



Public Utilities
Regulatory Authority
Equity in development

GUIDELINES

FOR

SHORT CODE APPLICATIONS

MAY 2015

94, Kairaba Avenue, P. O. Box 4230 Bakau, The Gambia
Tel: (220) 4399601 / 4399606 Fax: (220) 4399905
E.mail: pura@pura.gm Website: www.pura.gm

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1 PREAMBLE

The Gambia Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA) is the regulatory Authority established under the PURA Act 2001.

In accordance with Part VIII of the Information and Communications Act 2009, PURA is mandated to control the assignment of all national numbering resources and ensure that adequate numbers and numbering ranges are provided for all publicly available information and communications services.

Short Code Numbering resources that are used for providing communications service are scarce and finite national resources, hence it is in the national interest to administer them efficiently. It is therefore important for applicant to familiarize themselves with the PURA's Short Codes application process.

Short Codes which have become popular for providing Value Added Services are numbers that are shorter than the ITU-T E.164 format which for The Gambia is currently 7 digits long.

The purpose of these Guidelines is to ensure that numbering resources are efficiently and continuously managed. This will enable the Authority to also create equal access, transparency, fair competition and ensure an acceptable level of customer protection.

2 DEFINITIONS

Number:- a string of decimal digits that unambiguously identifies an end user of a given content

Numbering Plan:- means the method put in place for the management and administrating numbering resources structured in a standard format to provide unique telephone addresses and to provide identities to user to network interface, services or end user.

Premium Rate Numbers:- these are numbers that are used to offer services that generally cost higher than the normal local call rate and it is the caller that pays the bills. Part of the bill may be paid to the network provider and also the service provided

Shared Cost Numbers:- are numbers that are used in an intermediate level of telephone call billing, when the charge for calling a particular phone number is partially, but not entirely paid for by the recipient or the caller

The Act:- refers to the PURA Act 2001 and Information and Communications Act 2009

The Authority:- The Gambia Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA)

Toll Free: allows users to call an organisation using a unique free number without paying for the call charges. The call charges are however paid for by the one offering the service.

Value Added services:- non-core telecommunications services beyond the normal voice and data services on the telecommunications services

Any other definitions are as defined in the ACT.

3 SHORT TITLE, EXTENT AND COMMENCEMENT

These Guidelines shall be:

- a. referred to as the Guidelines for Short Codes Applications;
- b. applicable to applicants for Short Codes
- c. regulated under the enforcement Regulations 2010
- d. come into force with effect from **31st May 2015**.

4 OBJECTIVES OF THE GUIDELINES

The objective of these Guidelines is to ensure that Short Codes applicants are well informed of the Short Codes process in The Gambia and:

- to provide a regulatory framework for the efficient and continuous administration of the numbering resources
- to ensure equitable access, fair competition and protection of the customer
- to formulate minimum standard of practice for service providers in the use of Short Codes and to provide procedure for the provision of these services.
- that short Codes can be accessed from the networks of all operators in the country;

5 SCOPE AND OPERATIONS OF THE GUIDELINES

The Authority's regulatory scope shall include:

- Public and Private Communication Network Operators
- Government and non-governmental agencies with interest in Short Codes numbering resources
- Network facilities Providers
- Applications Services Value Added Service Providers
- Entities with interest in acquiring numbering resources

6 KEY PRINCIPLES

The principles set out below provide the extensive framework for the administration of Short Codes and other associated numbering resources used to offer a variety of communication service, having due regard to public policy. The principles are outlined as follows:

- The Authority is the sole body mandated to assign and regulate Short Codes.
- Numbering resources assigned by the Authority are not transferable.
- The administrative cost of reviewing, assigning and managing number resources shall be borne by the applicant
- The Authority shall periodically conduct audits on numbering resource utilization to ensure that they are used in accordance with these Guidelines and for the intended purposes.
- Assignees of numbering resources shall be responsible for ensuring that such assignments are utilized in accordance with these Guidelines, the agreed numbering plan and for the intended purposes in order to ensure efficiency

- The assignee may contact any licensed communications network operator for their appropriate network needs
- Communications network operators shall only forward traffic to or from numbers as assigned by the Authority.
- The assignment of a Short Code does **not** authorize the applicant to operate a communications network
- Any dispute between the applicant and the service provider shall be resolved by the Authority.

7 SHORT CODES AND SERVICES

Section 34 (1) of the IC Act 2009 **mandates** the Authority to ensure that operators of public information and communications system or **service** make available to its subscribers **free** access to **only** an emergency police, fire service, and medical number as part of their Emergency Service Obligations.

The following Emergency Short Codes have been harmonized by the Authority as indicated below:

| Item No | HARMONIZED SERVICE | HARMONIZED NUMBER |
|---------|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | Hospital Ambulance services | 116 |
| 2 | Police | 117 |
| 3 | Fire and Rescue Services | 118 |

These existing emergency numbers will remain the same 3 digit Short Codes.

Short Code numbers 112 & 999 dialed from a mobile phone may be routed to the Police even if a SIM card is not inserted.

7.1 New Short Codes Assignments

Operators had been using 3 digit Short Codes on the **1xx** numbering range to provide Value Added Services to their customers or to third parties. This has resulted in unequal access to resources and less competition with a single code having multiple assignees on different networks as well as lack of protection for customers. Operators can continue using these 3 digit Short Codes on the 1xx numbering range to provide Value Added Services to their customers or to third parties.

Operators may use 3 or 4 digits Short Codes from their own number range or other operator's number range **except** on the 1xxx number range to **internally** provide Value Added Services to customers on their own networks.

With these Guidelines for Short Codes Applications in place, the Authority will be issuing Short Codes to operators and stakeholders to provide Value Added Services using a 4 digit Short Code on the **1xxx** numbering range.

The Authority would charge for the use of Short Code numbers on the 1xxx numbering range once the Regulations on Numbers are in place.

The table below indicates the Short Codes on the 1xxxx numbering range that are to be assigned by the Authority.

| Item No | Service Name | Service Code | Digit length | Range |
|---------|-----------------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| 1 | Toll free services | 1xxx | 4 | 1000 -1599 |
| 2 | Standard Rate Services | 1xxx | 4 | 1600 - 1699 |
| 3 | Shared Rate Services | 1xxx | 4 | 1700 - 1799 |
| 4 | Premium Rate Services | 1xxx | 4 | 1800 - 1899 |
| 5 | Reserved & to be determined | 1xxx | 4 | 1900 - 1999 |

In the event of an emergency, the Authority will review the application in consultation with the operators and assign an appropriate short code.

8 SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION FORM

Application form(s) for Short Codes shall be submitted to PURA. The forms for the application of Short Codes attached as *Annex 1* are also available on the Authority's website www.pura.gm. A completed Short Codes application shall be submitted to the address below:

The Director General
The Gambia Public Utilities Regulatory Authority
94 Kairaba Avenue
P.O.Box 4230 Bakau
The Gambia
West Africa

Phone: + 220 4399601/2

Fax: + 220 4399905

Email: pura@pura.gm

The completed application shall be submitted to PURA and accompanied with the documents listed in application form attached as *Annex 1*.

9 INVOICING

There is a non-refundable application fee of **D2,500.00** for processing Short Code applications. Evaluation of the application shall commence upon confirmation of payment receipt. Short Code shall be charged in line with the Numbering Regulations

10 EVALUATION OF APPLICATIONS

The Authority will review application and documents to ensure compliance with the following relevant requirements:

- a. the processing time for Short Code applications is 4 months.
- b. if the Short Code application is granted, it will be valid for a period of one year only. Applicants are required to renew their application **three months** before the expiry of their number assignment.
- c. the applicant is required to commence operations within 3 months of being issued a Short code otherwise the assignment shall be withdrawn.
- d. if the application of the Short Code is approved, the Authority will write to (I) the applicant informing him of the Short code number to use and (II) write to the operators and request that they create the Short Code number. However, operators can only enable customers to access the short Code number if commercial terms are met.

11 TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR GRANTING SHORT CODES

If the applicant meets the relevant requirements, the Authority will issue a Short Code that permits the applicant to provide the intended services in The Gambia. The applicant shall also commit to conform to the following terms and conditions:

- a. Applicant is at **liberty to contact any operator** for the necessary commercial arrangements although they are encouraged to meet all operators and build relationship for future invoicing and maintenance purposes.

12 EFFECTIVENESS

These guidelines shall become effective from the date of signature.

ISSUED BY

PUBLIC UTILITIES REGULATORY AUTHORITY

DATED THIS... 28th DAY OF... MAY 2015



DIRECTOR GENERAL 2015





13 ANNEX 1: SHORT CODES APPLICATION FORM

1. Requirements for Short Codes Application

- a. Application letter explaining the purpose of the Short Code Service
- b. Business Registration Certificate (for Companies)
- c. Terms and conditions of the intended service
- d. Detailed technical plan of the network
- e. Roll out plan
- f. Completed application form

2. Applicants Identification

- a. Applicant's Name:
- b. Legal Type Company Government
 NGO Others:
- c. Business Registration Certificate Number (for company):
- d. Physical Address:.....
 PO Box:
 EMail:.....Website:.....
 Tel: Cell phone: Fax:

3. Contact Person if different from above

- First Name: Last Name:.....
- Physical Address:.....
- PO Box:
- EMail:.....Website:.....
- Tel: Cell phone: Fax:

1. Short Code Information

- a) Short Code Type: Voice SMS USSD
- b) Program Period: Permanent Temporary: From .../...../.....To:
...../...../.....

When is the short code number allocation required::

Date of launch of service:

Which operator/operators network will be used to terminated calls in order to access your services:

.....
.....

- c) Program Type Subscription Interactive media Voting
 General use Information Services Alerts
 Mobile marketing Others:.....

- d) Provide a detail description of the program:

.....
.....
.....
.....

Additional comments :

.....
.....
.....
.....

2. Billing System

Please choose the category of service to be offered

- a) Standard call (caller pays for the call)
- b) Toll Free (free for the caller but paid for by the service provider)
- c) Shared cost (call paid for by service provider and caller)
- d) Premium rate services (caller pays standard plus margin)

- a) **Standard call** Calls will be paid for by the caller and charged a standard call. The service provider can choose to use SIMs from all operators or from one only
- The service provider will pay a D10,000.00 annual maintenance fee to each operator.
- b) **Toll Free:** Calls are free for the caller but paid for by the service provider. The service provider can choose to use SIMs/Fixed line for all operators or from one only.
- One SIM or fixed telephone line: the calls are on net, service provider have to pay a deposit of D20,000.00 to each operator and will get 10,000 minutes yearly for free. Any minutes above 10,000 will be charged D2.00/minute.
 - Multiple SIMs: the calls are off net, service provider has to pay a deposit of D25,000.00 to each operator and will get 10,000 minutes yearly for free. Any minutes above 10,000 (over minute charge) will be charged D2.50/minute.
 - In case the 10,000 minutes were not used , the deposit is not refundable and the service provider needs to pay a new deposit for the next year
- c) **Shared cost:** Calls are paid for by both service provider and caller. The service provider can choose to use SIMs/Fixed line for all operators or from one only: The same choices from Toll Free , one SIM or multiple SIMs, annual deposit and over minute charge
- The annual deposit and the over minute charge is charged according to the shared percentage. For example: for a 50/50 shared one SIM option, the annual fee will be 12,500 for 10,000 shared cost minutes the caller will pay D1.25/minute and minutes above 10,000 will be charged 1.25/minute for the service provider.
- d) **Premium Rate:** Caller pays standard plus margin depending on the commercial arrangements. The charge paid by the caller is split in percentage between the operator and the service provider after deducting the standard call charge and the tax (in case the service provider is a non vat registered company, in case the service provider is registered, the percentage is split after deducting the standard call charge only).

Remarks

- e) *the rates included in the document are subject of change in case any change to the standard call cost or interconnect cost was agreed on between the operators and PURA. A meeting will be held to decide on the new rates*
- f) *In all scenarios highlighted above, an invoice will be sent to the service provider on a monthly basis. For the deposit based scenarios, the deposit is included in the invoice and every month the deposit is deducted. Once the deposit is exhausted, the stakeholder should settle the extra minutes monthly.*

- g) The scenario for voice call communication highlighted in the Toll Free, Shared Cost and Premium Rates will follow the same logic for SMS services. The cost of sending an SMS ranges between D0.55 to D1.10 depending on whether it is on-net or off-net.*
- h) It is the responsibility of the service provider to ensure that the service they are offering is not abused but used judiciously for receiving genuine calls.*
- i) Applicant must publish the terms and conditions of accessing their services*

The payment terms are as follow:

- i. If applicable, applicant must ensure that they have sufficient credit with each operator. If applicant fails to follow the payment terms with any operator, the operator will be at liberty to disable the service.*
- ii. If applicable, the deposit should be paid before the service starts*
- iii. If applicable, monthly bills shall be sent by the operator for the cost of the calls made by customers to access your services by the 15th of each month.*
- iv. If applicant has queries on the bills received, you are required to inform your service provider within 7 days of receiving your bill.*
- v. Applicant's service provider will determine the minimum amount remaining balance on your deposit. Once this minimum amount is reached, your service provider will send you a notification.*
- vi. If applicants fail to recharge their account after being notified by an operator, your service provider may disconnect your services.*
- vii. Operators will guarantee the same grade of service available for the normal subscribers.*
- viii. The service provider is at liberty to negotiate a favourable Service Level Agreement (SLA) and specified cause of action in the event of those service failures with the operators in relation to their chosen products.*
- ix. The SLA negotiated and agreed upon shall bind both parties in the event of service failure.*
- x. The signed SLA's shall be lodged to the Authority as reference point.*
- xi. Applicant must give a minimum of two weeks' notice to their service provider before discontinuing a service*