

TELECOMMUNICATIONS NUMBERING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Assignment of Reclaimed ISPCs

Background

Signalling System Number 7 (SS7) is commonly deployed by telecommunications networks for call control signalling. SS7 signalling networks are divided into international level and national level to facilitate network management. At the international level, a unique international signalling point code (ISPC) is assigned to each signalling point for network identification.

2. An ISPC is composed of two parts, an 11-bit Signalling Area/Network Code (SANC) and a 3-bit Signalling Point Identification. Under this 14-bit format, each SANC comprises eight ISPCs. ISPCs and SANCs are international number resources administered by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). The ITU would allocate SANC to OFTA and then OFTA would assign the ISPCs to the operators.

3. Thus far, the ITU has allocated the SANCs 4-105, 4-106, 4-107, 4-108, 4-109, 4-177, 4-178 and 4-179 to Hong Kong. Under these eight allocated SANCs, a total of 64 ISPCs are available for assignment to the industry.

Allocation and re-allocation of ISPC

4. Currently, ISPCs are assigned to external facilities-based and service-based operators who establish direct SS7 signalling links and interconnections with overseas carriers. During the last few years of operation, the Telecommunications Authority has withdrawn the assignment of ISPCs from some operators due to, for example, cancellation of licences by these operators.

5. In accordance with ITU-T Recommendation Q.708, ISPCs should be utilised efficiently. Therefore, it is the responsibility of OFTA to ensure that

any reclaimed ISPCs should be re-assigned after an appropriate ageing period as recommended by the ITU. In the ITU-T Recommendation Q.708, the ITU recommends an ageing period of six to eighteen months.

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6. In Hong Kong, the Code of Practice Relating to the Use of Numbers and Codes in the Hong Kong Numbering Plan has also incorporated a similar requirement on number recycling. It states that the operators should recover any relinquished numbers/codes immediately and these recovered numbers/codes should be recycled in six months. In order to ensure efficient use of international numbering resources and to comply with the requirement of the ITU Recommendation, OFTA has also adopted the practice of recycling those reclaimed ISPCs. Having regard to the requirement of the ITU and the above-mentioned Code of Practice, the reclaimed ISPCs would be re-cycled for assignment after a minimum ageing period of 6 months.

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