

**TELECOMMUNICATIONS NUMBERING ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**Revision to Numbering Code of Practice**

**號碼使用業務守則的修訂**

**Purpose**

This paper proposes the adoption of the revised Code of Practice Relating to the Use of Numbers and Codes in the Hong Kong Numbering Plan (“the Numbering Code of Practice”) attached at the Annex. The revised Numbering Code of Practice mainly includes the introduction of three categories of fixed numbers and the revision of the formula for calculating the mobile number utilisation rate.

**Background**

2. The current version of the Numbering Code of Practice was adopted by the Telecommunications Authority (“TA”) in February 2009, which incorporated the recommendations given in the NAC Paper No. 4/2008 for improving the efficient use of telecommunications numbers. It sets out the principles for the allocation and assignment of numbers and codes for telecommunications services providers to follow.

**Numbering Issues Raised at the 59th NAC Meeting**

3. The issues on reallocation of fixed numbers and revision of the formula for calculating the mobile number utilisation rate were discussed at the 59th NAC meeting held in December 2008. Some fixed network operators

expressed that the reallocation of the formerly returned numbers could not be used for some services whereas some mobile network operators considered that certain portion of mobile numbers were used for supporting network routing but these numbers were not included in the formula for calculating the mobile number utilisation rate stipulated under the Numbering Code of Practice.

4. In early 2009, OFTA held discussions with fixed and mobile network operators concerned to solicit their views on the above two issues. An NAC Numbering Working Group meeting was also held in May 2009 so as to explore practical solutions to resolve the two issues.

### **Outcomes of the Discussion**

#### ***Reallocation of Fixed Numbers***

5. Currently, all the existing allocated fixed numbers are kept in a single pool. As operators will be reallocated with their respective returned numbers first when they have demand for additional numbers, most of the fixed network operators doubt that the reallocation of the formerly returned individual numbers could not be used for the provision of Direct-Dialling-In (DDI) and new services which require contiguous blocks of numbers.

6. In view of the need of different numbers for different types of services, it is proposed that the allocated fixed numbers be split into a maximum of three categories, namely Direct Exchange Line (DEL), Next Generation Network (NGN) (New Platform) and DDI. In case the usage of a certain number category reaches the threshold of 70%, an operator may apply to the TA for new numbers under the corresponding number category. Under the new proposal, a fixed network operator may split its allocated numbers into one of the following options-

- Option 1 : Only one category (existing arrangement)

- Option 2 : Two categories, namely, DEL and DDI or NGN(New Platform) and DDI
- Option 3 : Three categories, namely, DEL, NGN(New Platform) and DDI

7. Once the above proposal is adopted, the application, return and reallocation of fixed numbers will be processed on an individual category basis. Each fixed network operator will need to provide a list of its allocated number blocks in each category to the TA prior to the return or application of numbers. Since some of the number blocks in DEL category may be migrated to NGN(New Platform) category under the NGN implementation project, flexibilities will be provided to fixed network operators for updating the number blocks in each category on a needed basis, however such regrouping of number blocks would need to be endorsed by the TA.

8. The classification of fixed numbers up to three categories is an interim measure as the DEL and NGN(New Platform) categories would be migrated into a single category after the completion of the NGN project. In this connection, fixed numbers would be divided into up to two categories (i.e. DDI and non-DDI) in the long run.

### ***Review of the Formula for Calculating the Mobile Number Utilisation Rate***

9. When the threshold limit for the application of mobile numbers was raised to 70%, some mobile network operators considered that there was a need to review the existing formula for calculating the mobile number utilisation rate as some of the mobile numbers are actually consumed by the network for supporting call routing.

10. According to the information provided by mobile operators, some mobile numbers such as handover numbers, roaming numbers and global title numbers are genuinely used by the mobile network for the support of roaming

and handover activities. Since these numbers are not included in the formula for calculating the mobile number utilisation rate, the NAC Numbering Working Group supported to include such numbers in the formula. In considering that this kind of routing support numbers only accounts for a small portion, it is generally accepted that such numbers should not be greater than 1% of the total numbers allocated to an operator.

### **Summary of the Proposed Revision to the Numbering Code of Practice**

11. Taking into consideration the outcomes of the discussion on the above two issues, it is proposed to incorporate the following changes in the Numbering Code of Practice-

- (a) a fixed operator may divide its allocated basic telephone services numbers up to a maximum of three categories (i.e. DEL, NGN(New Platform) and DDI) and the utilisation rate will be calculated on an individual category basis (see clause 2.24(A) of the revised document); and
- (b) mobile numbers used for supporting call routing, including handover numbers, roaming numbers, global title numbers, etc. will be included in the mobile number utilisation rate formula, but these numbers should not be greater than 1% of the total numbers allocated to an operator (see clause 2.24(B) of the revised document).

12. On 19 October 2009, the TA issued a statement entitled “Review of the Public Non-Exclusive Telecommunications Service and Service-Based Operator Licensing Regimes”. In order to streamline the two existing licensing regimes, one of the conclusions in the statement is to create a new “Class 3” type of services under the Service-Based Operator (“SBO”) licence for replacement of the existing Public Non-Exclusive Telecommunications Service (“PNETS”) licence. The streamlined licensing regime has been implemented starting from 30 October 2009. Since the TA will no longer

issue any new PNETS licence and all the existing PNETS licences will be migrated to the new licences in 2010, all the clauses in relation to PNETS services/licences stipulated under the Numbering Code of Practice should be amended to SBO Class 3 services/licences.

### **Advice Sought**

13. Members are invited to give views and comments on the proposed revision of the Numbering Code of Practice as given in the Annex.

**Office of the Telecommunications Authority**  
**August 2010**