



Government of  
The Republic  
of Vanuatu



Telecommunication &  
Radiocommunication  
Regulator

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# Report on the Consultation on the amendment of the Short Code Assignment Rule

The Office of the  
Telecommunications and  
Radiocommunications  
Regulator (TRR)

This Report provides the feedback and actions taken as a result  
of input on the consultation for amending the Short Code  
Assignment Rule

Dated: 28 September 2012



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28<sup>th</sup> SEPT 2012

## 1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Following the liberalization of the telecom sector in 2008, the interim Regulator at that time issued a National Numbering Table where allocations of numbers were based upon.
- 1.2 On 12 June 2012, the Office of the Telecommunications and Radiocommunications Regulator (TRR) published a *National Numbering Plan and Procedures (NNP)* for the sector. This NNP provides the procedural framework to ensure that numbers were allocated in an efficient and non-discriminatory manner.
- 1.3 Numbering requires continuous change to keep pace with liberalization, deployment of new technologies and introduction of new services. It was framed in a way to accommodate effective competition and future demands and provide various block of numbers including the short codes numbers (such as Emergency services numbers).
- 1.4 On July 23<sup>rd</sup> 2012, the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) made a request for TRR to allocate a short code number to be accessible through Voice and SMS, to be operational before the 2012/2013 cyclone season.

NDMO requested TRR to:

- a) Allocate a *Life and Safety* (Emergency) short code number to be used for voice calls in an emergency;
  - b) Allow for the same allocated short code number to provide “critical emergency information” to the general public through a pre-recorded message, which could be outside an emergency;
  - c) Allow for the same allocated short code number to be also used for SMS to/from areas with limited reception. This same short code number will supply SMS updates, alerts and awareness regarding disaster hazards.
- 1.5 NDMO had a preference for emergency short code number 117. TRR made it clear to NDMO from the beginning that, emergency short code 117 cannot be used to access pre-recorded messages outside emergency and cannot be used for SMS, based on the recently published *National Numbering Plan and Procedures*.
  - 1.6 On 17 August 2012, TRR undertook a consultation on amending the short code assignment rules for 10 working days between the dates of 17 August 2012 and 3 September 2012. At the time of closing and to the date of this report TRR had only received a submission from Digicel. This submission is classified as “Confidential” by Digicel and cannot be made available by TRR.

## 2. REASONING & FINDINGS

- 2.1 The Object of the Act in section 1(a) is to facilitate the development of the telecommunications sector in order to promote national, social and economic development.
- 2.2 As far as number allocations are concerned, the Regulator has the power under section 7(2)(d) of the Act to “allocate telephone number blocks and other telecommunication system numbers as administered by the ITU”.

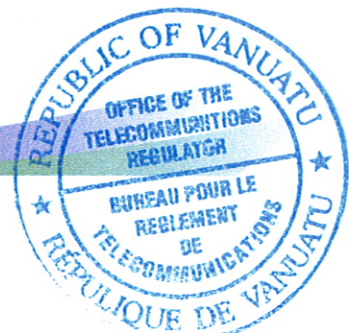




- 2.3 Also, section 7 (4) (d) states that the Regulator may make regulations “establishing and managing a national numbering plan and allocating blocks of numbers in accordance therewith”.
- 2.4 Section 7(12)(d) provides that the Regulator must act independently and impartially in performing the responsibilities, functions, duties and powers set out in this Act and other laws. Nothing in this Act is to be interpreted so as to prevent the Regulator from making a decision that will or might have a differential or prejudicial impact on a service provider or any other person.
- 2.5 Furthermore, clause 17.1 (a) of all Licences on the use of numbers states that “the Licensee and its customers shall not have any property rights in numbers”.
- 2.6 Moreover, section 17.2 (a) of all Licences on the allocation of numbers provided that “the Regulator may allocate blocks of numbers to the Licensee, which will only be done in accordance with the national numbering plan. All allocations of numbers shall be made under non-discriminatory terms and conditions by the Regulator upon request by the Licensee and other Licensed Operators for services they reasonably anticipate providing in the foreseeable future”.
- 2.7 Market liberalization in Vanuatu requires fair and transparent access to numbering resources with adequate capacity for all the players in the market.
- 2.8 Vanuatu has developed a *National Numbering Plan and Procedures*, put it on public consultation with all Licensees and stakeholders and published it on 12 June 2012.
- 2.9 The Regulator has to encourage efficiency in the allocation of numbering resources and to promote competition and innovation in telecommunications services.
- 2.10 The Regulator can make judgments in issuing numbers based upon customer benefits and in the national and public interest especially for Emergencies services.
- 2.11 Clause 2.2 of the NNP provides that the numbering need to be continuously changed to keep pace with liberalization, deployment of new technologies, and introduction of new services. The Regulator is also mindful of clause 2.3 of the NNP but when it comes to Emergency services, the Regulator has to act upon such demand especially when it comes to the public safety of the nation.
- 2.12 The Regulator therefore has the right to issue numbers in the 16X short code range which is not currently allocated.

### 3. METHOD

- 3.1 On 17 August 2012 TRR consulted with Licensees on the following proposals:
- a) Amend the *Life and Safety Services 11X* range to include Voice and SMS. Callers must be able to call or send SMS to emergency short codes from any and all networks without charge. Service providers must vacate SMS services numbers beginning with 11, therefore TVL shall refrain from using the SMS number of 1122.
  - b) Classify the 16X short code range as Type A.
  - c) Open up the 16X range for Government and NGO public information services to include Voice and SMS. Callers must be able to call or send SMS to 16X short codes



from any and all networks without charge but Government or NGO will pay for the call delivery.

- d) Amend the Short Codes Assignment Rules under Table 6-3 of the *National Numbering Plan and Procedures* accordingly.

- 3.2 Following TRR's review of Digicel submission, TRR requested NDMO to present its project to the National Response Group (NERG) stakeholders to get their feedback on an appropriate solution for NDMO.

## 4. DECISION

- 4.1 The Regulator therefore issued the Decision.
- 4.2 The Regulator shall amend the NNP and published it on its Official website [www.trr.vu](http://www.trr.vu). All service providers and interested parties will also be notified on this Decision and changes.

**The Office of the Telecommunications and Radiocommunications Regulator**

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