incumbent; that Mena and Zain have gained a substantial joint market share in excess of 30% in a short period of time; that the market definition was created to regulate access on the incumbent fixed network. Batelco also refers to the example of Malta, where the incumbent is regulated and the alternative cable network operator holds a 50% market share. Batelco believes that TRA's approach will perpetuate a vicious cycle where a fixed-line operator can be found to have SMP because it provides a service that it is obliged by regulation to supply, whereas an alternative network operator, even if a strong player in the broadband market, is incentivised not to provide wholesale access to third parties so as not to be susceptible to regulation.

TRA analysis and conclusion

229. TRA observes some confusion in Batelco's comments between the definition of the relevant markets and the identification of dominant operators. The question asked here relates to the definition of the relevant market, not to the identification of dominant operators. TRA reminds Batelco that it has included wholesale NFWS broadband access in the wholesale broadband access market. This means that obligations could apply to NFWS operators if they were found to be dominant (which is not the case currently, as justified by TRA below). As a consequence, Batelco's comments are not relevant.

230. Having considered the views of the respondents, TRA remains of the view that the relevant market is the wholesale broadband access market, which:

- includes Batelco's Bitstream product;
- includes NFWS access;
- excludes access to other local loop infrastructure (fibre, satellite);
- includes self-supply by Batelco;

- includes Batelco's Wholesale DSL product;
- excludes LLU.

231. The geographic dimension of the market is the Kingdom of Bahrain.

3.6 List of relevant wholesale markets

232. For the reasons set out above, TRA concludes that there are two relevant wholesale markets:

- the wholesale physical network infrastructure access market; and
- the wholesale broadband access market.

233. The geographic scope of both markets is national.

4 Identification and determination of dominance in the relevant markets

234. Having defined the relevant markets, the next step consists of analysing the extent of competition. The Telecommunications Law provides the following definition of "dominant position":

"the Licensee's position of economic power that enables it to prevent the existence and continuation of effective competition in the relevant market though the ability of the Licensee to act independently – to a material extent – of competitors, subscribers and users".

235. As outlined in TRA's Determination on the Methodology for Determining Market Power,⁶⁹ as well as in the Draft Competition Guidelines,⁷⁰ a large number of factors can be considered in assessing dominance, including:

- market share;
- overall size of undertaking;
- control of infrastructure not easily duplicated;
- network effects;
- the conduct of the participants;
- technological advantages or superiority;
- absence of or low countervailing buying power;
- easy or privileged access to capital markets/financial resources;
- product/services diversification (e.g. bundled products or services);
- economies of scale;
- economies of scope;
- vertical integration;
- highly developed distribution and sales network;
- absence of potential competition;
- barriers to expansion;
- ease of market entry.

⁶⁹ TRA, Methodology for Determining Market Power A Determination issued by the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority, 2003.

⁷⁰ TRA, Draft Competition Guidelines, 4 November 2008.

276. Batelco also takes the view that TRA should undertake a consumer survey before considering mandating LLU in the market. It argues that such study is vital to fully understand what products end-users can receive and what products end-users actually want and how they switch between alternatives. Batelco explains that such a study has been conducted in the UK by Ofcom. According to Batelco, in the absence of such a study, TRA is unable to determine satisfactorily that Batelco is dominant in the wholesale broadband access market.

TRA analysis and conclusion

277. TRA agrees with Zain's observations that Batelco has acquired more customers than Mena and than Zain since the launch of their commercial offers. As explained in the review of Question 3, between February 2008 and March 2009 Batelco acquired [•] new broadband customers while Mena Telecom and Zain acquired around [•] to [•] customers, respectively, in the same period.

278. Regarding Batelco's view that it is not dominant because it holds a market share estimated at between 60 and 70% and face increasingly strong competition from NFWS operators, TRA is of the view that, even if Batelco's market share may continue to decrease during the next months, it will still hold a market share superior to 50% and that NFWS operators will have difficulties in competing with the DSL infrastructure in the medium or long term. The DSL infrastructure indeed enables the provision of higher download speeds than the NFWS infrastructure and a larger scope of services. The example of Ireland shows that NFWS infrastructure can have more difficulties in competing in the medium/long term and that alternative operators provide higher download speeds when they are based on the DSL infrastructure through LLU than on their own NFWS infrastructure.⁷⁴

279. While TRA is of the view that consumer research can be a useful tool, TRA disagrees with Batelco that the conduct of a consumer study is a prerequisite to conclude whether Batelco is dominant in this relevant market. As demonstrated by the international practice of regulators and competition authorities the systematic conduct of consumer research is by no means a prerequisite to either the definition of relevant markets or the analysis of competition. It may assist but is clearly not "vital".

280. Further TRA notes that Ofcom used the consumer research referred to by Batelco in the context of its review of the wholesale broadband access market to assist in the definition of the relevant retail market and not to analyse dominance. More specifically, on the basis of its consumer research, Ofcom conducted the SSNIP test and investigated whether ADSL, cable and narrowband internet were in the same market.

281. Notwithstanding the above, TRA is of the view that the end-user point of view has already been adequately taken into account by TRA in its 2008 SMP Determination and through the consideration of international experience in the consultative process.

282. Having considered the views of respondents, TRA remains of the view that Batelco is dominant in the wholesale broadband access market in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

⁷⁴ For example, the Irish operator Imagine (www.imagine.ie) provides up to 4 Mbps on its NFWS infrastructure and up to 7.6 Mbps with the ADSL infrastructure. Similarly, the Irish operator Irish Broadband (www.irishbroadband.ie) provides up to 6 Mbps on its NFWS infrastructure and 24 Mbps with the ADSL infrastructure.

