

PRESS RELEASE

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Public Consultation on Proposed Changes to the Reference Access and Interconnection Offer Published by the Bahamas Telecommunications Company Ltd (BTC)

On March 30, 2016 URCA published for consultation its “Preliminary Determination and Draft Order on Proposed Changes to the Reference Access and Interconnection Offer Published by the Bahamas Telecommunications Company Ltd.” ECS 09/2016.

In this Preliminary Determination URCA presents for consultation its review of the Reference Access and Interconnection Offer (RAIO) published by BTC and the changes it proposes to require BTC to make to its RAIO. This consultation supplements the other work areas and projects that were identified in URCA’s 2015 Annual Plan and its proposed 2016 Annual Plan on the key regulatory issues that will need to be addressed in light of the introduction of mobile competition in The Bahamas.

As part of this review, URCA has preliminarily concluded that it would be appropriate and proportionate for BTC to amend its RAIO to include:

- Cost-based termination rates for calls originating on domestic fixed or cellular mobile networks owned by other licensees and terminating on BTC’s cellular mobile network.
- Provisions for other licensees to interconnect directly to BTC’s cellular mobile switch.
- Provisions to enable other licensees to obtain interconnection at no less than two (2) diverse and discreet points on BTC’s fixed and/or cellular mobile networks, using interconnection transport links based on Internet Protocol (IP) supporting Session Internet Protocol (SIP) technology.
- A termination service and associated cost-based termination rate for domestic and inbound international SMS/MMS.

The foregoing changes are intended to ensure that BTC’s RAIO services and related terms and conditions remain appropriate and fit for purpose following the introduction of competition in cellular mobile services and so will support the entry of a second cellular mobile operator in The Bahamas.

The consultation builds on URCA’s previous determinations on access and/or interconnection obligations for SMP operators and is consistent with the process for review and amendment to Reference Access and Interconnection Offers.

Written comments from the affected licensees and the public are invited on the matters contained in this Preliminary Determination. The document contains a number of questions to assist respondents in preparing their written submissions on this Preliminary Determination, which must be submitted to

URCA by 5 p.m. on 6 May 2016. Interested parties will then have the opportunity to further comment on responses made by other respondents by 5 p.m. on 10 June 2016. Directions for the submission of comments are contained in the consultation document.

Upon consideration of written responses, URCA will publish a Final Determination on the results of the consultation.

URCA encourages respondents to adhere to the deadlines for making written submissions on this Preliminary Determination and Draft Order. Having regard to the strict statutory timeframes imposed upon URCA in section 100(5) of the Comms Act, only in extreme circumstances will URCA consider accommodating any request for an extension to the deadlines for responding to this consultation.

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