

TELECOMMUNICATIONS NUMBERING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

New Number Level for Mobile Services

Background

At the 54th NAC Meeting, Members agreed that “66X” and “69X” numbers could be released for allocation to mobile services. Having considered Members’ consensus view, the Telecommunications Authority (TA) agreed that the “66X” and “69X” numbers would be released as a short term solution to increase the number supply for mobile services.

2. However, Members had different views on the choice of new number level for mobile services. Number levels “5”, “7” and “8” had been identified for consideration but no decision was made. As this is the first meeting for the new term of NAC membership which comprises representatives of each mobile network, the TA considers it opportune to further discuss this issue. To facilitate Members’ discussion, the salient points of the issue are recapitulated below.

Considerations on New Number Level for Mobile Services

3. In deciding the choice of new number level for mobile services, the following Guiding Principles should be observed:

- a) uniform numbering plan – uniform digit length for subscriber numbers;
- b) integrated numbering plan – network operators share same number levels;
- c) leading digit(s) convey service information – dedicated number level(s) for individual services;
- d) lengthen the life-time of the 8-digit numbering plan as far as possible; and
- e) defer any change of existing “7X” paging numbers as far as possible in order to minimize inconvenience to the paging subscribers.

The feasibility of allocating vacant numbers in levels “5X”, ”7X”, and “8X” to mobile services with reference to the above guiding principles were discussed in NAC Paper No. 3/2004 at the last NAC meeting. Salient points of the discussion are described below.

4. At present, “8X” numbers are allocated to FTNS operators for personal numbering services. The proposed deployment of “8X” numbers to mobile services will adversely affect the integrity of the numbering plan. In addition, allocation of “8X” numbers to mobile service will reduce the number supply for fixed network services and hence shorten the useful life of the 8-digit numbering plan. Based on the above considerations, allocation of “8X” numbers to mobile services is not preferred from the efficient use of numbers point of view.

5. Both the “5X” and “7X” numbers are considered feasible as the new number level for mobile services. However, “7X” numbers are currently allocated for paging services. Deploying “7X” numbers to mobile services would have adverse impact on the above mentioned Guiding Principle (e), i.e. any change to existing “7X” numbers should be deferred as far as possible. Under this circumstance, allocation of “7X” numbers to mobile services is also not recommended in the short term.

6. At the last NAC meeting, NAC Paper No. 2/2004 also mentioned the TA’s decision that “50” codes are allocated for the provision of value-added SMS and MMS, and any MNO, MVNO or FTNS operator offering SMS/MMS may deploy such code for the service. From the customer perspective, short message services are used to associate with mobile services. In this connection, the deployment of “5X” numbers to mobile services is seen to be a natural development which is in line with the above mentioned Guiding Principle (c). It is also noted that such deployment is in line with the other Guiding Principles.

7. Having considered the above, the TA has formed the following preliminary views on the new number supply for mobile services:

- (a) “5(1-9)X” numbers should be released to mobile services after the consumption of “6X” and “9X” numbers; and
- (b) “7X” paging numbers should be relocated to a new number level or be prefixed by an access code in order to vacate “7X” numbers for mobile services after the exhaustion of “5(1-9)X”, “6X” and “9X” numbers.

Advice Sought

8. Members are invited to give their views and comments on the proposed new number level “5” for mobile services.

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