

GUIDELINES ON LICENSING AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK FOR IP TELEPHONY SERVICES IN SINGAPORE

1 LICENSING

- 1.1 To provide IP Telephony services in Singapore, applicants need to acquire a Facilities-Based Operations (“FBO”) or Services-Based Operations (“SBO”) (Individual) licence from the Info-communications Media Development Authority (the “Authority”). The licence application guidelines and templates are posted on the Authority’s website at www.imda.gov.sg.
- 1.2 IP Telephony services in this guideline refers to any voice over Internet Protocol services offered using an E.164 telephone number (“IP telephony number”) allocated to customers in Singapore, which allow customers to make and receive voice, data and/or video calls using the same IP telephone number from any domestic or overseas location where broadband Internet access is available.
- 1.3 Applicants intending to deploy and/or operate any form of telecommunication network, systems and/or facilities for the purpose of providing IP Telephony services outside of their own property boundaries to third parties, who may include other licensed telecommunication operators, business customers or the general public, may apply to the Authority for an FBO licence.
- 1.4 Applicants intending to lease telecommunication network elements from any FBO licensed by the Authority so as to provide IP Telephony services, or to resell IP Telephony services of FBOs, to third parties; may apply to the Authority for an SBO (Individual) licence.
- 1.5 The licence application guidelines for both the FBO and SBO (Individual) licence are posted on the Authority’s website at www.imda.gov.sg. Details on licence application requirements, procedures and applicable licence fees are explained in the guidelines. Parties who are interested to provide IP Telephony services with an FBO or SBO licence should peruse the relevant guidelines and submit their applications to the Authority in accordance with the requirements outlined in the guidelines.

- 1.6 In addition to the existing FBO/SBO licence general conditions, the Telecommunications Act (Cap 323), its Regulations and any Codes of Practice, licensees would also be required to comply with the specific terms and conditions for the provision of IP Telephony services (Annex A) if they are intending to use E.164 telephone numbers and assign them to their customers in Singapore. Where necessary, the Authority shall amend a licensee's existing FBO or SBO licence to incorporate the required conditions.

2 USAGE, ALLOCATION AND ASSIGNMENT OF NUMBERS

- 2.1 Upon receiving the approval from the Authority for the provision of IP Telephony services, licensees may apply to the Authority for the allocation of telephone numbers for such services.
- 2.2 Depending on the type of licence, licensees will be allocated 8-digit number blocks starting with level "6" or "3". FBO licensees are eligible for both level "6" and "3" numbers while SBO (Individual) licensees will be eligible for level "3" numbers only.
- 2.3 For the avoidance of doubt, while the Authority does not allocate number level "6" to SBO licensees, an SBO licensee may however enter into a commercial agreement with an FBO licensee to obtain services with number level "6" and use such service as an input to provide its own IP Telephony service. This is provided always that the SBO licensee complies with the additional requirements set out in the paragraph 2.4.
- 2.4 In addition to the general licence conditions, FBO/SBO licensees offering IP Telephony services associated with level "6" numbers shall ensure the following in relation to such services:
- (a) Provide access (without charge) to emergency services such as 999, 995 and 993, in Singapore;
 - (b) Allow its IP Telephony subscribers to receive and make voice calls to/from other persons on any public switched telecommunication network or public mobile network or public digital voice network in Singapore;

- (c) Comply with the same Quality of Service (“QoS”) standards as may be established by the Authority from time to time for basic local call services associated with number level “6”;
 - (d) Provide integrated directories and directory enquiry services¹;
 - (e) Allow number portability for its IP Telephony services in accordance with the same standards and requirements as may be established by the Authority from time to time for basic local call services associated with number level “6”; and
 - (f) Limit IP Telephony service subscriptions to domestic customers within Singapore.
- 2.5 Telephone numbers will be allocated through either an administrative allocation or an auction process. To allow licensees to select the numbers they desire through a market-based approach, the Authority will periodically hold auctions for such telephone numbers. Details on telephone numbers allocation process and requirements are explained in the National Numbering Plan published on the Authority’s website at www.imda.gov.sg.
- 2.6 For the avoidance of doubt, any licensee who intends to provide IP Telephony services using E.164 telephone numbers and allocating such numbers to its customers in Singapore to access such services, regardless of whether such telephone numbers are issued by the Authority, must minimally obtain an SBO (Individual) licence from the Authority.
- 2.7 For more information on the Authority’s guidelines on number allocation to licensees, please refer to the Authority’s National Numbering Plan and guidelines at the Authority website at www.imda.gov.sg.

¹ Please refer to the Authority’s Decision On The Review Of The Regulatory Requirement for Directory Services dated 17 December 2013 (https://www.imda.gov.sg/~media/imda/files/inner/pcdg/consultations/20121018_directoryservices/explanatorymemo.pdf?la=en).

3 NUMBER PORTABILITY

- 3.1 FBO or SBO licensees offering IP Telephony services with 8-digit numbers starting with level “3” or other E.164 telephone numbers issued by overseas administrators will not be required to provide number portability, unless otherwise informed by the Authority. For the avoidance of doubt, FBO and SBO licensees providing IP Telephony service with level “6” numbers are required to provide number portability at similar standards to that established for basic telephony services associated with number level “6”.

4 INTERCONNECTION AND ACCESS

- 4.1 The Telecom Competition Code sets out the interconnection and access requirements to be complied by licensees. Licensees can decide to set up a “close-user” network and not request for interconnection with existing telecommunication networks in Singapore. If licensees intend to interconnect with existing telecommunication networks in Singapore, they are to commercially negotiate and pursue the most appropriate interconnection arrangements with other licensees. Licensees may agree to interconnect on any mutually agreeable terms, but must still observe the Minimum Interconnection Duties, set out in the Telecom Competition Code, for establishing interconnection agreements. The Authority will generally not involve itself in interconnection negotiations between non-dominant licensees.
- 4.2 For interconnection with Dominant Licensees, a licensee issued with E.164 telephone numbers by the Authority, may do so pursuant to commercial arrangements or negotiate an individualised interconnection agreement, following the procedures set out in the Code. If licensees fail to reach an interconnection agreement, licensees may request for the Authority to resolve the dispute under the Telecom Competition Code. As guidance to the industry, the Authority has issued a “Guide to Interconnection with Dominant Licensee” attached as Annex B, outlining different interconnection approaches and methods.

5 QUALITY OF SERVICE

- 5.1 FBO and SBO licensees offering IP Telephony services with 8-digit numbers starting with level “3” or other E.164 telephone numbers issued by overseas administrators will not be required to comply with any QoS standards established by the Authority, unless otherwise informed by the Authority.

6 BASIC OBLIGATION AND PUBLIC SAFETY

- 6.1 FBO and SBO licensees offering IP Telephony services with 8-digit numbers starting with level “3” or other E.164 telephone numbers issued by overseas administrators are not required to provide access to emergency services, integrated directories and directory enquiry services. However, licensees are required to inform customers if access to emergency service is not provided. Licensees who wish to provide emergency services access are required to provide it at no charge. The Authority reserves the right to require the provision of emergency call services, directory enquiry and printed directory services at a later stage, depending on market development.

7 ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS AND SAFEGUARDS FOR THE PROVISION OF IP TELEPHONY SERVICES

- 7.1 In co-operation with law enforcement agencies to enhance necessary measures for public safety and security, the Authority will require all IP Telephony service providers to comply with specific licence requirements. These requirements include proper access to emergency services (if access to such services is provided) and the recording and verification of subscribers and resellers' particulars.

8 CORRESPONDENCE/ENQUIRIES

- 8.1 Any enquiry concerning this invitation to submit applications are welcome. Enquiries made in writing should indicate clearly on the cover “**Enquiries on IP Telephony Services**” and should be addressed to:

Info-communications Media Development Authority
10 Pasir Panjang Road
#03-01 Mapletree Business City
Singapore 117438
(Attn: Director, Competition & Market Access)

Notes:

- 1 This document has no legal standing and is not intended as a substitute for advice. While every effort has been made to provide an accurate authoritative account of the licensing regime, the licence(s) to be granted successful applicants will be the complete authoritative text.**
- 2 The information contained in this document is intended to assist interested parties in applying for the relevant licences. It does not bind the Authority to particular course of action in relation to the handling of any application, the terms of any licence to be granted, or to grant any licence to any party. The Authority reserves the right to change its policies and/or to amend this document without prior notice.**
- 3 The grant of a licence is at the sole discretion of the Authority. The Authority reserves the right to accept any application submitted. The Authority will undertake to explain to applicant concerned, on the applicant’s request, why the applicant was unsuccessful in its application for a licence.**
- 4 The Authority reserves the right to disclose the identities of parties who have submitted applications. All other information received will be treated in confidence.**