

## **Telecommunications Regulatory Affairs Advisory Committee**

### **Minutes of the Twenty-Sixth Meeting Held on Tuesday, 30 January 2024 at 2:30 p.m. in OFCA Conference Room, 20/F Wu Chung House**

#### **Members Present**

Mr Esmond Chiu	Office of the Communications Authority ("OFCA") ("Chairman")
Mr Sidney Tsan	OFCA ("Secretary")
Mr Michael Kan	Consumer Council
Mr Ben Li	The Institution of Engineering and Technology Hong Kong
Mr Alex Wong	Communications Association of Hong Kong
Mr Francis Fong	Hong Kong Information Technology Federation
Mr Karson Ng	China Telecom Global Limited
Ms Sophia Yap	Hong Kong Broadband Network Limited / HKBN Enterprise Solutions Limited / HKBN Enterprise Solutions HK Limited ("HKBN")
Mr Kevin Chu	Hong Kong Telecommunications (HKT) Limited / PCCW-HKT Telephone Limited and Hong Kong Telecommunications (HKT) Limited / PCCW Global (HK) Limited ("HKT") / Genius Brand Limited
Ms Juliana Wong	Hutchison Telephone Company Limited ("HTCL")
Miss Katherine Kwok	HGC Global Communications Limited
Mr Tin-Lun Or	SmarTone Communications Limited / SmarTone Mobile Communications Limited ("SmarTone")

Mr T Y Hui	Localised Wireless Broadband Service / Localised Wireless Broadband System (Private) / Public Radiocommunications Service / Wireless Internet of Things Licensees as a group (“LWBS/LWBS (Private)/PRS/WIoT Licensees as a group”)
Ir Chi-Wah Tang	Hong Kong Police Force (“HKPF”)
Dr Patrick Tsie	Ad Personam

**In Attendance**

Ir Ken Chan	The Hong Kong Institution of Engineers (“HKIE”)
Mr David Ho	China Mobile Hong Kong Company Limited (“CMHK”)
Mr Kenneth Kwok	ComNet Telecom (HK) Limited (“ComNet”)
Mr Malcolm Leong	HKBN
Mr Alex Lai	Hong Kong Cable Television Limited (“HKCTV”)
Miss Edith Wong	Towngas Telecommunications Fixed Network Limited (“Towngas”)
Ms Irene Lau	LWBS/LWBS (Private)/PRS/WIoT Licensees as a group
Ms Alice Wong	HKPF
Mr Wilson S Lee	OFCA
Mr Desmond Young	OFCA
Mr Andrew Lo	OFCA
Mr Dennis Leung	OFCA
Ms Gladys Ng	OFCA
Ms Sharis Tam	OFCA
Mr KL Yeung	OFCA
Mr Patrick Man	OFCA
Mr Penny Lo	OFCA

Mr Eric Yung	OFCA
Mr Anson Chong	OFCA
Ms Sherrine Lo	OFCA
Mr Freeman Wong	OFCA
Ms Andreas Law	OFCA
Ms Joyce Li	OFCA
Mr Victor Wong	OFCA

### **Observers**

Mr Alex Tsang	CMHK
Mr Ken Cheung	SmarTone
Mr Tak Chow	SmarTone

### **Members Absent**

Ir Dr Philip Chan	HKIE
Mr Tony Tsang	VNET Group Limited
Ms Karen Mo	CMHK
Ms Sarah Zhang	China Unicom (Hong Kong) Operations Limited / Mobile Virtual Network Operators as a group
Mr Dickson Ip	ComNet
Mr Jia Law	Easy Tone Network Limited
Miss Xen Lim	Equinix Hong Kong Limited
Mr Raymond Chan	HKCTV
Mr Patrick Ng	NTT Com Asia Limited
Mr Hing-Wah Ngan	Towngas
Mr Terence Ho	TraxComm Limited
Ms Clio Ip	Village Telephone Limited
Mr Haining Hu	Vodafone Enterprise Hong Kong Limited
Mr Julian Chow	Unified Carrier (External Fixed Services)

	Licensees as a group
Mr Chung-Ho Yuen	Services-based Operators Licensees as a group
Dr Justin Chuang	Ad Personam
Ms Katy Lau	Ad Personam
Prof Yingjun Zhang	Ad Personam

The Chairman welcomed all participants to the meeting.

### **Item 1 Confirmation of Minutes of Last Meeting**

2. The Chairman said that the draft minutes of the 25<sup>th</sup> meeting were circulated to Members for comment on 15 August 2023. With adoption of some textual amendments suggested by a Member, the minutes of the 25<sup>th</sup> meeting were confirmed.

### **Item 2 Matters Arising**

3. The Secretary reported that the Communications Authority (“CA”), after consulting the telecommunications industry in the first quarter of 2023, issued the “*Code of Practice on Management of Scam Calls by Mobile Service Providers*” (“Scam CoP”) on 21 April 2023 for compliance by all mobile service providers. The Scam CoP had taken effect since 30 June 2023, and was subsequently revised in September 2023 to cover fixed service providers from 31 December 2023 onwards. Meanwhile, the SMS Sender Registration Scheme had been implemented since 28 December 2023. Major banks, telecommunications service providers and some government departments had joined the scheme, to be followed by other organisations progressively.

4. The Secretary reported the latest progress of implementation of measures undertaken by the telecommunications industry to combat phone and SMS scams, including (a) blocking phone numbers and websites referred by the HKPF; (b) full implementation of Real-name Registration Programme for SIM cards; (c) blocking suspicious calls

from outside Hong Kong; (d) alert for calls from outside Hong Kong; (e) promoting the use of call filtering service/app; and (f) raising public awareness through consumer education activities.

5. Regarding the Subsidy Scheme for Encouraging Early Deployment of 5G, the Secretary reported that there was enthusiastic response from the public and the deadline of application had been extended several times until 31 December 2022. In conclusion, the scheme had successfully promoted early 5G deployments in different sectors to foster innovation and smart city applications, and improved operational efficiency and service quality of various businesses that would contribute to enhancing Hong Kong's overall competitiveness.

**Item 3 Strengthening 5G Infrastructure by Ensuring Availability of Space in and Access to New Buildings for Installation of Mobile Communications Facilities (TRAAC Paper No. 1/2024)**

6. Mr Andrew Lo briefed Members on the implementation progress of the Government's proposal to strengthen 5G infrastructure by ensuring availability of space in and access to new buildings for installation of mobile communications facilities ("MCFs") by mobile network operators ("MNOs") through legislative amendment to the Telecommunications Ordinance ("TO").

7. The Chairman said that the proposal would be an important step to foster Hong Kong's development as a smart city by facilitating the expansion of 5G infrastructure by MNOs. Furthermore, after the implementation of the relevant legislative amendments to the TO, the installation of MCFs would be integrated into the building design in a holistic manner that would minimise any visual impact and concerns on radiation safety from the public.

8. In response to Mr Francis Fong's enquiry on the technical specifications of mobile access facilities ("MAFs") under the proposal, Mr Wilson S Lee replied that a code of practice would be issued by the CA setting out the minimum requirements on space and MAFs for the

installation of MCFs by MNOs in specified buildings (“Mobile CoP”). OFCA was now finalising the Mobile CoP by taking into account views and comments from the relevant stakeholders including the MNOs, building developers and professional bodies, and relevant Government departments. Meantime, the Buildings Department (“BD”) would update its *“Practice Note for Authorized Persons, Registered Structural Engineers and Registered Geotechnical Engineers APP-84”* to specify the design and associated requirements to provide suitable floor space and ancillary facilities (e.g. cable ducts) for the installation of MCFs, by adopting those requirements in the Mobile CoP.

9. Mr Francis Fong enquired about whether the aforementioned requirements had taken into account the future evolution of technology and whether there would be any requirements in relation to the sharing of facilities between Fixed Network Operators (“FNOs”) and MNOs. The Chairman said that, similar to the existing arrangements for FNOs, MNOs would nominate and appoint a coordinator to coordinate all the requirements from MNOs and liaise with the building developers in the initial building design stage. Under such a coordinated arrangement, the new building design should be capable of accommodating the needs of MNOs, including any new requirements due to new technologies. Subject to the liaison between building developers, FNOs and MNOs, the specified buildings concerned could make available a common telecommunications and broadcasting equipment room (“TBE Room”) for shared use by FNOs and MNOs, and the space designated for the use by FNOs and MNOs should be demarcated clearly.

10. Mr T Y Hui enquired whether the access rights to buildings of MNOs in future would be similar to that of FNOs, and whether the commercial agreements between MNOs and building owners regarding the installation of MCFs in existing buildings would be affected. The Chairman said that the scope of the proposal would only cover new or rebuilt specified buildings and the current commercial arrangements for existing buildings would remain unchanged.

11. In response to Mr Kevin Chu’s enquiry on whether the scope of the proposal would cover Government buildings, the Secretary replied that while the legislative amendments were not applicable to Government

buildings, relevant Government departments would ensure that suitable space and facilities would similarly be provided at new Government buildings and public housing estates.

12. In response to enquiries from Mr Kevin Chu and Ms Juliana Wong, the Chairman said that the amended TO would be expected to commence within this year. Building developers would be required to make available space and facilities in those new or rebuilt specified buildings with plans of the building works approved by the Buildings Department six months after the commencement of the Bill.

13. Mr Alex Wong opined that 5G network coverage at lifts should also be improved and asked if the reserved space for the installation of MCFs would include space required for providing coverage at lifts. The Secretary said that the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (“EMSD”) would specify the technical requirements of installation of telecommunications facilities at lifts in the first quarter of 2024 so as to facilitate the provision of mobile network coverage at lifts for both new and existing buildings. The Chairman added that under the proposal, appropriate floor space would be reserved in TBE Room and on rooftop of new buildings for installations of MCFs. Regarding the provision of indoor mobile coverage at lifts, it was anticipated that the relevant equipment would also be installed in the TBE Room. Indoor antennas providing coverage at lifts, if required, would be installed at locations provided by building developers in coordination with MNOs.

14. In response to Mr Ben Li’s enquiry on the undesirable visual impact of outdoor antennae on rooftop of buildings, the Chairman responded that installation of MCFs would be integrated in the building design of new buildings in future. It was anticipated that the concern on visual impact should gradually be improved when more new buildings adopted the holistic design requirement under the proposal. In response to Ms Juliana Wong’s suggestion on enhancing the publicity on radiation safety, the Chairman said that OFCA would continue to proactively disseminate relevant publicity messages to the public through the TV and Radio Announcements in the Public Interest and consumer education activities.

#### **Item 4    New Policy Initiatives to Promote 5G Development (TRAAC Paper No. 2/2024)**

15.     The Chairman invited Mr Eric Yung, Mr Anson Chong and Mr Patrick Man to brief Members on three new policy initiatives to promote 5G development as announced in the 2023 Policy Address, namely, enhancing coverage of 5G networks in rural and remote areas through subsidies (“Rural 5G Scheme”), enhancing the 5G network capacity at major public event venues, and supplying more spectrum to MNOs by auctions.

16.     Regarding the Rural 5G Scheme, Mr Francis Fong enquired about the target rural and remote areas to be covered and the availability of infrastructure in the areas for installation of radio base stations (“RBS”) by MNOs. He also asked about the latest progress of the Subsidy Scheme to Extend Fibre-based Networks to Villages in Remote Areas (“Rural Broadband Scheme”). Mr Eric Yung replied that the Government would take into account the comments from the industry and relevant stakeholders when formulating the details of the Rural 5G Scheme, including the scope and the shared use of subsidised infrastructure by MNOs. The Chairman added that the implementation of the Rural Broadband Scheme was progressing well, providing the necessary infrastructure for other telecommunications services in rural and remote areas, including 5G. The roll-out of three submarine fibre-based cables connecting Lamma Island, Cheung Chau and Peng Chau had been completed, and fibre-based networks had already reached more than 150 villages out of the 235 villages covered by the Rural Broadband Scheme.

17.     In response to Mr Francis Fong’s observation on the quality of mobile services provided by MNOs at major public event venues, the Chairman mentioned that OFCA would proactively coordinate with relevant venue owners/managers for facilitating the enhancement work of 5G network capacity at those venues.

18.     Dr Patrick Tsie enquired about the role of OFCA in the policy initiative for major public event venues and if there would be any target for the minimum network capacity requirement. Mr Wilson S Lee



replied that OFCA would act as a facilitator and work with relevant venue owners/managers and MNOs to enhance 5G network capacity at those venues. Given the high level of competition in the market, it might not be necessary for OFCA to impose any performance requirements such as the download/upload speeds at major public event venues for MNOs to comply.

19. Dr Patrick Tsie further asked if OFCA would mandate MNOs to deploy 5G standalone (“SA”) system instead of non-standalone system to increase the network capacity at the major public event venues. Mr Wilson S Lee replied that in light of the technology-neutral policy, it was entirely the commercial decisions of individual MNOs to decide the technology to deploy for their 5G networks.

20. Ms Juliana Wong enquired whether supporting infrastructure would be provided by the Government under the Rural 5G Scheme, akin to the arrangements for provision of mobile coverage in Covid-19 isolation centres, or whether the funding arrangement would be similar to that of the Rural Broadband Scheme. The Chairman said that the operational details of the Rural 5G Scheme were being formulated at the moment and OFCA would provide more information to the industry in due course.

21. Mr T Y Hui enquired whether OFCA would make available information about the MNOs’ deployment of various frequency bands for 5G, including the refarmed 4G spectrum and the geographical distribution of 5G RBS to the public. The Chairman replied that OFCA was not in a position to release those commercially sensitive information of the MNOs.

22. Mr T Y Hui expressed concern on the slow development of the ecosystem in the 26/28 GHz bands, in particular the availability of customer premises equipment supporting 5G SA mode in that band and asked if OFCA would consider reduction of the licence fee for the LWBS Licence. The Chairman noted the concern and considered that the development of the ecosystem would depend on many factors. As a regulator, OFCA was committed to and had been facilitating 5G development from both the supply and demand sides, including making

available additional spectrum to the market, administering a subsidy scheme for encouraging early deployment of 5G, etc. Regarding LWBS licence fee, the Chairman said that there was no scope for any licence fee reduction.

23. Mr Alex Tsang, Ms Juliana Wong, Mr Kevin Chu and Mr Tin-Lun Or reiterated the MNOs' concerns on various issues related to the spectrum supply of 6/7 GHz band, including the proposed timing of conducting the auction and assigning the spectrum, the possibility of supplying more spectrum to avoid spectrum fragmentation, etc. The Chairman said that the CA would give due consideration to all the views and comments received from the industry in the public consultation on the assignment arrangement of the spectrum in the 6/7 GHz band, and would promulgate its decision in a joint statement to be issued by the CA and the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development in the coming months.

## **Item 5 Any Other Business**

24. The Chairman advised that the next TRAAC meeting would tentatively be held in the second quarter of 2024. Members would be informed of the meeting arrangement nearer the time.

25. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

**Office of the Communications Authority  
February 2024**