3rd 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 – 110002

Subject: Consultation Paper on "Review of Mobile Number Portability (MNP) process"

Dear Sir,

This is in reference to your Consultation Paper dated 6th April 2018 on **"Review of Mobile Number Portability (MNP) process".**

As desired, we hereby enclose our response to the questions raised in your above mentioned Consultation Paper.   We hope our response will be given due consideration. We shall be obliged to address any further queries from your good office in this regard.

Thanking you and assuring you of our best attention always.

Yours sincerely,

Satya Yadav
Addl. Vice President – Corporate Regulatory Affairs
Tata Teleservices Limited
And
Authorized Signatory
For Tata Teleservices (Maharashtra) Limited

Encl: As above

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TTL views on TRAI Released Consultation Papers on "Review of Mobile Number Portability (MNP) process"

Tata Teleservices welcomes TRAI's Initiative on "Review of Mobile Number Portability (MNP) process" and seeking views from TSPs, through this consultation paper.

With regards to the specific questions raised in the consultation paper, our responses are enumerated below:

1. **Would it be appropriate that MNPSP be assigned the task of generating and communicating the Unique Porting Code (UPC) to the subscriber intending to port his mobile number as proposed in the consultation paper?**

   And

2. **If you agree to assign the task of UPC generation to MNPSPs, whether the revised process outlined in the consultation paper is appropriate to address the relevant issues being faced in the existing MNP process?**

   And

3. **Do you suggest any other methodology which can address the issues being faced in the existing MNP process? Elaborate your answer.**

   TTL Response:

1. The proposal put forward by TRAI that the UPC be generated by the Mobile Number Portability Service Provider (MNPSP) may be emanating from perception that TSPs are not generating/delivering the UPCs to their subscribers after receiving the request from them. The reason for the same has been stated in the consultation paper that the delay in providing the UPC is due to technical issues with Operation Support System (OSS) of the Donor Operator (DO).

2. In this regard, it is submitted that a TSP is committed to complying with the provisions of the MNP regulation pertaining to the generation of the UPC. TRAI would appreciate the fact that the TSPs have been generating the UPC as prescribed in the regulation.

3. Therefore, the rationale for adopting the proposal of generating the UPC by MNPSP cannot be on account of inaction by the operators.

4. Further, the technical reasons mentioned by TRAI due to which delay in the generation/delivery of the UPC happened in certain cases can also happen in the systems of the MNPSP and hence the same cannot be the reason to shift the UPC generation from TSP to MNPSP. Thus, we submit that the generation of the UPC should remain with the operators.

5. If TRAI amends the Regulation and entrust the MNPSP for the generation of UPC after performing certain checks as described in Para 2.18 of the consultation paper, we request that operators should be given at least 6 months from the date of notification of the amendment in order to implement the changes in the system. Also, TSPs should not be asked to compensate or bear the cost of adopting this process of UPC generation by the MNPSPs. This cost should also not be recovered through the per port transaction charge.

6. On the issue of rejection of the MNP request on various grounds, we would like to submit as below:

   a. Occurrence of human errors is higher in case of UPC mismatch. There are two major reasons for the human errors i) the executive of RO enters wrong code ii) UPC expires, i.e. MNP request reaches to the DO after expiry of UPC due to delayed initiation of MNP process by the subscriber or the executive of the RO. The percentage of rejections owing to these two grounds is quite significant and shouldn't be seen as a reason to change the MNP process.

   b. The MNP Systems deployed by the operators enables the DO to verify the content of the UPC received from the RO through the MNPSPs. This process doesn't have any human intervention and is working well since the launch of the MNP service.

   However, if TRAI modifies the regulations and shift the UPC generation from DO to MNPSP, then MNPSP should be responsible for checking the rejection reasons based on the UPC content i.e. UPC mismatch and UPC expiry as given in Para 2.21 of the Consultation Paper.

4. How can KYC information available with DO be verified during the MNP process to avoid fraudulent porting? Please elaborate.

TTL Response:

1. The issue of verification of the KYC information has been discussed on many occasions in the past. Options e.g. Name, Date of Birth, Addresses have been considered as information which can be verified during the MNP process to avoid fraudulent porting. However, the information e.g. name, address etc. depends on how it has been captured by a particular

operator, the likeliness of matching of this information between the database of DO and RO is not high. Further, any mismatch of such information (even for the same subscriber) will create false fraudulent cases and rejection of MNP request under these grounds will become substantial. Similarly, in case of Date of Birth (DOB), a large number of old subscribers have not provided their DOB since it was not a mandatory field at that time and hence DOB also cannot be used effectively to verify the KYC information available with DO and RO.

2. Furthermore, the cases of fraudulent porting are minuscule in comparison to the overall porting. Also, with the collaborative efforts of the operators and TRAI/DoT, these cases get resolved in a timely manner.

3. Notwithstanding the above, if TRAI wishes to prescribe certain mechanism to curb the issue of fraudulent porting, then providing the Aadhar number of the subscriber to the DO to verify the customer's information will be the most suitable option to avoid fraudulent porting. In this case, the RO, along with the MNP request can also pass on the Aadhar number of the subscriber to the DO which in turn verifies the same with the Aadhar number of that subscriber available in its data base. In case of miss-match, DO can revert back to RO about the same and that MNP request can be discarded.

5. What are the challenges in implementing the proposed MNP processes/framework on the part on the part of stakeholders' viz TSP (as DO and RO) and MNPSP? Elaborate your answer.

TTL Response:

Implementing the proposed MNP process will be incremental in operation cost. And so will involve high level of implementation of integration. Also real time connectivity may a roadblock.

6. Whether MNPSP should be compensated towards the cost of generation and delivery of UPC to the subscriber through SMS? If yes, what mechanism can be adopted?

TTL Response:

In this regard, we would like to submit that the Per Port Transaction Charge of Rs. 4 which the MNPSP gets from the RO is sufficient enough to cover the cost of generation and delivery of UPC to the subscriber through SMS.

7. What would be appropriate mechanism to reinforce the accountability and role of MNPSP in the proposed scenario?

TTL Response:

The existing license conditions for the MNPSP don't envisage the proposed MNP process and hence there will be a requirement to amend the MNPSP license conditions by DOT. Then the scope of work for MNPSP will define the roles and responsibilities.

8. **What could be mandatory obligations on part of the MNPSP?**

TTL Response:

1. In case TRAI wants to go ahead with the proposal of UPC generation and checks w.r.t. UPC content by MNPSP then, TRAI should prescribe a detailed Service Level Agreement (SLA) for each task that the MNPSP is required to perform as per the proposal.

2. Also, in case of issues pertaining to non-generation of UPC or any other issues pertaining to MNP process, customers will approach the DO and hence there has to be a complaint redressal mechanism which should be applicable on the MNPSP along with the timelines to redress the complaints.

9. **In the event of large scale disruption or sudden shutdown of network, what could be the appropriate alternative mechanism to ensure delivery of UPC and completion of porting process?**

TTL Response:

1. In this regard, it is submitted that TRAI should allow the bulk porting of subscribers from one operator to another operator in case the former operator is shutting down its services. Following steps can be adopted in this bulk porting process:

   a. Operator A (who is closing the services) will choose one of the exiting TSP (Operator B) as per their mutual commercial agreement.

   b. Operator A will inform their subscribers through advertisement, SMS etc. regarding the closure of service and the bulk porting facility of their numbers to the Operator B.

   c. Operator A will generate the UPCs for all of its subscribers impacted due to the closure of its services by using additional Alphabets as operator code which have not been allocated to any existing operators.

d. Operator A will then provide the details of its subscribers along with the generated UPC to operator B which will then process the numbers for porting and will update the subscribers about the status of the process.

e. Also, to ensure that the subscriber can still exercise its right to choose the operator of his choice, the date of activation can remain same in the system of operator B so that if any subscriber wants to move to any other operator, he can do so without waiting for 90 days period.

The above process will not only ensure the continuity of services, but will also facilitate the smooth transition of the subscriber from one operator to another and also ensure that the subscribers can still choose its operator.

10. **(a) Do you agree with the process for transfer of the prepaid balance to the subscriber's account as described in the consultation paper? What changes do you envisage in licensing/regulatory framework to enable the provision? Please elaborate your answer.**

(b) If the above process is not agreeable, please suggest alternate mechanism.

And

11. **What should be regulatory requirements to monitor efficacy of the provision of transferring the unspent pre-paid balance? Please elaborate your answer.**

TTL Response:

1. TTL do not agree with the proposal to transfer the pre-paid balance to the subscriber's account at the time of porting from one operator to another operator.

2. There are few points which should be considered by the Authority before exploring the option of prepaid balance transfer from DO to RO in case of porting of mobile numbers. Main points have been highlighted below: -

    i. There is need to do a cost-benefit analysis between the cost of transfer of the amount vis-à-vis the actual balance amount which would be transferred in each case. Most of the subscribers are aware of the fact that in case of porting, their pre-paid balance will get forfeited and hence they utilize most of the amounts before making the port request.

    ii. Hence, there is no apparent benefit which would be achieved by mandating the balance transfer of prepaid account from DO to RO in case of porting.

iii. TRAI in this consultation paper has highlighted the option that keeping aside some threshold value of prepaid balance towards meeting additional administrative expenses for transfer of unspent balance; the balance amount can be transferred/ refunded to the subscriber.

iv. In this regard, it is submitted that it would be difficult to explain to the subscribers regarding the deduction of that threshold value before initiating the transfer and would increase the consumer complaints. Further, since the transfer of the balance will require efforts from both DO and RO, some of the pertinent issues such as which entity will deduct the amount and how it would be distributed amongst the DO and RO needs to be answered.

v. It is pertinent to mention that Operators have been requesting TRAI to consider their request in case of post-paid refund to put a threshold value below which operators shouldn't be asked to refund the amount since the refund process itself cost more than the actual amount to be refunded. However, TRAI has not entertained such requests of the operators, may be due to the reason of discrimination and unfairly treatment of some of the subscribers. Thus, in view of the same, threshold value cannot be defined for the prepaid balance transfer as well. Further, without recovering the cost to transfer the amount; it would be unjust on the operators to mandate them for transfer the balance amount for each subscriber.

vi. One important factor in the balance transfer is to consider the core balance amount equal to the exact monetary value which the DO will transfer to RO and in turn RO will credit the same amount in the account of the subscriber. However, in cases where the DO has given extra talk time to the subscribers, an anomaly would occur in the process.

12. In the proposed scenario of reduced MNP timelines, should the validity of the UPC be reviewed? If yes, what should be the period of validity of the UPC? Please elaborate your answer with justification.

TTL Response:

No. TTL is not in favour of any change in the existing process which is working fine.

13. Whether it would be appropriate to review the existing structure of UPC? Please elaborate your answer with justification.

And

14. If you agree to above, does proposed structure as discussed above adequately serve the purpose or would you suggest any other mechanism? Please elaborate your answer with justification.

TTL Response:

1. In this regard, it is submitted that the identification of the mobile number as postpaid is being done easily by the operators and changes in the UPC content for identification of the number as postpaid is not required.

2. However, if TRAI feels that it would enhance the effectiveness of the MNP process in case the identification of the postpaid number is be done through UPC content, then we are in agreement with the proposed structure for UPC content for both non-corporate and corporate subscribers.

15. Should the provision of withdrawal of porting request be done away with the revised MNP process? Please state your answer with justification.

And

16. What additional changes do you envisage in the MNP Regulations? Elaborate your suggestions.

TTL Response:

1. Provision of choice to the subscriber is the essence of the MNP and hence the choice of not going ahead with the MNP request should also be given equal importance. Thus, the option of withdrawal of porting request should always be there for a subscriber. Doing away with this process is restricting the subscribers from exercising his right of choice.

2. We would further like to submit that the existing provisions of withdrawal of porting request are inconvenient for the customer. Also, in the existing process the Donor Operator (DO) does not get any information regarding initiation of withdrawal request nor about the action taken on it by the RO. Thus, TSPs as DO were facing difficulties to redress the consumer's complaints, for cases of non-cancellation of porting request.

3. In view of the above issues, we would like to propose an SMS based process for withdrawal of the porting request which is customer-friendly, transparent and easy to implement.

4. We request the Authority to continue with the option to withdraw the MNP request.

17. Due to the difficulty envisaged, should the subscriber be allowed to reconnect his mobile number even after number return process is initiated? If yes, what could be the criteria? . Please elaborate suitable method.

TTL Response:

Yes, the reconnection should be allowed within 60days and MNPSP DBs to be updated accordingly.

18. Should the MNPSPs be allowed to charge for the ancillary services such as number return and bulk database download by TSPs? Please provide your comments with justification.

TTL Response:

TTL is not in favour of the same and there should not be transactional cost every-time.

19. Would the new technologies, such as blockchain, be helpful for facilitating faster and transparent MNP process? What can be the possible advantages and challenges? Please elaborate.

TTL Response:

TTL is not in favour of this.

20. If there are any other issues(s) relevant to the subject, stakeholders are requested to offer comments along with explanation and justifications.

TTL Response:

NA