

OUR Invites Applications for Number Portability Licence

(KINGSTON, Jamaica; October 14, 2014): As plans advance for the introduction of Number Portability in Jamaica, the Office of Utilities Regulation (OUR) has invited entities interested in a licence to provide Number Portability Administration Services to submit their applications.

Number Portability will mean that customers will be able to retain their existing telephone numbers across networks—choosing a service provider based on service, quality, and price, rather than on a desire to retain a particular telephone number. Customers will be able to change service providers while avoiding the inconvenience, costs and risks associated with changing numbers. Number Portability will promote competition by eliminating real or perceived barriers to customers switching service providers, making it easier for entry into the market by new players.

Pursuant to the Telecommunications Act, Number Portability falls under the remit of the Ministry of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining and it is the Minister who places the obligation on telecommunications providers to provide Number Portability services. However, Section 37(1) of the Telecommunications Act, vests the OUR with the responsibility to advise the Minister on the making of rules imposing on public telecommunications carriers the responsibility to offer Number Portability. The Minister has set a target date of May 31, 2015 for implementation.

The OUR's invitation for applications is in accordance with the directive issued to the OUR by the Minister, pursuant to Sections 10(1) and (2)(a) of the Telecommunications Act. The OUR will assess the applications and make a recommendation to Minister for the granting of the licence.

The successful applicant, the Number Portability Administrator, will operate a Number Portability Central Reference Database and an automated Order Handling process for inter-operator communications. That entity will also manage and coordinate activities related to Number Portability in accordance with the industry code of practice and operational guidelines for the Number Portability process, and facilitate the provision of number portability service by public telecommunications carriers in Jamaica.

Details on the Technical & Price Proposal Requirements can be accessed on the OUR's website: www.our.org.jm.

Applications must be submitted no later than December 1, 2014. Applicants will be notified of the outcome of this process in January 2015.