

Islandcom thanks the Commission and appreciates the opportunity to respond to this Number Portability Consultative Document. We recognize the Commission's objective and role to ensuring the continuation of effective competition within the Turks and Caicos Islands, and congratulate the Commission in this effort. Islandcom is the very product of the Commission creating a more liberalized and competitive telecommunications sector.

However, it must be recognized by the Commission that Islandcom is the smallest of the providers and, hence, there are certain rate limiting factors that are not necessarily experienced by the other providers. Islandcom having suffered material loss at the outset to move its network within the spectrum band is now constrained as to its capital expenditures. Our recommendations and suggestions of this number portability are from the paradigm of a company balancing and managing its income and expenses. Additionally, considering the socio-economic demographics of the current Turks and Caicos Islands market we are very concerned about the impact of adding a cost that may only be beneficial to an extremely small segment of the population. In other words, the opportunity cost of gaining number portability must be juxtaposed against the other competitive potential factors that could benefit the people of the Turks and Caicos Islands better. While Islandcom realizes that the population size is no longer a determining factor for the introduction of LNP, what is different from the smaller countries that have implemented LNP is their income per capita. According to CIA World Fact-Book Gibraltar's GDP is approximately \$43k in 2006, and the Cayman Islands the only country within the Caribbean to have successfully introduced LNP its GDP is approximately is closer to \$60k. TCI's per capita income is approximately \$11.5k¹

The Commission must recognize that while costs benefit analysis may not be significant in determining the introduction of LNP, it must be part of the consideration. One of the stated reasons behind LNP is the efficient management of numbers but, when the current numbers usage are considered as function of the current population size and even using the most liberal of estimates for its growth, TCI will not encounter any constraints on its numbering system for many decades. Additionally, when examining the Capex cost of implementing a LNP system it is approximately US\$2 million per provider (estimates of Cayman implementation as provided by LIME and Digicel). The total telecommunications market size are approximately 25k subs in TCI. Then if one assumes that 50% of those will port in one year, the cost of porting on the market would be about US\$500 per port. But, if it is assumed that only 2% of the total market will port (which is the avg market estimates) then the cost is \$12,000 per port. The question that must be asked, is this spend that the Commission proposes and possibly to be done within 18 months creating and promoting effective and sustainable competition? Part of an effective competitive market is that it must be efficient, and allocative efficiency must be part of the Commission's determination. Minimally for allocative efficiency to be achieved it must be the

¹ Index mundi country comparison GDP – per capita retrieved from <http://www.indexmundi.com/g/r.aspx?v=67>

marginal cost of implementing LNP must be less than or equal to the marginal benefit derived from having implemented same.

1. NP should be restricted to service provider number portability, specifically porting between mobile to mobile and fixed to fixed numbers only. It is not proposed to offer hybrid fixed to mobile and mobile to fixed NP in TCI. In the case of fixed NP, it is intended to allow porting of fixed numbers within the same local exchange and local call areas only. Please provide your comments and views regarding this proposed approach.
 - a. Ideally, Islandcom would like to see the hybrid version of mobile and fixed number portability but, if the cost of implementing such a system starts becoming even greater than Islandcom would be satisfied with the conventional method of mobile-mobile and fixed-fixed only.
2. The NP process of moving a customer's number from one provider to another provider can be achieved by either Recipient Led (the customer requests porting through the new Recipient operator) or Donor Led (the customer porting approaches their current operator to seek permission to leave). Please state your preference and outline your reasoning?
 - a. As pointed out in the document, "Recipient led porting is viewed as being much more customer friendly and efficient, since the recipient as beneficiary in the porting process is responsible for driving the smooth transfer of number to their network. Consequently, recipient led porting is seen to offer faster porting timeframes, much lower porting rejection rates and simpler porting processes." It appears that recipient led porting is best for the customer.
3. It is proposed that NP is to be managed and operated in TCI through a centralized NP system which will track all TCI numbers, manage the porting process between recipient and donor operators and provides some ancillary administration functionality. This approach enables a standardized porting process to be operated across all TCI providers. Please provide your comments and views regarding this proposed approach.
 - a. Islandcom concern is ensuring the customer has the best experience at the cheapest cost. Given that as the basis and without intimate knowledge of each provider's network it may be that a peer-to-peer solution is a feasible solution.
4. By proposing to adopt the centralized driven NP approach, it is proposed that the successful provider of the NP Clearinghouse will be licenced by the TCI Telecommunications Commission to provide NP services and will be required to contract directly with the licenced TCI operators. Please provide your comments and views regarding this proposed approach.
 - a. A licenced NP clearinghouse would be of concern to Islandcom. Another provider of services entering the market will not be providing these services at cost. It must be that no additional cost burden be placed on the consumer.

5. It is proposed that the NP Clearinghouse may be either operated from TCI or hosted overseas. Please provide your comments and views regarding this proposed approach.
 - a. The Commission recognizes that there are several concerns with either approach. Islandcom's concern is that whatever Clearinghouse option is chosen that the Commission indemnifies the network provider against any loss of customer privacy information.
6. It is proposed that all fixed and mobile traffic to ported and non-ported numbers originated and terminated in the TCI will be directly routed by the originating network to the terminating network using the All Call Query approach. All Call Query direct routing is widely used in NP implementations across the world and is considered to be the most operationally efficient and reliable form of routing in NP jurisdictions. Please provide your comments and views regarding this proposed approach.
 - a. While Islandcom concedes that ACQ is operationally efficient, the concern remains about the cost-benefit analysis of using this methodology. The actual costs are yet to be ascertained with each of the methodologies, and while Onward Routing may be less efficient the cost of implementation may well make up for the inefficiency.
7. Introducing NP is likely to enhance competition and choice in the TCI telecommunications market. Please provide your comments about this statement.
 - a. Islandcom does think competition would be slightly increased with the introduction of LNP, but thinks the current marginal cost outweighs any marginal benefits that may be gained. The Commission is yet to prove that the efficiency gains outweigh the costs.
8. It is proposed that each operator and the successful provider of the NP Clearinghouse will be responsible for their set-up costs to prepare for the implementation and launch of NP in TCI and that such set-up costs shall not be recoverable from consumers or other stakeholders. Please provide a cost estimate of set-up investment your organization is likely to incur in preparing for the possible introduction of NP into TCI, and your comments and views regarding this proposed approach.
 - a. Islandcom will have to provide these costs at a later date.
9. It is proposed that Recipient operators will be allowed to charge customers for porting their numbers at the discretion of each recipient operator. Consumer charging will be reasonable and the TCI Telecommunications Commission reserves the right to set a maximum limit to consumer porting charges. Donor operators are not permitted to charge customers for porting out numbers from their network. Please provide your comments and views regarding this proposed approach.

- a. Given the size of the market and the estimated amount of persons that will be porting about 2%, the Commission would be remiss in not allowing both the recipient and donor operators to be able to charge some fee to these consumers to offset the cost. [The Commission should think of porting like highways everyone gets to pay for the roads, but not until you start to drive on it that one gets to pay the tolls.]

10. It is proposed that donor operators shall be permitted to charge recipient operators for reasonable costs which are directly attributable to the actual efficient processing of porting requests. The TCI Telecommunications Commission reserves the right to set a maximum limit to donor porting charges. TCI Telecommunications Commission reserves the right to set a maximum limit to donor porting charges.
 - a. While it may be that Commission may have to set charges, it should initially allow the carriers to set these charges.

11. Should fixed and mobile NP be implemented and launched at the same time or should the introduction be phased? If you prefer a phased approach, what should the order of the phasing be and why?
 - a. Islandcom is indifferent to how LNP should be implemented.

12. It is proposed that NP will be implemented and launched to the TCI public within 18 months of the date of this consultation. Please provide your comments and views regarding this proposed approach.
 - a. Islandcom does think that this time table is too aggressive for the implementation of LNP. It must be remembered that the Cayman Islands took in excess of 5 years and while lessons can be learned about the implementation Islandcom would propose a more realistic time frame of 36 months.

13. It is proposed that the implementation and preparations for the launch of NP in TCI will be managed by a cross stakeholder working group reporting to the TCI Telecommunications Commission, but the TCI Telecommunications Commission shall be responsible for setting the key NP process and functional details and implementation timeframes etc. Please provide your comments and views regarding this proposed approach.
 - a. Islandcom believes that the Commission should play an integral role in the implementation of cross stakeholder working group. However, it will be important that Commission does not become a micro manager and start dictating to the carriers how the network must be developed. It is a very fine line to walk by the Commission.

14. It is proposed that all customer porting requests will be completed within; 2 working days for mobile NP and 5 working days of fixed NP, from the date of the customer's validated and signed porting request. Please provide your comments and views regarding this proposed approach.
 - a. Islandcom believes the Commission should take into consideration benchmarks, but being cognizant of the local market peculiarities at the same time. Therefore, until the vagaries of the market and providers are ascertained then the Commission should not dictate the time. It is possible that porting could also be improved beyond the 2 or 5 day waiting period.

15. It is proposed that data transfer during the porting process between the recipient and donor operators is minimized to ensure efficient and robust consumer porting experience with minimal unnecessary porting failures or rejections. It is proposed that porting data transfer will be restricted to MSISDN/ number being ported and donor operator. Porting process security and integrity will be provided by independent customer validation for each porting request, by either SMS (for mobile number porting requests) or Interactive Voice Response or PIN (for fixed number porting requests). Please provide your comments and views regarding this proposed approach.
 - a. Islandcom will have to respond to this at a later date.

16. It is proposed that once a customer's porting request has been authorized by the customer and validated by the NP Clearinghouse and passed to the donor operator for approval, the porting request must proceed to completion unless legitimately rejected by the donor operator in compliance with the rejection reasons determined by the TCI Telecommunications Commission. Once a validated porting request has been passed to the donor operator by the NP Clearinghouse it cannot be amended or cancelled by any party. Please provide your comments and views regarding this proposed approach.
 - a. Islandcom does think that this approach is reasonable as it would be both technically and administratively burdensome to do otherwise.

17. It is proposed that outstanding debt cannot be used by a donor operator to reject a customer porting request, provided the customer's account is not barred or suspended from making outbound calls at the time the customer's porting request is processed by the recipient operator. Please provide your comments and views regarding this proposed approach.
 - a. Islandcom disagrees with the Commission on this matter. A customer must settle all outstanding balances before he is allowed to port. Within TCI there are no incentives for customers to pay their debt to the operator they are leaving, so it is important that providers ensure that debts are settled before allowing customers to port.

18. It is proposed that once the customer's validated porting request has been passed to the donor operator by the NP Clearinghouse, the donor operator will not be permitted to contact the customer during the period the porting request is being processed. Once the porting request has been successfully completed, for a period of 60 days, the donor operator will only be permitted to contact the customer for the sole purpose of recovering any outstanding payments or debts and will under no circumstances contact the customer during this period with purpose of soliciting the customer to return to the donor operator's network. Please provide your comments and views regarding this proposed approach.
- a. Islandcom thinks this is reasonable, however if debts are settled before porting there will be no need for any contact with previous customers.
19. It is proposed that customers will not be permitted to port their number to another operator within 60 days of their previous successful porting request. Please provide your comments and views regarding this proposed approach.
- a. Islandcom thinks 60 days is a reasonable amount of time before any further porting is allowed.
20. It is proposed that only real-time porting of customer numbers will be allowed and customers will not be able to defer or delay porting requests to later dates. Please provide your comments and views regarding this proposed approach.
- a. Islandcom thinks that the Commission is correct in its view about only allowing real time porting.
21. It is proposed that the porting process will allow the porting of multiple customer numbers within a single porting request (where "multiple number" is defined as two or more numbers belong to the same customer account), both contiguous and non---contiguous number ranges, to support the efficient porting of multiple number blocks. Please provide your comments and views regarding this proposed approach.
- a. Islandcom does not see the benefits outweighing the costs involved with porting multiple numbers on one porting request.