



PB/VIL/18-19/003

17 May, 2018

Shri Syed Tausif Abbas
Advisor (NSL-II)
Telecom Regulatory Authority of India
Mahanagar Doorsanchar Bhawan,
Jawahar Lal Nehru Marg, Old Minto Road,
New Delhi - 110 002

Subject: Vodafone's counter comments to TRAI Consultation Paper on 'Review of Mobile Number Portability (MNP) process' dated 06.04.2018

Dear Sir,

This is in reference to the above-mentioned Consultation Paper issued by Authority on 06.04.2018.

In this regard, please find enclosed our counter comments to the above-said Consultation Paper.

We hope that our submissions will merit your kind consideration and support.

Thanking you,

Yours sincerely,

For **Vodafone India Limited and**
Vodafone Mobile Services Limited

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Balaji', is located below the typed name.

P. Balaji
Director – Regulatory, External Affairs & CSR

Encl: As stated above

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Vodafone counter comments to TRAI Consultation Paper on Review of Mobile Number Portability (MNP) process dated 06.04.2018

We have gone through the submissions of various stakeholders on the TRAI's consultation paper and have following counter comments to offer:

1. At the outset, we would like to submit that our comments may kindly be considered as counter-comments to the submissions of other stakeholders which are contrary to the views expressed by us. In our view, many changes supported or new steps proposed by some stakeholders do not yield any process advantage or are against the interests of the consumers/TSPs and will also lead to huge costs to be incurred by all stakeholders.
2. Considering the stability of the system and large volumes of porting transactions with customers exercising their choice and using the porting process to port, a comment by a stakeholder that there is general dissatisfaction of the consumers in the long drawn process is incorrect. In our comments, we have provided the figures on industry wide porting transactions (increasing year on year) and ratio of UPCs being generated to the porting requests being raised, which clearly shows the general satisfaction of the consumers and exercising their choice, in their interest, even after generating UPC request. .
3. We strongly disagree with the suggestion of one stakeholder who has proposed change in porting process to "tackle the menace of segmented offers" and DO indulging in "furtive practice of one to one discount and offers", in violation of TRAI's reporting requirement. In this regard, it is first submitted that retention of customers by TSP or choice by customer of continuation with same TSP even after UPC and/or porting request is completely valid. Further, the segmented offers are well recognized by TRAI and hence not furtive. Such offers are beneficial to the consumers as they provide varied choice and specified offerings to different segment of consumers. Hence, the above statement of the stakeholder is incorrect and cannot form the basis for any change in the MNP process. Any attempt by altering the MNP process to deny the customer the choice or deny the right to TSP to retain will be illegal.
4. The same stakeholder is of the view that the subscriber should not be permitted to withdraw porting request. As mentioned above and in our comments, the law of the land does not permit anyone to take away customer's choice to be retained or customer's right to withdraw its request to port out within a reasonable time. Therefore, we do not agree with the said comments..

Further, it is seen from comments of various Consumer Organizations that they also are of same view as us and have strongly recommended that the customer should have a right to cancel or amend the port request at any time and it would help the telecom consumers.

We have also provided evidence and data to the Authority in our response to the consultation, that there are substantial number of subscribers who even after raising porting requests, have exercised their choice of remaining back with the donor operator. Also, we have shared details of current SMS based porting withdrawal process, which is transparent and user friendly for customers. Furthermore, window of withdrawal of porting request along with a user friendly process, will also help genuine consumers in case any fraudulent porting request is raised.



Therefore, we reiterate that the current provision of withdrawal of porting request within 24 hours, should be continued with.

5. While one of the stakeholder has supported & proposed details on the Blockchain, most of the stakeholder including MNPSPs have expressed concerns that using Blockchain for porting process will be an expensive solution due to the massive computing processes, with little benefit over the traditional porting processes. In fact one of the TSPs has highlighted glaring weaknesses in Blockchain viz. no industry wide standards, subscriber information retention, data misuse, harassment to consumer due to risk of poaching as data will be available with all TSPs, size of data retention with each TSP node would become unsustainable. Additionally, we would like to submit there would be concerns of breach in confidential information provided by a customer, irrelevant information being provided to a TSP not relevant to a particular transaction, besides leading to huge cost for implementation without any advantage to consumers or TSPs or any other stakeholder. In view of the above, it is submitted that the existing framework and technology are working well and introduction of Blockchain is not required as it will lead to huge cost without any related advantages besides other challenges and concerns as highlighted above.
6. One stakeholder has introduced an issue, which was not part of the consultation, that SMS pertaining to UPC generation should be whitelisted with no charges. At present the SMS for UPC generation is sent to a short code and chargeable as per normal tariffs and when chargeable, it in a way prevents non-genuine UPC generations. It may be noted that if some operator does not want to charge for such SMS then that operator has a choice, however, such cases may increase retail level misuse.
7. The same stakeholder has introduced another issue, which is not part of the consultation paper i.e. issuance of one UPC for all corporate porting connections. This issue was taken up in the draft Telecommunication MNP (5th amendment) regulations on 15th March 2013. Thereafter, it was decided by Authority vide Telecommunication MNP (5th amendment) regulations, 2013 dated 22nd July 2013, that UPCs should be generated by the user of each corporate mobile number to avoid conflict/dispute regarding the porting of corporate mobile number to avoid that the number is ported out without the user knowledge. It also stated if mobile number of Authorised signatory is permitted to generate UPC, the entire framework is required to be changed without serving any useful purpose and Donor operators would need to maintain a separate list of such Authorised Signatories for authentication.

Furthermore, post the said decision, TRAI has issued two more draft regulations besides, the instant consultation paper, and has not considered this issue for consultation. Therefore, the issue which has been decided by the Authority after detailed consultation and has not been considered under subsequent consultations, should not be dealt through a side comment by one stakeholder.

In our view, there have been no change in conditions related thereto and suggestion of single UPC to a corporate would lead to conflict/disputes with users and corporates, will bring huge complexities in terms of changing the entire framework and building a separate list of such Authorised signatories for authentication, besides it would also not serve any useful purpose. A port out request of a corporate number can be due to many reasons and in most of the cases such request is confined to individual numbers. The issue deals with substantive change in understanding and the processes, complexities involved therein.



8. The same stakeholder has also mentioned that information sought by MNPSP should be made available at shortest time interval. We reiterate our comments that pre-checks or any information sought before UPC generation would lead to consumer dissatisfaction and also distrust into the process, as consumer perceives instant SMS revert of UPC without any lag, whereas such pre-checks and information before UPC would lead to delay as it cannot be provided in shortest time interval due to involvement of multiple systems.
9. The same stakeholder has also mentioned that provisioning can be done 24x7. In this respect we refer to our comments and reiterate that this would not be customer friendly as it would disrupt the services to consumer during the day hours where continuous connectivity and usage capability is desired by consumers and will lead to very high consumer complaints on call centers of both RO and DO. Also, unavailability of dedicated teams of partners, presently managing MNP systems and processes during specific MNP window of 10PM to 5PM to ensure the 2 hour SLA and clubbing of MNP requests with other provisioning requests like non-MNP activation/SIMEX/VAS/Data during the day/evening time putting huge load on systems, would lead to delay in 2 hour SLA and thus, customer dissatisfaction and not in their interests besides, huge costs for TSPs. We reiterate our detailed inputs given through our comments to the consultation paper and again submit that in consumer's interests, the activation/deactivation window of 10:00 PM to 5:00 AM should continue.
10. We endorse the comments given by stakeholders including MNPSP that proposed process would require:
 - a. Amendment to the MNPSP license and
 - b. Any new regulation should only come after the MNPSP license renewal.

New Delhi
17 May 2018