



**GSM ASSOCIATION**

**CODE OF CONDUCT**

**FOR INFORMATION ON INTERNATIONAL  
ROAMING RETAIL PRICES  
IN THE ARAB REGION**

## I. INTRODUCTION

The GSM Association (GSMA) is the global trade association for the world's leading mobile operators. The Association works to promote, enhance and protect the interests of the GSM mobile operator community worldwide and pursues the goal of making wireless work globally. As a global trade association, the GSMA aims to accelerate the implementation of collectively identified, commercially prioritized operator requirements and to take leadership in representing the global GSM mobile operator community with one voice on a wide variety of issues nationally, regionally and globally.

Membership consists of more than 690 GSM mobile phone operators across 213 countries and territories of the world providing GSM, GPRS and 3GSM services. In addition, more than 170 manufacturers and suppliers support the Association's initiatives as associate members. The Association's members serve more than 2 billion customers across 213 countries and territories.

## II. OBJECTIVES

The GSM Association has developed this voluntary Code of Conduct for operators in the Arab region for the purpose of enhancing the clarity of international retail roaming price information for consumers. Operators adhering to this Code of Conduct aim to respond to consumer demand in the Arab region for greater transparency in international retail roaming prices.

The objective of this Code of Conduct is to provide greater consistency and clarity to the range of information available to consumers on charges and available services, so that when away from their home network they are able to make better informed decisions regarding: network roaming choice (network availability), charges, availability of data services, prepay, specific value-added services (such as voice mail, access to customer care, recharge of pre-paid, breakdown service, travel service, medical helpline etc.) coverage and information on how to use roaming services in general.

The delivery of retail roaming information to customers via the customer care services of the home operator is believed to be the most effective tool as it is the easiest and most commonly used by the customer. Increasingly customer care services rely on web-based roaming information. It follows that the Internet is also considered a very effective means to communicate information given its broad use and accessibility across the (Arab) world. Other possible options also exist to provide information on roaming and include SMS, MMS, fax on demand, e-mails, a roaming guide, information material at points of border entry/exit (like airports), a leaflet accompanying the bill and information via retail outlets.

Providing customers with up-to-date roaming prices is important for any operator. This Code of Conduct aims to enhance transparency by making the best possible information

about those prices available to the customer. It must be noted that there are also alternative methods used for providing more transparency in roaming prices. Many operators have been introducing new tariff schemes that aim to simplify roaming tariffs.

### III. MEASURES TO PROVIDE INFORMATION TO CUSTOMERS

GSM operators adopting the Code of Conduct will implement at least Measures 1, 2 and 3. Operators are furthermore encouraged to implement any additional measures listed under point 4.

The quoted tariffs should be updated according to the media used (customer service, website, etc.) at least once a month if changes occur. If changes do not occur, tariffs should be updated as soon as they have changed. Where published tariffs are indicative, this should be clearly indicated to the consumer.

Any additional measures, other than those set out below, that operators want to apply and which contribute to the aims of the Code of Conduct are also promoted by this Code.

#### **(1) Information via the customer service number of the home operator**

The HPMN customer service branch will provide the roaming customer on request the following information on voice and SMS services:

- Tariff per minute of a call to a fixed number within the visited country;
- Tariff per minute of a call to a mobile number within the visited country [if different from call to fixed number];
- Tariff per minute of a call to a fixed number in the home country;
- Tariff per minute of a call to a mobile number in the home country [if different from a call to a fixed number in the home country];
- Tariff of receiving a call on the visited network when applicable;
- Tariff of sending and receiving an SMS and MMS on the visited network when applicable;
- Information on which charging unit (minutes or seconds) applies and whether set up charges are applicable;
- Numbers and, where appropriate, website addresses of customer care and information services of the visited network (for instance directory services);

- Information on peak and off peak times, if appropriate, for each roaming partner;
- Information on tariffs for conditional call forwarding and related tariffs, when applicable;
- Information about availability to toll free numbers by visitors and related tariffs when applicable, like emergency numbers;
- Where available, information on, and any additional charges for prepay roaming and value-added services such as short codes (excluding premium services).

Tariffs should state whether they are inclusive or exclusive of VAT. If VAT is excluded the rate should be indicated.

Tariffs should be provided in the currency of the home network operator, with a risk margin related to the added foreign currency exchange rate.

## **(2) Information via the Internet site of the home operator**

On the operator's website a clearly visible link shall be provided to a section containing roaming information. Alternatively, there can be a general link to tariff information on the home page. Roaming information should then be a clearly labeled sub-category.

Information to be provided on the website will be the same as for customer care [see section III (1)]. Operators will seek to provide the most complete information possible on their website according to the specificity of their market and customer needs.

The website that quotes the operator's roaming tariff information should be formatted in such a way that customers are able to print all the necessary information.

Operators should indicate that for information on geographical worldwide roaming coverage, customers can access the GSM Association world website at the following web address: <http://www.gsmworld.com>, or, alternatively, on the website of the operator.

It is recommended that operators include a section of most frequently asked questions and answers related to access to roaming services on their website with the following set of questions as a minimum depending on the customer's subscription type:

- Can I travel and use international roaming services as soon as I buy my phone?
- If not how can I activate the international roaming service?
- Do you offer the same services, whilst roaming, as I can access in the country where I have my subscription?
- Do I need a new phone (i.e. tri-band) to travel to certain countries?

### **(3) Information via SMS**

Since an SMS message can only contain a limited amount of characters, the operators should use SMS for providing only basic roaming information. As a minimum, operators should indicate the link where roaming information is available on their website and/or should provide the phone number of their customer service .

Operators who wish to provide more detailed information are encouraged to do so.

### **(4) Information via other measures**

There are several other means of providing information with respect to roaming prices to customers. The possible choice of one or more of the following measures should be made by the operator according to the value of the measure to the end user. It should be noted that these measures will generally be targeting specific niches in the market. The effort should be proportionate to the perceived need of the end customer.

- **Information via retail outlets**

The operator should ensure that retail outlets that are under the direct control of that operator are able to provide the means for customers to access all the information mentioned under section III 1.

Operators should endeavor to ensure that independent retailers have available, at least, the information where a customer is able to obtain precise roaming information. In particular, retail outlets should have available the customer service number of the operator and the address of the web site.

- **Information via printed material**

Operators should provide information on roaming via different printed means of their choice such as leaflets, brochures, roaming guides, billboards, etc. This information could be communicated in different ways such as including or attaching such information in or to the bill, at border points of entry/exit, in retail outlets or by any other means that operators consider appropriate.

- **Information at Airports, Borders etc.**

Operators should provide information at airports and other ports of entry on billboards and/or posters with customer service details and/or SMS short codes that can provide customers with tariff information.

#### **IV. IMPLEMENTATION**

This Code of Conduct is intended to reflect best practice and should therefore increase consumers' awareness of international retail roaming issues. This Code of Conduct serves as a statement of the current intentions of GSM Association Members in the Arab region, drawn up for the benefit of customers, in order to facilitate a clearer understanding by such customers of international retail roaming prices and does not create any legally binding obligations. This Code of Conduct is non-binding in accordance with Article 15 section 4 of the Regulations of the GSM Association.

A list of operators who agree to comply with this Code of Conduct will be maintained by GSM Association and will be available as an annex to the Code of Conduct on the GSM Association website: [www.gsmworld.com](http://www.gsmworld.com) (hereafter referred to as 'the List').

#### **V. COMPLIANCY MECHANISM**

Operators will verify their compliance with the "Code of Conduct for Information on International Roaming Retail Prices", through a self-certification statement on their website or on other relevant information material.

The code requires that each signatory reconfirms to the GSMA on an annual basis that they have fully complied with its terms throughout the previous year and confirm that they intend to continue to comply for the forthcoming year

**GSM Association**

**December 2006**

**LIST OF SIGNATORIES: (As per 17/08/07 - In progress )**

Areeba Sudan  
Areeba Syria  
Batelco, Bahrain  
du, United Arab Emirates  
Etisalat, United Arab Emirates  
Fastlink Jordan  
JAWWAL, Palestine  
Qtel, Qatar  
MobileCom, Jordan  
Mobily, Etihad Etisalat, Saudi Arabia  
Mobinil, Egypt  
Mobitel, Sudan  
MIC1, Lebanon.  
MIC2 - MTC Touch, Lebanon  
MTC Vodafone Bahrain  
MTC Kuwait  
MTC Atheer, Iraq  
Omani Qatari Telecommunications Company SAOC, Oman  
Oman Mobile Telecommunications Company L.L.C, Oman  
Orascom Telecom Algérie – Djezzy, Algeria  
Saudi Telecom Company, Saudi Arabia  
SpacetelYemen, Yemen  
Syriatel, Syria  
Tunisiana, Tunisia  
Umniah, Jordan  
Vodafone, Egypt  
Wataniya, Kuwait