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COMMUNICATIONS AUTHORITY OF MALDIVES

Request for Proposals

Consultancy on Implementation of Mobile Number Portability

Information Document

10 March 2011

1. Introduction

The Communications Authority of Maldives (CAM) has the mandate to regulate the telecommunications sector in the Maldives. The sector is governed by the Maldives Telecommunications Regulation 2003, and the applicable telecommunication policy.

Competition was introduced to the Maldives' telecommunications services market with the licensing of a second internet service provider in May 2003. During December 2003, the new licensee Focus Infocom started Internet services. Prior to this, all telecommunications services were provided by Dhiraagu. Further competition was introduced in 2005 when a second cellular mobile operator, Wataniya Telecom Maldives started services.

In order to acquire full benefits of competition, it is critical that a conducive environment be created by removing the barriers that would hinder development of competition. Number portability removes one such barrier in that customers are free to make a choice of their service providers without having to give up the numbers used for a long time. It is a means by which competition can be further strengthened by allowing a customer to change a carrier while retaining the telephone number already assigned. From the customer's perspective, number portability offers great advantages in facilitating a user's ability to switch networks without the inconvenience and costs of changing his or her telephone number.

A Request for Proposals is hereby issued to select a suitable consultant to carry out specific tasks outlined in this document within an available budget of USD13000.

2. Situation and Objective

With the introduction of competition to the cellular mobile services market, two operators now provide mobile services. The two operators, Dhiraagu and Wataniya provide services using GSM technology. The services of both operators are advanced and comprehensive, but at the same time there are distinctive differences over which customers may prefer one over the other.

Maldives moved to new 7-digit closed numbering plan in 2005. Currently under this numbering plan, each operator has a distinguishing first digit. As such, Dhiraagu numbers start with 7, while Wataniya numbers start with 9.

Mobile Number Portability (MNP) is a desirable means to strengthen competition, thereby enabling customers to switch operators who may be otherwise reluctant to do so due to the inconveniences of changing the telephone number. The value that mobile number portability brings to the marketplace has been recognised by many countries around the world as evidenced by the number of countries that have already implemented it.

During the time of introducing competition in the mobile services (ie during 2004), existing and incoming operators were informed on the importance of MNP and CAM's

intent to implement it in the near future. As such, reference documents were produced and shared.

After two years of competition in the mobile services market, a study was carried out in 2007 to determine the feasibility of implementing number portability. The conclusion of this study then showed that the cost of implementing it was too high for the industry given the small size of Maldivian market. However, assessing the current market share of the mobile operators, it appears that the need for MNP is becoming stronger. CAM therefore is committed to make an informed decision on how to move forward in this endeavour.

It is now desired to carry out an independent evaluation on the needs of the industry, and identify various options to implement MNP in the Maldives and based on such an assessment work out an implementation schedule to introduce mobile number portability.

When implementing MNP, CAM intends to recommend an approach to mobile number portability that will expedite the deployment of portability and require minimal, if any, modifications to an operator's switching equipment. CAM will attempt to ensure that mobile number portability can be easily implemented without creating any disruptions to an operator's network. From an administrative perspective, operators may be required to make some minor modifications to their current billing systems and procedures to exchange billing information from one operator to another.

In order to move forward with the study and implementation of MNP, CAM requires the services of a competent consultant. This consultancy project is open to qualified and suitable firms or individual consultants.

3. Terms of Reference

Mobile Number Portability is viewed by customers and the industry stakeholders as a key enabler for effective competition. Further to the indications given to the operators earlier, CAM now intends to determine the various options including costs for implementing MNP. The selected consultant will assist CAM with the project on MNP, in carrying out the different tasks to identify the various options and methodology on implementing Mobile Number Portability in the Maldives and assist in developing a monitoring mechanism for implementation of Mobile Number Portability as per the schedule identified.

3.1 Required Tasks

- a) The Consultant shall carry out a comparative analysis on how and when MNP was implemented in other markets particularly those similar to Maldives, around the world. In doing so, the successes and issues faced must be addressed.
- b) The Consultant shall carry out a consultation process among the operators to evaluate the needs for MNP.

- c) Based on the needs, the Consultant shall identify the options, including costs, for introducing MNP in the Maldives.
- d) The Consultant shall recommend a technical solution to provide mobile number portability that will work across all networks including the fixed line network, considering the existing networks, their capabilities and limitations.
- e) The Consultant shall propose a practical implementation schedule to cover the recommended solution.
- f) Implementation and operation of MNP will incur some costs. The Consultant shall recommend a mechanism to ensure that the cost allocation and recovery process is equitable in terms of ensuring the appropriate allocation between operators of costs resulting from the introduction of mobile number portability.
- g) With MNP, customers will not be able to distinguish on-net and off-net calls, thereby limiting the transparency of the applicable call tariff. It is therefore desired to establish a means of informing a caller when he/she is making a call to a ported number. The Consultant shall recommend a practical solution based on the capabilities of the existing networks.
- h) Upon implementation of MNP, operators will need to establish internal procedures. The Consultant shall make recommendations covering internal processes, scope and eligibility for MNP, application procedures and customer interactions, based on best practices around the world.
- i) Managing the implementation process of MNP is crucial in order to ensure that the objectives laid out are being achieved. The consultant shall develop a monitoring mechanism to oversee and manage the implementation process. The Consultant is not required to be present onsite during any period of the implementation phase; only comprehensive instructions shall be provided for CAM to conduct the role
- j) The Consultant shall produce instructions for CAM to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of MNP when it becomes operational.

3.2 Work Format

The Consultant may work remotely where appropriate but it is expected that time be spent onsite in the Maldives.

3.3 Expected Outcome

At the end of each phase of the consultancy, in addition to the successful conduct of specified tasks, the Consultant should produce a comprehensive report addressing the requirements as set in Section 3.1 above. The report may be submitted in two stages:

- a) a preliminary report during or at the end of on-site work;
- b) the final report within two weeks of completion of the tasks.

4. Requirements in Proposals

Proposals should outline a work plan and the methodology that will be utilised in accomplishing the terms of reference. It should also provide a detail schedule of work.

The total price of the consultancy service should be clearly specified. As the project is in two discrete phases, the price of each phase must be presented separately. For all activities of the consultancy project that may incur any costs, the cost bearer must be specified.

It is expected that the consultant(s) proposed for the project will have the following qualifications and experience:

- A university degree in telecommunications or a related field with the evidence of specialising in the appropriate areas of expertise to carryout the activities as specified in section 3.
- Over 5 years experience in the appropriate areas of expertise.
- Experience, knowledge and understanding of conditions and problems in a similar environment as that of Maldives.
- Ability to draft precise and complete analytical reports, project proposal/documents, etc.
- Knowledge of, and ability to use, personal computers and a good knowledge of English is essential.
- The ability to work in a team, in a foreign environment.
- Prior experience in dealing with number portability issues in similar regulatory environments.

Company profile (where applicable), details of relevant experience and similar work undertaken, and CVs of proposed consultants must be submitted along with the proposal.

5. Evaluation Criteria

The successful Consultant will be selected on the basis of the experience, the methodology of work, the duration to accomplish the specified tasks, and the proposed price for the consultancy.

The specific weightings for the evaluating criteria are as follows:

Criteria	Weight
Experience	40
Methodology and Duration of Work	20
Price	30
Overall Proposal	10

6. Conditions of Proposal Submission

Proposals are to be delivered to -

*The Chief Executive
Communications Authority of Maldives
Telecom Building
Husnuheena Magu
Male', Maldives*

Closing time for the receipt of proposals is -

3.00 PM on Sunday, 10 April 2011

It is the responsibility of the sender to ensure that the proposal is correctly delivered before the closing time. Proposals received after the closing time will not be accepted and the senders will be notified accordingly. Such proposals may be collected from CAM by the respective sender. Proposals not collected within 30 days from the closing time for proposals will be destroyed.

Proposals are to be submitted in a sealed envelope marked:

“Proposal for Consultancy on Mobile Number Portability Implementation”

The address including email, fax and telephone numbers of the sender should be indicated on the envelope.

In case of difficulties in submitting proposals before the closing time, proposals may be sent by email. The email address to which proposals are to be sent is mnp@cam.gov.mv. All proposals sent by email should still reach the Communications Authority of Maldives (CAM) by the closing time. Proposals sent via email should be followed up by sending the original which should reach CAM within one calendar week of the closing time, latest by 17 April 2011. As a safeguard against delays and lost emails, senders should notify CAM by fax when sending proposal by email.

CAM reserves the right to accept or reject any or all of the proposals.

7. Inquiries

All inquiries relating to this consultancy should be directed to:

*Communications Authority of Maldives
Telecom Building
Husnuheena Magu
Male', Maldives
Tel: +960 3323344
Fax: +960 3320000
e-mail: mnp@cam.gov.mv*