



Consultation on Draft QoS Policy and Draft QoS Regulatory Framework

Annex 1:

Draft Quality of Service Policy

Consultation Document

6 March 2014

Communications Regulatory Authority

Comments in response are due by 20th April 2014

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1 Introduction

One of the roles of the Communications Regulatory Authority (CRA) is to set criteria for the Quality of Service (QoS) of all telecommunications services (including Internet services) and to monitor the compliance of the providers of telecommunications services holding licenses in Qatar (Service Providers). QoS regulation is one major aspect of telecommunications regulation.

This QoS Policy sets out the basis upon which the QoS offered by Service Providers shall be measured and regulated by CRA. Its goal is to explain the policies, objectives and general approach related to the regulation of QoS in Qatar. Pursuant to this QoS Policy, CRA will issue any decision that is necessary to implement the QoS Policy.

In parallel with this QoS Policy, CRA has developed a comprehensive QoS Regulatory Framework which includes a clear definition of all the QoS parameters (generally called Key Performance Indicators, KPIs) and their respective targets, measurement methods, reporting procedures and templates, compliance and enforcements procedures, etc. The implementation of a comprehensive, modern and effective QoS Regulatory Framework will maximize the benefits to the public in the provision of telecommunications services in Qatar.

This document has taken account of the conclusions of the QoS benchmark¹ (covering 13 countries across the world) and their application to the Qatari market.

2 Legal basis

The following legal provisions provide the basis for the QoS Policy, but not exhaustively.

Article 4(8) of the Telecommunications Law of 2006 (“the Law”) empowers CRA to safeguard the interests of customers, including the setting of tariff regulation and criteria for QoS, and monitoring the terms and conditions of telecommunications services provision.

Article 101 of Executive By-Law 1 of 2009 for the Telecommunications Law (“Executive By-Law”) prescribes that CRA shall set the minimum QoS parameters and may have them amended following consultation with the related Service Providers. CRA may include those criteria in the licenses, or issue them by an order from it, which shall include reporting obligations.

The above-mentioned licenses authorize the Service Providers to provide the specified telecommunications networks and services in accordance with the terms and conditions of the licenses, relevant legislation, and any regulations, including instructions issued by CRA before or after the effective date of the licenses. Accordingly, CRA may from time to time issue additional requirements as part of the terms and conditions of the licenses which are binding on the Service Providers.

The considerations listed above justify without any doubt the need for CRA to set policies with respect to QoS.

¹ See Annex 3: Quality of Service Benchmark Report

CRA considers that the Telecom Law may evolve in the future. In this context, any future amendments to the Telecom Law shall apply to the QoS Policy.

3 Scope of this QoS Policy

This QoS Policy applies to:

1. Authorized and/or Licensed Services Providers holding, inter alia:
 - a) Individual License for the provision of Public Fixed Telecommunications Networks and Services;
 - b) Individual License for the provision of Public Mobile Telecommunications Networks and Services;
 - c) Individual License for the provision of Passive Fixed Telecommunications Networks and Services; or
 - d) Individual License for the provision of Public Satellite Telecommunications Networks and Services;
2. Any Class Licenses (as applicable) by which telecommunications services are offered to the public;
3. All public telecommunications services (including Internet services); and
4. Support functions such as billing and customer care.

Therefore, the scope of this QoS Policy includes, but is not limited to:

1. Fixed wired networks (including fixed passive wired networks), fixed wireless networks, mobile networks and satellite;
2. Access services, voice services, video and multimedia services (including video streaming), SMS services, web browsing, leased lines services (national or international);
3. Wholesale services currently provided or which may be provided in the future. This includes leased lines, interconnection voice services such as call origination or call termination, bitstream services, local loop unbundling, infrastructure access services such duct access and their ancillary services;
4. Customer support;
5. Billing; and
6. Number portability.

For the avoidance of doubt, the following areas are outside the scope of this QoS Policy:

1. The performance of radio equipment and telecommunications terminal equipment; and
2. The quality of sales and retailing of Service Providers.

4 Objectives of this QoS Policy

The objectives of this QoS Policy are:

1. To modernize the regulation of QoS in Qatar in accordance with the Telecommunications Law;
2. To explain CRA's role with respect to QoS regulation;
3. To introduce a greater level of clarity, transparency and certainty with respect to QoS regulation;
4. To set the policies and objectives for the regulation of QoS, which form the basis for the QoS Regulatory Framework; and
5. To move from a regime where QoS regulation is focused on the monitoring of a few Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) listed in Service Providers' licenses when licenses are granted, to a more comprehensive and forward-looking regime focusing on customers' QoS experience and needs.

5 Effective Date

The provisions of this QoS Policy become effective upon its date of issue, except where otherwise indicated.

6 QoS Policy

6.1 General Policy Statements

1. The ultimate beneficiary of QoS regulation shall be the customer. To this end, QoS regulation shall assist end users in choosing their Service Provider by providing transparent, objective and comparable information across Service Providers.
2. QoS regulation shall assist Service Providers to compete on equal terms by providing objective comparison information between Service Providers in the market and therefore to support the transition of the telecommunications market to a higher level of competition.
3. QoS regulation shall enable CRA to better address the state of the market.
4. QoS regulations shall cover all telecommunications services.
5. CRA shall use available and relevant enforcement measures in case a Service Provider is not fully compliant with the QoS regulation. Enforcement measures shall be proportional to the degree of non-compliance.
6. Service Providers shall be encouraged to provide high and continually improving levels of QoS, in line with international best practices, especially in areas where competition pressures are not sufficient to ensure incentives to increase QoS.
7. In order to take into account new services, technology changes, customer expectation changes and competition evolution, QoS regulation provisions shall be regularly updated.
8. Interconnection and access between Service Providers shall allow adequate level of QoS.

6.2 KPI Requirements

The most relevant and widespread tool to regulate QoS is the use and monitoring of QoS indicators generally called Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). KPIs should respect the following requirements:

1. KPIs shall be objective and clearly defined.
2. KPIs shall be comparable and measurable. To be comparable, KPIs shall be based on a common methodology between Service Providers.
3. KPIs shall be easy to understand for end-users by referring as much as possible to services seen by the user and not to internal network technologies.
4. KPIs shall be focused on services and components of the provision of services which have importance for end-users.
5. KPIs shall be published and presented in a way that assists the comparison between the QoS of different Service Providers.
6. Costs incurred by Service Providers to measure KPIs shall be proportionate to the objectives of QoS regulation.
7. KPIs shall as much as possible be based on international standards (such as those published by the ITU² or the ETSI³).
8. KPIs measurements, when based on samples, shall be representative of the main different specificities of Qatar (geographic areas, types of users, etc.).
9. KPIs measurements should be transparent and it should be possible to verify measurements independently.

² International Telecommunications Union

³ European Telecommunications Standards Institute

7 List of definitions and acronyms

Ancillary services	Services that are ancillary to the sale or provision of basic services, which may include co-location services, patching services, duct space, cabling services and in-house-wiring
CRA	Communications Regulatory Authority, State of Qatar
Customer relationship	Service Provider activity aiming at managing the relationship with customer (i.e. managing complaints, providing support, etc.)
ETSI	European Telecommunications Standards Institute
Bitstream services	Service where a fixed wired network operator installs a high-speed access link to a customer's premises (e.g., by installing ADSL equipment in the local access network) and then makes this access link available to third parties, to enable them to provide high speed services to the customer
Fixed passive network	Fixed wired network (see below) which only provides passive services, i.e. services which provide access to a physical medium
Fixed wired network	A telecommunications network that facilitates the conveyance of signals by means of wireline facilities between points at fixed locations on the network
Fixed wireless network	A telecommunications network that facilitates the conveyance of signals by means of wireless facilities between points at fixed locations on the network
ITU	International Telecommunications Union
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
Leased lines	Service contract between a Service Provider and a customer, whereby the Service Provider agrees to deliver a symmetric telecommunications line connecting two or more locations in exchange for a monthly rent
Local Loop Unbundling	Process where the Service Provider operating a local loop makes its local network (the cables that run from customers premises to the exchange) available to other Service Providers.
MMS	Multimedia Messaging Service
Mobile networks or Public Mobile telecommunications network	Any network over which Mobile Services are provided by a holder of a Public Mobile Telecommunications Networks and Services Authorization to the general public on a commercial basis
Number portability	Any service by which a customer can retain any existing number without any difficulty or impairment of the quality of the service or its availability, when changing his location or switching from one Service Provider to another
QoS	Quality of Service
Service Provider	Person that is licensed to provide one or more telecommunications services to the public or licensed to own, establish or operate a telecommunications network to provide telecommunications services to the public. This includes providers of information or content provided using a telecommunications network.
SMS	Short Message Service
Wholesale services	Services provided by one Service Provider to another Service Provider (as opposed to retail services provided by one Service Provider to an end-user)