



## **URCA to commence testing on NewCo's rollout activities**

04 October 2016

The Utilities Regulation and Competition Authority (URCA) is pleased to note that in a Press Release issued by NewCo on Friday 30<sup>th</sup> September 2016, NewCo announced that its first coverage obligations had been met and invited the public to apply to use NewCo's services during what NewCo refers to as its "soft launch" phase.

On June 30<sup>th</sup> of this year, following the selection process consistent with the provisions of the Communications Act 2009 (Comms Act), and upon compliance with the Government's license conditions, NewCo was issued both an Individual Operating Licence (IOL) and an Individual Spectrum Licence (ISL) by URCA. The IOL authorizes the operation of an electronic communications network and provision of carriage services, while the ISL permits the use of specific allocations of premium radio spectrum. Both licences have been awarded for a term of fifteen years, until 29 June 2031. Copies of the licenses can be downloaded from URCA's website at <http://www.urbahamas.bs/download/005434200.pdf> and <http://www.urbahamas.bs/download/005445500.pdf>.

The first milestone in the roll-out conditions set out in the ISL requires that NewCo provides cellular mobile services to the general public with its own cellular mobile network covering 99% of New Providence and 80% of Grand Bahama, by 1<sup>st</sup> October 2016. URCA has commenced a verification exercise to determine whether or not NewCo has in fact achieved this important first milestone. The verification is expected to take approximately four (4) weeks, and once completed URCA will update the public of the outcome. If URCA determines that NewCo has not met its roll-out obligations, URCA may exercise its rights under the Performance Bond submitted to URCA on behalf of NewCo, up to the amount of \$4 million in respect of this first milestone.

Following the initial roll out, NewCo is expected to continue its network build-out in order to provide coverage to the entire Bahamas within a further 21 months. URCA will continue to assess NewCo's performance to ensure that it meets all of the roll-out obligations set out in its licences, and its other obligations as an URCA licensee within the electronic communications sector.

URCA's objective is to ensure a fair and level competitive playing field in all electronic communications markets in The Bahamas.

URCA is committed to the development of competition in the cellular mobile sector which URCA expects will bring benefits to all consumers of electronic communications services and will boost the economic and social development of The Bahamas.

Consumers who decide to subscribe to NewCo's services are advised to review all service contracts and promotional materials carefully, so that they are aware of all terms of their service plans, inclusive of call and messaging charges. Consumers are also advised to acquaint themselves with URCA's Consumer Protection Regulations, and the providers' complaint handling procedures.

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