For discussion on 28 March 2002 NAC Paper No. 3/2002

TELECOMMUNICATIONS NUMBERING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Number Resources for Fixed Telecommunications Network Services (II)

Introduction

From 1 January 2003, the fixed telecommunications network services (FTNS) market would be fully liberalized. Part I of this paper (NAC Paper No. 1/2002) has outlined the availability of number resources to support FTNS in the fully liberalized market. The paper has also discussed the constraints and has proposed options to increase the availability for certain types of number resources. These number resources include IDD prime access code, access code for customer hotline/operator-assisted service and network number.

2. This paper describes the preferred options to be adopted in order to increase the availability of numbers or codes. In addition, this paper also recommends the revised assignment method for "900" numbers in order to support the potential increase in demand for "900" numbers in the fully liberalized FTNS market. Currently, "900" numbers are deployed for the provision of information services.

Preferred Options

3. Having considered the views of the NAC members in the 44th NAC meeting, the following preferred options would be adopted:

4. IDD prime access code – one 4-digit access code (005x and 003x) would be assigned to each eligible FTNS operator. The codes in the 005x number range would be assigned first and then the codes 003x. If operators wish to obtain their preferred codes in the 003x number range, they have to bid the code with charity donation. After the consumption of these codes, 5-digit access codes 004xx would be assigned to each FTNS operator.

5. Access code for customer hotline/operator-assisted service – one 4-

digit access code (102x, 104x, 105x, 107x, and from 124x to 129x) would be assigned to each eligible FTNS operator. If operators wish to obtain their preferred codes in the 128x number range, they have to bid the code with charity donation.

6. Network number – network numbers are shared among mobile and fixed networks. In order to cater for the potential demand, 3-digit prefix network numbers would continue to be assigned from existing number levels opened for assignment. These levels include 40, 41, 42, 43, 48 and 49. After the consumption of these number levels, 4-digit prefix network numbers will be assigned from number levels 45, 46 and 47. The number level 44 would be reserved for the potential expansion of network numbers to 13 digits long. Under this arrangement, a total of 28 3-digit prefix network numbers and 300 4-digit prefix network numbers would be available for assignment.

"900" numbers

7. "900" numbers are 11 digits long and have the following format: 900 S X_1....X_7. S is the service indicator while X_1....X_7 are the access numbers. The values 0, 2, 3, 4, 6 and 9 have been assigned to S for various services. Currently, leading digits "900 S 0" to "900 S 3" have been allocated to the four wireline-based FTNS operators. (i.e. X_1,000,000 to X_1,999,999 or 1,000,000 numbers for each service per operator, except for S=3 which would be allocated with 1,000 numbers because "900 3" numbers are 8 digits long). If the current method of assignment continues, "900" numbers could only support six more operators.

8. In order to improve this situation, a smaller amount of "900" numbers would be allocated to the new FTNS operators for their first application. Since "900" numbers are deployed as access numbers to information services, it is considered that an initial allocation from $X_3$0,000 to $X_3$9,999 could meet the operational need of the operator at the launch of service. (i.e. 10,000 numbers for each service per operator, except for "900 3" which would be allocated with 10 numbers.) In accordance with the guidelines laid down in the Code of Practice relating to the use of numbers and codes in the Hong Kong numbering plan ("the COP"), operators could apply for additional 10,000 numbers when the utilization of the allocated numbers exceeds 60%.

Advice Sought

9. Members are invited to give their views and comments on this paper.

Office of the Telecommunications Authority
March 2002