



TANZANIA COMMUNICATIONS REGULATORY AUTHORITY

National Roaming Guidelines

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NATIONAL ROAMING GUIDELINES

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Approved by Dr. Jabiri K. Bakari	Title Director General	Signature 	Date 26-03-2024
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PART I PRELIMINARY PROVISIONS

1.0 Citation and Commencement

These guidelines shall be cited as National Roaming Guidelines, 2024 and shall come into force on the date of signature of the Director General.

2.0 Interpretations

For the purpose of these guidelines, unless the context requires otherwise: -

“Authority” means the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA) established under the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority Act No.12 of 2003;

“Communications services” means any services the purpose or effect of which is to enable or facilitate electronic or postal communication;

“Customer” means any person who obtains or seeks to obtain goods or services of any kind from a person undertaking activities pursuant to the Act and includes subscribers;

“Home Network” means a mobile network to which a customer has a subscription;

“Licensee” means a person licensed by the Authority to provide any electronic communication, postal or courier services;

“Mobile Communications services” means communications services provided to customers by licensed mobile network operators. The services include making and receiving voice calls, sending and receiving SMS messages, sending and receiving data and/or access to other electronic communications services;

“National Roaming” means the ability for a subscriber/customer to continue to access the mobile communications services including voice calls, SMS, data and other VAS services while outside of their home network coverage within the same country using the network of another licensed mobile service provider;

“Roaming” means the ability of subscribers/customers to continue to access the mobile communications services including voice calls, SMS, data and other VAS services while outside of their home network coverage using the network of another mobile service provider;

“Roaming Provider” also called host operator, means a licensed operator who provides roaming services to subscribers from the roaming seeker;

“Roaming Seeker” means a licensed operator whose customers seek to have national roaming services with another licensed operator;

“Service Provider” means a licensed Telecommunications Service provider;

“SMS” means short messaging service;

“Subscriber” means a person who receives an applications service or a content service under an agreement with or pursuant to terms and conditions established by an applications service licensee or a content service licensee;

“**VAS**” means Value Added Services;

“**Visited Network**” means a mobile network on which a customer is currently roaming and that is outside the boundaries of the home network; and

“**Would-be Roaming Provider**” means an operator to whom a request is made for the national roaming services.

3.0 Introduction

Mobile communications services have today become an integral part of everyday life and increasingly play key roles in various aspects of the socio-economic development of the country. Every day, consumers rely on mobile phones to communicate, make transactions and access various social and financial services delivered through mobile cellular networks.

The Tanzania Communications Authority (TCRA) is responsible for regulating electronic and postal communications in Tanzania. In carrying out its regulatory functions, TCRA has a duty to promote the availability of regulated services to all consumers including low income, rural and disadvantaged consumers. In exercising the powers conferred upon the Authority under section 5 of the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Act No. 12 of 2003, TCRA issues licences to service providers with various terms and conditions depending on the type of the licence. Among of the conditions specified is the rollout obligations by the licensees so as to achieve nationwide coverage.

TCRA has continued to work with the Universal Communications Service Access Fund (UCSAF) and the licensed operators to ensure that universal service obligations are achieved. Despite these efforts, there are still challenges on limited infrastructure and access to electricity, thus leaving some of the areas in the country to remain unserved or underserved.

In order to ensure availability of communication services in unserved/underserved areas where there is a limited network coverage for some operators, national roaming has been identified as one of the useful measures to extend availability of services to customers, whenever there is a network coverage deployed by any operator. This form of network sharing provides more options to the customers and therefore enhances competition.

4.0 Objectives of the Guidelines

4.1 Main Objective

The main objective of these guidelines is to provide the procedures for the implementation of national roaming services on a fair, transparent and economically efficient basis for the benefit of consumers, service providers and the telecom sector in the country.

4.2 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the guidelines are as follows: -

- i. To promote service accessibility for consumers of mobile communications services;
- ii. To encourage active infrastructure sharing;
- iii. To ensure that communications services are accessible to subscribers beyond the network coverage of their home network; and
- iv. To promote efficient use of network facilities and other resources.

5.0 Scope

The scope of these guidelines shall apply to all instances where roaming services are required within the United Republic of Tanzania.

6.0 Applicability

These guidelines shall apply to holders of National Network Services Licence issued by the Authority with obligations to provide mobile communication services in the United Republic of Tanzania.

PART II TECHNICAL REQUIREMENT

7.0 General Requirements

- i. The national roaming shall be allowed only in underserved/unserved areas where the roaming seekers have not deployed their network;
- ii. The national roaming in urban areas will be implemented upon TCRA approval;
- iii. National roaming services shall not be provided on signal strength basis;
- iv. Network parameters exchange shall be as per GSM 1R.21 as modified for national roaming or any other standardized format; and
- v. Roaming providers shall be required to redesign their networks to accommodate additional traffic for the duration of the National Roaming Agreement.

7.1 Quality of Service

The roaming provider shall ensure that the quality for services provided to roaming subscribers complies with the requirement of the Electronic and Postal Communications (Quality of Service) Regulations.

7.2 Network Display Name

The Public Land Mobile Network (PLMN) name displayed on the mobile phone of a roamer shall consist of the both the names of the home and visited networks.

7.3 Subscriber Charging

There shall be no additional charges to national roaming subscribers. The subscribers shall be charged at the same tariffs as the tariffs of the home network and access to emergency services shall be free of charge.

7.4 Billing

The generation of Call Data Records (CDRs) shall be in accordance with the internationally accepted format to facilitate billing of national roaming services. The CDRs shall be collected and rated from the home seeker network then sent to the roaming provider for validation. The shared CDRs shall enable monthly billing on usage, fraud detection and usage monitoring.

7.5 Roaming Services

Subject to any conditions or restrictions set in the national roaming agreements, the roaming provider shall provide the following services to a roamer among others: -

- i. Voice services;
- ii. SMS services;
- iii. Data services;
- iv. Machine-to-machine (M2M) communications
- v. Recharge (Prepaid);
- vi. USSD services; and
- vii. Premium Short Codes.

The roaming subscribers shall be denied services that are not offered by their home network.

7.6 Call Routing

Outgoing calls from roaming subscribers shall be routed by the Visited Network based on the dialled number as follows: -

- i. Calls to subscribers in the visited networks shall be routed back to home network for onward routing toward destination;
- ii. Calls to networks other than the visited, shall be routed to interconnect trunks to the respective operator;
- iii. International calls may be routed via the home network for termination; and
- iv. Calls to emergency numbers and other national location-based services shall be routed to the relevant nearest service centre in the visited network.

7.8 Relationship with Subscribers

- i. The roaming provider shall neither directly nor through its affiliates, advertise, solicit business, market its products and/or services nor otherwise send any unwanted messages to the roaming subscribers. This includes welcome messages or notifications;
- ii. All customer support including service complaints shall be handled by the home network; and
- iii. All requests for subscriber information by relevant legal and regulatory authorities shall be the responsibility of the home network.

7.8 Fault Management

The home and visited networks shall take ownership and ensure prompt resolution of the faults. When required, the root cause analysis shall be provided for record purposes.

PART III PROCEDURES

8.0 Procedure for National Roaming

- i. The service providers shall request and negotiate national roaming agreements with each other on bi-lateral and non-discriminatory terms;
- ii. The service provider requesting national roaming services shall send a written request with relevant details to the roaming provider;
- iii. The roaming provider shall confirm receipt of the roaming request with a roaming seeker within seven (7) calendar days of receipt thereof;
- iv. The roaming provider shall notify the roaming seeker of its approval or rejection of the roaming request in line with the procedure stated under section 8.1 and 8.2;
- v. Where the roaming provider fails to respond to the roaming seeker of its approval or rejection of the roaming request within thirty (30) calendar days, the roaming seeker shall notify the Authority in writing, and the Authority shall take necessary steps in relation to the roaming request.

8.1 Approved Roaming Requests

- i. The roaming provider shall notify the roaming seeker in writing of its acceptance within thirty (30) calendar days from the receipt of the roaming request;
- ii. The parties shall thereafter enter into a non-disclosure agreement and commence negotiations of the terms of the national roaming agreement;
- iii. The parties shall conclude negotiations on the terms of the roaming agreement and execute the same within 60 calendar days from receipt of the roaming request;
- iv. The parties shall ensure that the national roaming agreement is submitted to the Authority for noting within 14 days after concluding negotiations. Any subsequent changes in the agreement shall be submitted to the Authority;
- v. The Authority shall reserve the right to request for additional information or amendments made on the relevant parts of the national roaming agreement in order to verify the requirement to the terms of the agreements and any other relevant legislation or regulatory instruments;
- vi. All negotiations for national roaming shall be done in good faith. Neither party shall: -
 - (a) Obstruct or delay negotiations;
 - (b) Refuse to provide information relevant to the negotiations including information necessary for the execution of the agreement; and
 - (c) Refuse to designate a proper representative to expedite the negotiation.
- vii. Roaming services shall commence within ninety (90) calendar days from receipt of the roaming request.

8.2 Rejected Roaming Requests

- i. The roaming provider shall notify in writing, the roaming seeker and the Authority, of its refusal within fifteen (15) calendar days of receipt of the roaming request;
- ii. The rejection of the roaming requests shall include the reasons for such rejection;
- iii. The roaming provider shall be required to provide proof of reasons for rejections to the Authority; and
- iv. Where the reasons for the rejections are not justifiable, the Authority may direct the roaming provider to accept the request for roaming services and proceed with negotiations as required in section 8.1 above.

PART IV RESPONSIBILITIES

9.0 Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the stakeholders involved in the national roaming services shall be as follows: -

9.1 Responsibilities of the Roaming Provider

The roaming provider shall: -

- i. Ensure that their networks have enough capacity for supporting subscribers of the roaming seeker and consider capacity for future expansion in the designated areas;
- ii. Not to alter the technical characteristics of the services offered in such a way to make them differ from the technical characteristics of the same services provided to its home subscribers unless otherwise agreed under the roaming agreement;
- iii. Facilitate to make quick and effective national roaming implementation to avoid delay in providing roaming services;
- iv. Comply with the requirement of the Electronic and Postal Communications (Quality of Services) Regulations while providing roaming services;
- v. Not to connect, block, discontinue or otherwise impair national roaming services without approval from the Authority;
- vi. Inform the roaming seeker and the Authority on major network failures or problems that affect national roaming services;
- vii. Ensure that storage, treatment and transfer of personal data of end users is in line with the relevant laws and regulations; and
- viii. Ensure adequate security measures are deployed to protect roaming subscribers in their networks.

9.2 Responsibilities of a Roaming Seeker

The roaming seeker shall: -

- i. Promptly honour all payment dues prescribed in the agreement;
- ii. Provide transparency to and safeguards for the roaming services; and
- iii. Ensure that the roaming services comply with the requirement of the Electronic and Postal Communications (Quality of Services) Regulations.

9.3 Responsibilities of the Authority

The Authority shall: -

- i. Keep records of all signed national roaming agreements between the service providers to ensure compliance with laws, regulations and guidelines;
- ii. Keep records of all amendments made to the roaming agreements between the service providers;
- iii. Assess the level of service quality provided to roaming subscribers;
- iv. Prevent any anti-competitive practices by the service providers while providing roaming services;
- v. Carry out investigations on the reasons provided for rejected requests for roaming; and
- vi. Ensure compliance of the service providers to other relevant laws and regulations.

10.0 Dispute Resolution

Where a dispute arises during negotiation before conclusion of the agreement, during the subsistence of such agreement or after termination, parties shall endeavour to amicably resolve the issues. When a resolution is not reached, the Authority shall adjudicate all disputes referred on a case-by-case basis.

11.0 Amendment

These guidelines shall be reviewed regularly to ensure continued relevance and accommodate developments in the communication sector.

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