

TELECOMMUNICATIONS NUMBERING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Direct-Dialling-In (DDI) Circuit-to-Number Ratio for IT-based Value-added Services (II)

Purpose

This paper summarizes the result of the last consultation on the circuit-to-number ratio for the assignment of Direct-Dialling-In (DDI) numbers by Fixed Telecommunications Network Services (FTNS) operators to IT-based value-added services. One example of these IT-based value-added services is the fax gateway server which assigns personal fax numbers as extensions through DDI lines. Finally, the proposed way forward will also be discussed for Members' consideration.

Result of Last Consultation

2. The subject was discussed in the last NAC meeting on 28 August 2003 in the NAC Paper No. 6/2003. OFTA noted the growing trend in the deployment of various new IT-based value-added services that required the assignment of more DDI numbers than what was permitted under the existing circuit-to-number ratio of 1:12.5. Preliminarily, OFTA considered it appropriate to maintain the current circuit-to-number ratio after considering a number of technical issues. These included the need to ensure efficient utilization of number resource, the availability of technical alternatives with higher efficiency in using the DDI numbers, and the fact that the common practice in PABX trunk dimensioning would render some spare DDI numbers that could be made available for the IT-based applications.

3. OFTA consulted the NAC on other aspects as well. During the last NAC meeting, a number of Members indicated their support on the proposal to maintain the circuit-to-number ratio. In particular, the emerging IT-based applications would likely require more DDI numbers without regard to the actual number of physical CPEs being installed. The popularity of the IT-based value-added service would therefore make the consumption of the DDI numbers increase tremendously. As a result, relaxation of the circuit-to-number ratio might cause

pressure on the amount of available number resources and whether these number resources could cope with the future demands.

4. Nevertheless, a few Members were of the view that technological innovations in telecommunications services should be encouraged and adequate amount of DDI numbers should be assigned to meet the requirements of the end-users.

5. After the meeting, OFTA received one further submission from a Member who supported the proposal to maintain the current circuit-to-number ratio. He considered that it was feasible for the IT-based value-added service to use a single number for both voice and fax services such that personalized call access and unified messaging services could be realized. Other than this submission, there were no other comments received.

OFTA's Considerations

6. While OFTA encourages innovations and the adoption of new technologies in the telecommunications field, it is also essential that the efficient use of the number resource can be ensured. As described in the last NAC paper, there are other viable technical alternatives that are able to make better use of the DDI numbers. For instance, the use of a prime fax number with extension numbers assigned to employees of a corporation; the use of new PABX line cards that can automatically detect whether the incoming calls are voice or fax. In fact, unified messaging systems readily available in the market already support the use of one single number for integrated voice and fax access. System integrators and telecommunications solution providers can always make use of these alternatives to provide the corporate customers with new telecommunications solutions that can help increase productivity and enhance user flexibility. Hence, OFTA believes that the development of new IT-based value-added service will not be compromised if the circuit-to-number ratio is to be maintained.

7. As the adoption of any lower circuit-to-number ratio will have a direct impact on the rate of consumption of the fixed numbers, it is crucial for OFTA to ensure that the DDI numbers are assigned and utilized efficiently. Taking into account the views and comments made by the Members since the last NAC meeting, it is considered appropriate to maintain the current circuit-to-number ratio for the assignment of DDI numbers by the FTNS operators.

Office of the Telecommunications Authority
November 2003