

## **Special Number Arrangements**

### **A Consultation Paper Issued by The Office of the Telecommunications Authority**

**14 June 2002**

#### **Background**

On 4 February 1997, the Telecommunications Authority (TA) issued a public consultation paper entitled “Special Number Arrangements” (SNA)<sup>1</sup> to solicit views from the industry and the general public on the arrangements for the allocation and assignment of “special numbers” to operators and consumers of telecommunications services in Hong Kong. Subsequently, a total of 15 submissions were received and the comments in these submissions are summarised at Annex A. The majority of them supported formalising the SNA to allocate “special numbers” to operators and customers in a fair and transparent manner, and use the proceeds to benefit the society.

2. Having considered the views of the consumers, local telecommunications service operators and other interested parties, and the experience of overseas administrations, the TA formed the view that SNA would bring benefits to consumers of telecommunications services and should therefore be implemented. The Government therefore proposed to provide for the legal basis for the SNA in the Telecommunication (Amendment) Bill 2000. According to the Government’s proposal, the proceeds from the SNA should be used for charity, or for education, research and development activities connected with telecommunications. The proposal was supported by the Legislative Council and the Bill was enacted in June 2000.

3. According to section 32F of the Telecommunications Ordinance, as amended by the Telecommunication (Amendment) Ordinance 2000, (the “Ordinance”), the regulatory framework for SNA would be provided for by

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<sup>1</sup> The consultation paper of 1997 could be downloaded from OFTA’s Internet web-site at <http://www.ofa.gov.hk>.

subsidiary legislation to be made by the Secretary for Information Technology and Broadcasting (SITB). ***In view of the time elapsed since the consultation exercise in 1997, the TA considers it necessary to seek further views and comments on certain major aspects of the SNA before finalising the details and the relevant legislation.***

#### **What are “special numbers”?**

4. “Special numbers” means the collection of numbers or codes, or blocks of numbers or codes, in the numbering plan for telecommunications services in Hong Kong, which are attractive, or are likely to be attractive, to a customer and for which the customer is willing *to pay for the right to use*. For the sake of clarity, various terms used in this Paper are defined below:

- “customers” includes consumers (as individuals or companies) and service providers who are customers of network operators.
- “operators” includes service providers and network operators, e.g., fixed and mobile network operators, external telecommunications service providers, etc.
- “consumers” are the end-users of telecommunications services, e.g. subscribers of the mobile telephone service, paging services, etc.
- “special numbers” (in quotation marks) refers to special numbers, special number blocks and/or special access codes.

5. “Special numbers” may appear in different forms. For administrative purposes, the TA has identified four categories of “special numbers”, namely:

- primary special numbers for consumers
- secondary special numbers for consumers
- special number blocks and access codes for operators
- consumer/operator requested “special numbers” comprising
  - ◆ consumer requested special numbers;
  - ◆ operator requested special number blocks and access codes

6. The “special numbers” in the first three categories are suggested in Annex B. The main selection criterion is that the numbers, number blocks or access codes should fall into a special and easily recognisable pattern, or may be

regarded as "lucky" in general. For the fourth category, i.e. *consumer/operator requested "special numbers"*, a number, number block or access code is only regarded as special by individual consumer/operator and cannot be identified until that consumer/operator applies for it. However, it should be noted that not any number, number block or access code could be chosen for a particular application. The use and availability of such "special numbers" should comply with the specifications of the numbering plan. For instance, numbers with leading digit "3" are allocated for fixed services and hence these numbers, at present, cannot be used for mobile services. In addition, if these "special numbers" fall within some ranges reserved for particular services (e.g. numbers beginning with digit "99", which have been reserved for emergency services) or have not yet been allocated to operators, they will not be made available for customers.

### **Why is there a need for SNA?**

7. In Hong Kong, the allocation and assignment<sup>2</sup> of all telecommunications numbers and codes to customers is under the control of the TA. Currently, operators are allocated number blocks for the subsequent assignment of individual numbers to customers. This is a responsibility delegated by the TA to the operators for administrative purposes. Although the current system is equitable in that numbers are normally assigned to the customers at random or according to the preference of the customers, the assignment process of the more desirable numbers lacks transparency and does not offer sufficient choice to users.

8. As regards the allocation of number blocks and access codes to operators, the TA has set up an informal system which enables operators to choose the more desirable blocks and codes by voluntarily making a donation to charity. The informal system applies to the allocation of number blocks for fixed, mobile and paging network services. Operator may request for some preferred number blocks which are designated for relevant services from the TA. A successful applicant will be granted the preferred number block by the TA without the need to go through the normal balloting procedure but the applicant has to make a donation to the charity. Similarly, an external telecommunications

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<sup>2</sup> "Allocation" is the distribution of numbers and codes by the TA to the telecommunications network operators on a block by block basis. "Assignment" is the actual designation of individual numbers and codes from the number blocks to the users.

services provider may bid for a preferred access code from the TA and the successful applicant will also have to make a donation to the charity. The minimum amount of donation is set by OFTA. For example, the minimum donation for an access code of the external telecommunications services is HK\$200,000. Such a system needs to be formalised.

9. The TA wishes to introduce new arrangements whereby the allocation and assignment of “special numbers” to both the consumers and the operators will be conducted in a more equitable and transparent manner. In proposing the new arrangements in this Paper, the TA has made reference to the overseas practices. Some examples of overseas practices in allocating special numbers are given in Annex C. In the following text, the term “allocation” will be a general term used to refer to the process of allocating/assigning the right to use numbers, number blocks or codes to the customers and operators.

### **Legal basis for SNA**

10. Before June 2000, the TA’s power to administer the numbering plan in Hong Kong was derived from section 3 of the Telephone Ordinance, which was repealed by the Telecommunication (Amendment) Ordinance 2000. The main deficiency of the Telephone Ordinance is that it did not provide for the use of the fees levied for the right to use numbers or codes.

11. The Telecommunication (Amendment) Ordinance 2000 rectifies this deficiency. Under section 32F of the Ordinance, the TA is empowered to control and promote equitable allocation and use of numbers and codes in the numbering plan of Hong Kong. Section 32F(3)(c) of the Ordinance further provides that “*the TA may designate or approve on request by any person, a number or a code in the numbering plan to be the subject of special allocation, assignment, lease or sale as provided for under regulations made by the Secretary under Section 32F(5)*”. In the Ordinance, the “Secretary” refers to the SITB.

12. As regards the proceeds arising out of any allocation, assignment, lease or sale of the right to use a number or code, section 32F(5)(b) under the Ordinance empowers the SITB to require, by regulation, the proceeds to be -

- (i) paid to a charitable institution, or an institution carrying out education, or research and development, activities connected with telecommunications; or
- (ii) applied towards promoting education, or research and development, connected with telecommunications; or
- (iii) paid into a fund established by the TA for holding the proceeds for the purposes of (i) and (ii).

13. Section 32F(5)(c) also empowers the SITB to impose requirements, by regulation, on the TA in relation to the establishment and management of the relevant fund.

### **Guiding principles**

14. In drawing up the implementation details for SNA, the TA proposes to adopt the following set of basic guiding principles:

- employ a fair and transparent procedure;
- promote efficient use of numbers and codes;
- obtain market value for attractive numbers and codes;
- allow for, and encourage recovery and reallocation of unused, or no longer required, numbers and codes;
- allow for the allocation of numbers/codes only where there is a legitimate need or intent to use the numbers and codes for the purpose of telecommunications services;
- on the one hand seek to minimise windfall gains through numbers/codes and prevent the inflation of the price of numbers/codes due to artificial scarcity, and on the other hand ensure that each number/code can be allocated to the user who places the highest value on it;
- NOT unduly add complexity to the allocation system;
- NOT encourage number/code hoarding; and
- NOT give unfair competitive advantage to any operator or customer.

**15. *The TA would like to seek views and comments on these guiding principles.***

## Scope of SNA

16. In the 1997 consultation exercise, it was proposed that paging numbers should be excluded from the SNA given the market conditions of paging services at that time<sup>3</sup>. With the lapse of time and the rapid changes in the environment of the telecommunications market in the last few years, the TA would like to revisit this proposal.

17. When an application for a paging number block is approved by the TA, the exact paging number block to be allocated is normally determined by ballot. However, the TA received requests from some paging network operators for allocation of their preferred number blocks by making a donation to charity. Having consulted the Telecommunications Numbering Advisory Committee, the TA issued an interim procedure entitled "Code of Practice Relating to the Use of Numbers and Codes in the Hong Kong Numbering Plan" (the Code) to handle the special requests by paging network operators. The latest revision of this document was released in February 2002 and it can be downloaded from the OFTA's Internet web-site of <http://www.ofta.gov.hk>.

18. In order to adopt a common procedure for the allocation of "special numbers", the TA proposes that SNA should apply to all services of fixed networks, personal numbering, mobile networks and paging networks in Hong Kong. The interim procedure for obtaining preferred paging number blocks should be replaced by the SNA. ***The TA would like to seek views and comments on this revised proposal.***

19. There are difference in views as to whether primary special numbers should be taken away from the number blocks allocated to the operators, and whether the assignment of all special numbers (primary or secondary) should be left to the discretion of the operators. Being guided by the principles set out in paragraph 14, the TA is of the preliminary view that special numbers/codes are likely to be valued highly in the community, and leaving the assignments of all "special numbers" to the discretion of the operators would not be in line with one of the basic guiding principles, that is, the allocation of special numbers and

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<sup>3</sup> Paragraph 6 of the consultation paper issued in 1997.

codes should be done in a fair and transparent manner. ***Nevertheless, the TA welcomes further views and suggestions on the scope of numbers/codes to be incorporated under the SNA.***

### **Change of the current numbering plan**

20. When the existing eight-digit unified numbering plan was launched in January 1995, it was expected that the numbering plan should be able to cater for the industry need and growth for a period of 15 years. After conducting a review on the lifetime of the existing numbering plan, it is estimated that, according to the current rate of demand for new numbers, the existing numbering plan may sustain a longer lifetime of up to 2015 before it is necessary to implement a new nine-digit numbering plan. Thereafter, with the implementation of a nine-digit numbering plan, special numbers of eight-digit lengths may lose the whole or part of their special status when they are converted to nine-digit numbers.

21. It should be pointed out that under the proposed SNA, ***only the right of use*** of the "special numbers" will be allocated to the consumers and the ownership of the "special numbers" will still remain with the TA. Under Section 32F(1) of the Ordinance, the TA has all powers and privileges relating to or connected with the numbering plan. He has the power to alter the numbering plan when the need arises. Therefore, the TA may terminate any right to use any "special numbers" allocated under the regulations for SNA in case of a need to change the numbering plan. ***Under this circumstance, the TA would not be liable for any financial loss if an attractive number becomes unattractive as a result of the change of the numbering plan and no compensation will be rewarded if the right of use is terminated by the TA in case of a change in the numbering plan.***

### **Use of proceeds derived**

22. In the 1997 consultation exercise, there were different views on how the proceeds should be used. After considering the views received, the Government proposed, and the Legislative Council supported, that the proceeds might be used for charity, or for education, research and development activities connected with telecommunications. The legal framework was expressly provided for in section 32F of the Telecommunications Ordinance.

23. The TA considers that the proceeds should be used for sponsoring education, research and development activities connected with telecommunications. The TA further proposes that allocating the proceeds to local universities which carry out education, research and development activities in connection with telecommunications is most appropriate. The universities will have the flexibility to channel the proceeds to sponsor suitable projects, depending on the size of proceeds which may vary from year to year. Compared to the more traditional method of establishing a fund committee which centralises the vetting of applications and allocation of funds, this is an administratively simple and efficient way to achieve the objective. There should also be a reporting system for the universities to account for the proper use of the proceeds and management of projects to the Government. ***The TA would like to seek views on his proposal to channel the proceeds generated from the SNA to universities to sponsor telecommunications-related educational and research projects.***

#### **Allocation of “special numbers”**

24. As the four categories of “special numbers” have different characteristics and market values, the TA considers that different approaches should be applied to the four categories of “special numbers” in order to ensure that the numbers are allocated in the most efficient and effective way.

25. The proposed arrangements for allocating various categories of “special numbers” are described in the paragraphs below. For each category, it should be noted that the special number can only be used in accordance with the numbering plan (e.g., a number with leading digit 3 can only be used for fixed line service). Accordingly, only operators who are conferred with the right for such use (e.g., only fixed line operators are allowed to bid for a special number block with leading digit 3) or consumers intending to use the number for such use are allowed to participate in the bidding.

#### *Primary special numbers*

26. Primary special numbers will be made available to the public *by auction* to be arranged at intervals as determined by the TA. The TA proposes that the



minimum bid for each primary special number should be HK\$10,000. The TA will decide which primary special numbers will be made available for bidding at each auctioning exercise.

#### *Secondary special numbers*

27. For secondary special numbers, they will be made available for assignment to the public by network operators at a fee approved by the TA. Taking into account the current economic atmosphere and that the fee should be generally acceptable and affordable to the public, the TA proposes that the fee should be a fixed fee for easy administration, and the fee will be reviewed and revised regularly. The TA proposes that the fixed fee may fall within the range of HK\$200~500. Operators will be allowed to retain 30% of the fee and the remaining 70% should be paid to the TA for subsequent distribution of the proceeds.

#### *Special number blocks and access codes*

28. Special number blocks and access codes will be allocated to eligible<sup>4</sup> operators *by auction* at intervals as determined by the TA. Such operators will be allowed to bid for special number blocks and access codes for provision of relevant services under their licence. For example, an eligible mobile operator will be allowed to bid special number blocks designated for mobile services but not for fixed services. All primary special numbers will be removed from the special number blocks prior to allocating the block to the successful bidder. All secondary special numbers contained in the special number blocks will still be subject to the arrangement as proposed in paragraph 27 above.

29. The TA proposes that a minimum bid for a special number block or access code should be HK\$200,000. This amount is currently adopted in the bidding of access codes for external telecommunications services providers for donation to charity. The TA will decide which special number blocks or special access codes will be made available for bidding at each auctioning exercise.

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<sup>4</sup> An operator is eligible for applying/bidding for a special number block or special access code if he meets the relevant requirements or criteria (e.g., minimum utilisation rate with the number block already allocated to him, etc.) as specified in the "Code of Practice Relating to the Use of Numbers and Codes in the Hong Kong Numbering Plan".

### *Consumer requested special numbers*

30. Any interested consumer could apply to the operator for a specific number, other than those in Schedules 1 to 2, within a number block which has been allocated by the TA to that operator by paying a fixed fee for easy administration, and the fee will be reviewed and revised regularly. The TA proposes that the level can be set in the range of HK\$200~500. The operator will retain 30% of the fee and the remaining 70% should be paid to the TA for subsequent distribution of the proceeds.

### *Operator requested special number blocks or access codes*

31. An eligible operator could also apply to the TA for number blocks or access codes in the numbering plan other than those already designated as special number blocks and access codes in Schedule 3 of Annex B. If the specific number blocks or access codes are available, they will be provided for auctioning at the next auction at a minimum bid of HK\$200,000 for each number block or access code.

32. In order to ensure compliance with the numbering plan in Hong Kong, applications for consumer/operator requested “special numbers” under the following circumstances will not be entertained:

- When the use of the number block requested by an operator has not been determined by the TA, or the number requested by a consumer is located within a number block which has not been allocated to any operator. For example, if a mobile network operator makes a request for allocation of the number block "600", the request will not be accepted as the block has been reserved for services not yet determined by the TA. If a consumer requests the assignment of the number "68881668", the request will not be accepted as the number block “6888” has not yet been allocated to any operator;
- When the number or number block has already been allocated to another consumer/operator and the number or number block is still in use;
- When the requested use is in conflict with the numbering plan or any

international obligation. For example, an application for use of the number block "678" for fixed network services will not be entertained because under the existing numbering plan, the number block "678" has been reserved for mobile services; or

- When the requested use may affect the development of future numbering plans, particularly those being discussed at the NAC. For example, if OFTA is consulting the NAC on changing the designated use of certain numbers or number blocks in the numbering plan, the relevant numbers or number blocks may not be assigned for the time being.

**33. *The TA would like to seek comments on the proposed mechanism for allocating the four categories of "special numbers" and the minimum level of the bidding price or fee for each category of the "special numbers".***

#### **Use of modern technologies in auctioning**

34. The TA will consider the employment of the latest information technologies for auctioning of the "special numbers". This may include the on-line bidding over the phone or via the Internet. ***The TA welcomes any views and suggestions on the use of modern technologies for the auctioning process.***

#### **Administrative expenses and incentive to operators**

35. The TA had suggested in the 1997 consultation exercise that the operators could retain 30% of the net proceeds derived from assignment of the secondary special numbers and "consumer requested special numbers" to meet the administrative expenses incurred as a result of the SNA. The intention was to provide incentive to operators in implementing the SNA.

36. In the 1997 consultation, some members of the industry were concerned about the adequacy of recovering the administrative costs from the SNA arrangement. Having taking into account the views received, the TA has proposed a streamlined SNA as set out in paragraphs 26 to 32. With the streamlined SNA, the TA believes that the key issue is to set an appropriate retention percentage of the proceeds which operators are allowed to retain to cover the administrative expenses. On the other hand, if the percentage is set too

high, the net proceeds derived from the SNA will be substantially eroded, making the whole process ineffective. ***The TA welcomes views on this issue.***

### **Retention of “special numbers” already assigned**

37. The TA recommends that consumers or operators who are currently using “special numbers” are entitled to continue to use such “special numbers” and do not have to pay any fee or additional charges. This means that those “special numbers” which have already been allocated before the proposed special allocation scheme come into operation would not be affected by the SNA retrospectively.

38. Nevertheless, if the “special numbers” currently in use are given up and returned to the operators or the TA, they will be subject to the same control governing the newly allocated “special numbers”, as set out in paragraph 40 below.

39. ***The TA welcomes comments on the proposed treatment of “special numbers” already assigned.***

### **Control over the use of “special numbers”**

40. With the introduction of SNA, it is necessary to introduce regulatory measures for the control over the use of “special numbers”. The TA proposes the following regulatory measures for the control over the use of the “special numbers”:

- All primary or secondary special numbers acquired by consumers for use in fixed and mobile networks shall be portable between network operators of the same category;
- If a consumer or an operator is to give up the right to the use of “special numbers”, it cannot recover the costs incurred for it in obtaining that right. The right to use for “special numbers” shall revert to the TA or, as the case may be, to the operator who is responsible for the allocation of the “special numbers” concerned. ;
- Once acquired by a consumer, the “special number” must be activated for use within 45 days; and

- The TA may terminate any right to use any “special numbers” allocated under the regulations for SNA if in his opinion such use will be in violation of the numbering plan or in conflict with any international regulations and obligations for which Hong Kong has to observe in relation to number allocation.

***The TA welcomes comments on the proposed regulatory measures for the control over the use of "special numbers".***

### **Private transactions of “special numbers”**

41. There were divided views on whether private transactions<sup>5</sup> of “special numbers” should be allowed. Some considered that free trading of “special numbers” would promote speculative activities, while others considered that private transaction could boost the value of “special numbers” and hence result in larger contributions.

42. Having considered the pros and cons regarding the private transactions, the TA proposes to forbid private transactions of “special numbers” and any other forms of private transfer of “special numbers” (i.e. the registered person possessing the right to use of a particular “special number” is not allowed to transfer this right to anyone in any forms). It is because the primary objective of SNA is to provide for a fairer and more transparent procedure for allocation of “special numbers”. Any means leading to speculative activities should not be encouraged and all allocated “special numbers” should be registered under the names of the customers and operators.

43. In the case of “grandfathered” “special numbers” (i.e. “special numbers” which have already been assigned to and are in use by customers at the time of the enactment of the subsidiary legislation in relation to SNA), they should also be returned to OFTA or the relevant operators if the registered customer gives up or no longer has the right to use them.

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<sup>5</sup> Private transactions refer to trading or changing of right of use of special numbers by individuals or companies with or without monetary exchange, but do not include transferring of the right of use of special numbers resulting from change of ownership of companies.

44. ***The TA seeks views on the above-proposed prohibition of private transactions of “special numbers”.***

### **Record keeping and accounts**

45. OFTA would set up a database on “special numbers” and would issue guidelines to operators on how to maintain records and accounts. To ensure that all auctions and transactions in relation to the allocation of “special numbers” have been properly conducted, the operators should submit to the TA a record of the numbers allocated/assigned under the SNA and the fees collected no later than 30 days after the transaction.

46. The TA would make available the transaction information, including those transactions conducted by him, for inspection by the public. In addition, the TA would make available for inspection by the public those numbers in Schedules 1 and 3 of Annex B, which would be made available for allocation in advance.

### **Implementation**

47. The Government intends to enact the necessary subsidiary legislation of the SNA as soon as practicable in order to proceed with implementation of the SNA.

48. Relevant codes of practice in relation to the implementation of the SNA will be issued by the TA to ensure that proper procedures are taken by the operators on the sale of special numbers to their customers. Operators may have to alter their existing practices on number assignments for the implementation of the SNA.

### **Invitation for comments**

49. The TA would like to invite comments on the issues raised in this consultation paper in relation to Special Number Arrangements, in particular the following:

(A) The proposed guiding principles (Paragraph 14);

- (B) Whether SNA should apply to all services of fixed networks, personal numbering, mobile networks and paging networks in Hong Kong (Paragraph 18);
- (C) Scope of numbers/codes to be incorporated under the SNA (Paragraph 19);
- (D) TA's proposal to allocate proceeds generated from the SNA directly to universities to sponsor telecommunications-related educational and research projects, and the allocation mechanism (Paragraph 23);
- (E) Mechanism for allocating the four categories of "special numbers" and the minimum level of the bidding price or fee for each category of the "special numbers" (Paragraph 33);
- (F) The use of modern technologies for the auctioning process (Paragraph 34);
- (G) The percentage of proceeds derived from assignment of "special numbers" that should be retained by the operators to cover the administrative expenses (Paragraph 36);
- (H) The treatment of "special numbers" already assigned (Paragraph 39);
- (I) Regulatory measures for the control over the use of "special numbers" (Paragraph 40); and
- (J) Prohibition of private transaction of "special numbers" (Paragraph 44).

50. The views and comments on this consultation paper should reach the Office of the Telecommunications Authority on or before 26 July 2002. Any person who submits the views and comments should be aware that the TA may publish all or any part of the views and comments received and to disclose the identity of the source in such manner as the TA deems fit. Any part of the submission, which is considered commercially confidential, should be marked. The TA would take such markings into account in making his decision as to whether to disclose such information or not. Submissions should be addressed to:

Office of the Telecommunications Authority  
29/F Wu Chung House  
213 Queen's Road East  
Wanchai, Hong Kong  
[Attn.: Senior Telecommunications Engineer (External Affairs)1]  
Fax: (852) 2838 5004

An electronic copy of the submission may also be sent by e-mail to [sna@ofta.gov.hk](mailto:sna@ofta.gov.hk).

**Office of the Telecommunications Authority**

14 June 2002



**Summary of Comments Received on  
Public Consultation Paper of 4 February 1997  
On Special Number Arrangements**

**Introduction**

The public consultation paper entitled “Special Number Arrangements – Public Consultation Paper” was released on 4 February 1997 for consultation until 22 March 1997.

2. A total of 15 written submissions were received from the following respondents -

- 1) Mr. Desmond Chiu
- 2) City Telecom (HK) Ltd. (CTI)
- 3) Consumer Council
- 4) Hong Kong Productivity Council (HKPC)
- 5) Hong Kong Telephone Company Ltd. (now called PCCW-HKT Telephone Ltd.) (PCCW-HKT)
- 6) Cable & Wireless Hong Kong Telecom CSL Ltd. (CSL)
- 7) Hong Kong Telecommunications Users Group (HKTUG)
- 8) Mr. Cyrus Hui/AsiaNet (Hong Kong) Ltd.
- 9) Hutchison Telecommunications (HK) Ltd. (Hutchison)
- 10) Mr. W Y Leung/Civil Aviation Department, as Member of the Radio Spectrum and Telecommunications Standards Advisory Committees
- 11) Mandarin Communications Ltd. (Mandarin)
- 12) New T&T Hong Kong Ltd. (New T&T)
- 13) New World Telephone Ltd. (NWT)
- 14) SmarTone Mobile Communications Ltd. (SmarTone)
- 15) Dr. John Ure

**Summary of Comments**

3. The following tables summarised the views and comments from the above respondents.

## 1) General comments

Respondents	Comments
Mr Desmond Chiu	Considered that a network operator needs not pay for an easily memorable number in the provision of its service to the public (e.g. voice mail, customer service hotline).
CTI	Considered that SNA could enhance consumers' convenience in accessing PNETS operators' services and would help further deregulate both the general and the telecommunications markets. Wondered if PNETS operators could apply for use of the special numbers.
CSL	Pointed out that it was not entirely correct that customers did not have choice in the present situation; they did have limited choice within the practical level. Considered that there could be alternative ways to improve the transparency of the existing allocation process. In both the UK and US, choice of special numbers does not apply to local telephone numbers. In the UK, special numbers are confined to a particular service and the selling point was portability. In the US, such flexibility is allowed in freephone service only.
HKPC	Supported the allocation of special numbers to operators and users through auction.
Mr Cyrus Hui	Considered that given the Government's financial surplus, extra financial burden should not be placed on customers for using special numbers.
Hutchison	Doubted whether the proposed SNA could achieve the purpose of conducting the allocation process in a more efficient and equitable manner, due to the significant amount of administrative costs on operators, OFTA and Economic Services Branch. The scheme would create a privileged class of special number owners. The proposed SNA hardly non-discriminatory while the existing arrangement was equitable in that numbers were assigned to the end customers more or less at random.
Mandarin	Considered the existing practice of allocating number blocks to network operators by drawing lots an equitable arrangement. Mobile numbers should remain under the control of operators' control and a person can obtain a special number from individual operators by payment of an administration fee.
New T&T	Considered it not necessary for an overly formal process for allocation of special numbers. The proposed SNA and the administrative costs involved

Respondents	Comments
	would put new operators in an disadvantageous position as numbers including its new technology plays an important role in a competitive environment. Suggested that OFTA should devise a simple scheme whereby carriers would take a percentage of the revenue from sale of special numbers with the rest to OFTA for charity.
SmarTone	Supported the proposed SNA in principle.

## 2) What are Special Numbers

Respondents	Comments
PCCW-HKT	Suggested that numbers beginning with the digit '4', which was used by fixed and mobile operators as network numbers, should be excluded.
Mr Cyrus Hui	Wondered if the TA has the legal rights to sell, auction and put the proceeds to charity purposes.
Hutchison	Wondered if Secondary Special Numbers would fall within the DDI blocks and routing numbers would be classified as special numbers.
Mandarin	Found the proposed scheme unfair, e.g. operators could take out the primary special numbers from the number blocks to which they were allocated.
New T&T	Wondered if the definition would make every number potentially be a special number.
NWT	Suggested that licensees who were closer to the marketplace should be able to provide inputs to classifying special numbers. In addition, the auction and assignment of special numbers should be left to the discretion of the licensees.

## 3) Paging Numbers

Respondents	Comments
PCCW-HKT	Considered that the SNA should cover fixed, mobile and paging networks.
Hutchison	Agreed that paging numbers should be excluded from SNA. Due to the competitive industry environment, cellular numbers should also be excluded.
Mr W Y Leung	Considered that the SNA should also be applied to the paging sector.
TNAC	Proposed that the existing interim arrangements for allocation to paging operators their preferred paging number blocks accompanied by charity donations should come under the SNA.

#### 4) Primary Special Numbers

Respondents	Comments
Hutchison	<p>Considered that there should be restriction on the maximum amount of telephone numbers which could be acquired by one person/company in each auction session, in order to prevent such numbers coming under the control of a few speculators or 'collectors'.</p> <p>Personal details of the bidders should not be disclosed.</p> <p>Suggested that some of the special numbers should be reserved for use by charity and public service bodies which could not afford to pay.</p>
Mandarin	<p>Wondered who would have the title of the special numbers after the user ceased to subscribe to a service.</p>

#### 5) Secondary Special Numbers

Respondents	Comments
Consumer Council	<p>Supported the sale of Secondary Special Numbers for charity purposes.</p> <p>Nevertheless, the operators should only be allowed to keep a fixed percentage of the total proceeds, rather than 30% of the total proceeds net administrative costs, for meeting the administrative expenses involved, thereby saving the TA from auditing the accounts of the operators.</p> <p>It is proposed that a 20% royalty, which should be used for meeting the administrative expenses rather than an incentive, should be sufficient. The favourable publicity from the SNA should provide an incentive for the participation of operators.</p>
Hutchison	<p>Wondered if Secondary Special Numbers would include the DDI blocks and routing.</p> <p>Suggested that Secondary Special Numbers should be included in the number blocks for allocated to operators, thereby reducing the administrative costs and simplifying the scheme. This would also raise the value of number blocks.</p> <p>Suggested that OFTA should set out his criteria in approving the price for special numbers.</p>

## 6) Special Number Blocks and Access Codes

Respondents	Comments
Hutchison	Observed that due to number portability, special number blocks might not be considered by FTNS operators as effective in marketing and retaining customers. A simple fixed-price approach might be more cost-effective.

## 7) Customer Requested Special Numbers

Respondents	Comments
CSL	Considered that the artificial monetary value attached to a number might encourage fraud.
PCCW-HKT	Considered it difficult to estimate the administrative costs at this stage. OFTA should discuss with operators on the logistics involved and hence the proportion of the revenue to be allocated for covering the administrative costs.
Hutchison	Suggested that FTNS operators be given the flexibility of charging an amount no more than \$1,000 and contribute 50% of the actual revenue to the SNF.

## 8) Administrative costs

Respondents	Comments
CSL	Doubted whether the administrative costs were on a one-off basis or of an on-going nature such as the long-term costs in porting numbers and maintaining auction and transaction records, hence the proposed 30% of net proceeds to be retained by operators might not be enough.
Hutchison	Considered it necessary to define "administration costs" as well as difficult to estimate the related costs like those on database and network development, customer services, sales and marketing, accounting, etc.
Mandarin	Considered that the 30% net proceeds to be retained by operators in selling Secondary Special Numbers and the \$500 for selling Customer Requested Special Numbers not sufficient to cover the administrative costs for sale of numbers and other extra work arising from the sale of numbers.

## 9) Special Number Fund (SNF)

Respondents	Comments
Consumer Council	Considered that the SNF should simply be used for charity in order to keep the administration cost to a minimum, especially as it is uncertain how much revenue will be generated. Funding of educational and research projects by the SNF would involve a lot of vetting work and hence incur extra administrative expenses. Such projects should be funded by the industry.
HKPC	Supported the establishment of the SNF, and that the Fund should be used solely to finance research projects that would benefit the telecommunications industry. The SNF should be publicly audited.
Mr Cyrus Hui	Considered that the proceeds from sale of special numbers should not go to the SNF but directly to the Government. It was unclear why OFTA should be involved in fund management and charity donations. There would be incremental costs in administering the SNF and the auction.
Mandarin	Considered that if the telecommunications industry considered it necessary for such a fund, it should be established out of the initiation of the industry. OFTA should be cautious not to mix up its role as a government supervisor and regulatory body with that of a charitable organisation.
NWT	Considered that some telecommunications licensees should serve on the SNF Management Committee.
HKTUG	Welcomed the establishment of the SNF and suggested that at least 50% of the Fund should be used for charity. The SNF Management Committee should give priority to educational work e.g. teaching customers to be 'smart user' and providing teaching aids to schools.
Dr John Ure	Supported the establishment of the SNF, as an interested party. Proposed methods of disbursing the fund:- student scholarship <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• direct grants to educational programmes and research projects</li> <li>• commissioned educational programmes and research projects</li> </ul>

## 10) Private Transaction of Special Numbers

Respondents	Comments
HKPC	Considered that private transaction of special numbers should not be allowed. While a special number is “transferable” through the sale of their holding company, the number should only be used in the name of the holding company which were first assigned with the number.
PCCW-HKT	Supported private transaction of special numbers after they were assigned from OFTA or network operators. Private transactions should register with OFTA which would issue a document of proof of for verification by operators.
Hutchison	<p>Considered that private transaction of special numbers should in principle be prohibited. The monitoring costs might exceed the benefits.</p> <p>Had reservations on allowing private transaction of special numbers which were public resources and should not be promoted as “money-making commodities” like property, antiques and stamps. Private transactions would create speculators or “numbers collectors” who would take advantage of the low tariff structure to stock up special numbers. Under such circumstances, the 45-day connection requirement might severely burden the FTNS operators in respect of installation, operating, disconnecting and porting numbers.</p> <p>Observed that apart from selling the holding company of a special number, special numbers could be sold by porting it to the buyer’s phone. Certain “number owners” might lease the special numbers they “owned”.</p>
Mr W Y Leung	Considered that private transactions should not be allowed.
Mandarin	<p>Considered free trading of special numbers would promote speculative activities. There would be the question of technical feasibility in transferring numbers from one network to another and additional administrative costs would be incurred.</p> <p>It would also lead to problems in the settlement of the transfer fees and encourage frequent transfer of special numbers, both of which could generate disputes in the use and ownership of the transferred numbers.</p>
NWT	Suggested that the licensees be granted the right to conduct private transactions which were quasi-commercial in nature and should fall outside the scope

Respondents	Comments
	of the TA's responsibility. Also this could yield higher proceeds from sale of special numbers.
SmarTone	Considered that if private transaction of private numbers was to be allowed, the arrangement should discourage speculation and should not provide an additional source of income to operators and other entities including users.
HKTUG	Considered private transactions could boost the value of special numbers and hence a larger contributions to the SNF. Only a limited amount of special numbers would be attractive enough for repeated sale. Proposed measures to prevent abuse:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prohibiting transaction with the first 12 months of allocation;</li> <li>• Imposing high transaction cost (50% of the incremental value as contribution to the SNA).</li> </ul>

#### 11) Record-keeping

Respondents	Comments
CSL	Considered technically and economically not feasible when numbers could be made available to the public in three different ways, especially with number portability in place. Consumers would also be confused as to where he could apply for a number.
Hutchison	Considered that network operators should be consulted on the record keeping and accounting requirements beforehand.
PCCW-HKT	Suggested that OFTA set up a data base containing information on the numbers assigned and those not yet assigned for access by the public in a convenient way.
SmarTone	Suggested that a central database on special numbers be set up and OFTA should issue manual or guidelines to operators on maintaining records and accounts.

#### 12) Other comments

Respondents	Comments
SmarTone	Suggested that OFTA should conduct education and publicity programmes for educating the consumers. Considered that for mobile network, the issue of implementing number portability should be taken into account.



## Schedule 1

Primary Special Numbers<sup>6</sup>

A primary special number is one of the following:

2222 1111, 2222 2222, 2222 3333, 2222 4444, 2222 5555  
 2222 6666, 2222 7777, 2222 8888, 2222 9999, 2222 0000  
 3333 1111, 3333 2222, 3333 3333, 3333 4444, 3333 5555  
 3333 6666, 3333 7777, 3333 8888, 3333 9999, 3333 0000  
 4444 1111, 4444 2222, 4444 3333, 4444 4444, 4444 5555  
 4444 6666, 4444 7777, 4444 8888, 4444 9999, 4444 0000  
 5555 1111, 5555 2222, 5555 3333, 5555 4444, 5555 5555  
 5555 6666, 5555 7777, 5555 8888, 5555 9999, 5555 0000  
 6666 1111, 6666 2222, 6666 3333, 6666 4444, 6666 5555  
 6666 6666, 6666 7777, 6666 8888, 6666 9999, 6666 0000  
 7777 1111, 7777 2222, 7777 3333, 7777 4444, 7777 5555  
 7777 6666, 7777 7777, 7777 8888, 7777 9999, 7777 0000  
 8888 1111, 8888 2222, 8888 3333, 8888 4444, 8888 5555  
 8888 6666, 8888 7777, 8888 8888, 8888 9999, 8888 0000

2345 6789, 3456 7890, 7654 3210  
 8765 4321, 9876 5432

2233 4455, 3344 5566, 4455 6677, 5566 7788, 6677 8899  
 7766 5544, 8877 6655, 6655 4433, 5544 3322, 4433 2211  
 3322 1100

2211 2211, 2233 2233, 2244 2244, 2255 2255  
 2266 2266, 2277 2277, 2288 2288, 2299 2299, 2200 2200  
 3311 3311, 3322 3322, 3344 3344, 3355 3355  
 3366 3366, 3377 3377, 3388 3388, 3399 3399, 3300 3300

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<sup>6</sup> Certain numbers and codes will not be made available for allocation under the special number arrangement. For example, numbers with leading digit "4" & "5" will be reserved for network operation and for migration to new numbering plans in future.

4411 4411, 4422 4422, 4433 4433, 4455 4455  
4466 4466, 4477 4477, 4488 4488, 4499 4499, 4400 4400  
5511 5511, 5522 5522, 5533 5533, 5544 5544  
5566 5566, 5577 5577, 5588 5588, 5599 5599, 5500 5500  
6611 6611, 6622 6622, 6633 6633, 6644 6644, 6655 6655  
6677 6677, 6688 6688, 6699 6699, 6600 6600  
7711 7711, 7722 7722, 7733 7733, 7744 7744, 7755 7755  
7766 7766, 7788 7788, 7799 7799, 7700 7700  
8811 8811, 8822 8822, 8833 8833, 8844 8844, 8855 8855  
8866 8866, 8877 8877, 8899 8899, 8800 8800

2211 1122, 2233 3322, 2244 4422, 2255 5522  
2266 6622, 2277 7722, 2288 8822, 2299 9922, 2200 0022  
3311 1133, 3322 2233, 3344 4433, 3355 5533  
3366 6633, 3377 7733, 3388 8833, 3399 9933, 3300 0033  
4411 1144, 4422 2244, 4433 3344, 4455 5544  
4466 6644, 4477 7744, 4488 8844, 4499 9944, 4400 0044  
5511 1155, 5522 2255, 5533 3355, 5544 4455  
5566 6655, 5577, 7755, 5588 8855, 5599 9955, 5500 0055  
6611 1166, 6622 2266, 6633 3366, 6644 4466  
6655 5566, 6677 7766, 6688 8866, 6699 9966, 6600 0066  
7711 1177, 7722 2277, 7733 3377, 7744 4477  
7755 5577, 7766 6677, 7788 8877, 7799 9977, 7700 0077  
8811 1188, 8822 2288, 8833 3388, 8844 4488, 8855 5588  
8866 6688, 8877 7788, 8899 9988 8800 0088

2121 2121, 2323 2323, 2424 2424, 2525 2525  
2626 2626, 2727 2727, 2828 2828, 2929 2929, 2020 2020  
3131 3131, 3232 3232, 3434 3434, 3535 3535  
3636 3636, 3737 3737, 3838 3838, 3939 3939, 3030 3030  
4141 4141, 4242 4242, 4343 4343, 4545 4545  
4646 4646, 4747 4747, 4848 4848, 4949 4949, 4040 4040  
5151 5151, 5252 5252, 5353 5353, 5454 5454  
5656 5656, 5757 5757, 5858 5858, 5959 5959, 5050 5050  
6161 6161, 6262 6262, 6363 6363, 6464 6464, 6565 6565  
6767 6767, 6868 6868, 6969 6969, 6060 6060  
7171 7171, 7272 7272, 7373 7373, 7474 7474, 7575 7575

7676 7676, 7878 7878, 7979 7979, 7070 7070

8181 8181, 8282 8282, 8383 8383, 8484 8484, 8585 8585  
8686 8686, 8787 8787, 8989 8989, 8080 8080  
9191 9191, 9292 9292, 9393 9393, 9494 9494, 9595 9595  
9696 9696, 9797 9797, 9898 9898, 9090 9090

2020 0002, 3030 0003, 6060 0006, 7070 0007, 8080 0008  
2020 2000, 3030 3000, 6060 6000, 7070 7000, 8080 8000  
2020 2220, 3030 3330, 6060 6660, 7070 7770, 8080 8880  
2020 0222, 3030 0333, 6060 0666, 7070 0777, 8080 0888  
2020 0022, 3030 0033, 6060 0066, 7070 0077, 8080 0088  
2020 0220, 3030 0330, 6060 0660, 7070 0770, 8080 0880  
2020 2200, 3030 3300, 6060 6600, 7070 7700, 8080 8800  
2020 0000, 3030 0000, 6060 0000, 7070 0000, 8080 0000  
2020 2222, 3030 3333, 6060 6666, 7070 7777, 8080 8888

3131 1113, 3232 2223, 3434 4443, 3535 5553,  
3636 6663, 3737 7773, 3838 8883, 3939 9993  
3131 3111, 3232 3222, 3434 3444, 3535 3555,  
3636 3666, 3737 3777, 3838 3888, 3939 3999  
3131 3331, 3232 3332, 3434 3334, 3535 3335,  
3636 3336, 3737 3337, 3838 3338, 3939 3339  
3131 1333, 3232 2333, 3434 4333, 3535 5333,  
3636 6333, 3737 7333, 3838 8333, 3939 9333  
3131 1133, 3232 2233, 3434 4433, 3535 5533,  
3636 6633, 3737 7733, 3838 8833, 3939 9933  
3131 3311, 3232 3322, 3434 3344, 3535 3355,  
3636 3366, 3737 3377, 3838 3388, 3939 3399  
3131 1111, 3232 2222, 3434 4444, 3535 5555,  
3636 6666, 3737 7777, 3838 8888, 3939 9999  
3131 3333, 3232 3333, 3434 3333, 3535 3333,  
3636 3333, 3737 3333, 3838 3333, 3939 3333

6161 1116, 6262 2226, 6363 3336, 6464 4446,  
6565 5556, 6767 7776, 6868 8886, 6969 9996  
6161 6111, 6262 6222, 6363 6333, 6464 6444,

6565 6555, 6767 6777, 6868 6888, 6969 6999  
6161 6661, 6262 6662, 6363 6663, 6464 6664,  
6565 6665, 6767 6667, 6868 6668, 6969 6669  
6161 1666, 6262 2666, 6363 3666, 6464 4666,  
6565 5666, 6767 7666, 6868 8666, 6969 9666  
6161 1166, 6262 2266, 6363 3366, 6464 4466,  
6565 5566, 6767 7766, 6868 8866, 6969 9966  
6161 6611, 6262 6622, 6363 6633, 6464 6644,  
6565 6655, 6767 6677, 6868 6688, 6969 6699  
6161 1111, 6262 2222, 6363 3333, 6464 4444,  
6565 5555, 6767 7777, 6868 8888, 6969 9999  
6161 6666, 6262 6666, 6363 6666, 6464 6666,  
6565 6666, 6767 6666, 6868 6666, 6969 6666

7171 1117, 7272 2227, 7373 3337,7474 4447,  
7575 5557, 7676 6667, 7878 8887, 7979 9997  
7171 7111, 7272 7222, 7777 7333, 7474 7444,  
7575 7555, 7676 7666, 7878 7888, 7979 7999  
7171 7771, 7272 7772, 7373 7773, 7474 7774,  
7575 7775, 7676 7776, 7878 7778, 7979 7779  
7171 1777, 7272 2777, 7373 3777,7474 4777,  
7575 5777, 7676 6777, 7878 8777, 7979 9777  
7171 1177, 7272 2277, 7373 3377, 7474 4477,  
7575 5577, 7676 6677, 7878 8877, 7979 9977  
7171 7711, 7272 7722, 7373 7733, 7474 7744,  
7575 7755, 7676 7766, 7878 7788, 7979 7799  
7171 1111, 7272 2222, 7777 3333, 7474 4444,  
7575 5555, 7676 6666, 7878 8888, 7979 9999  
7171 7777, 7272 7777, 7373 7777,7474 7777,  
7575 7777, 7676 7777, 7878 7777, 7979 7777

8181 1118, 8282 2228, 8383 3338, 8484 4448,  
8585 5558, 8686 6668, 8787 7778, 8989 9998  
8181 8111, 8282 8222, 8383 8333, 8484 8444,  
8585 8555, 8686 8666, 8787 8777, 8989 8999  
8181 8881, 8282 8882, 8383 8883, 8484 8884,  
8585 8885, 8686 8886, 8787 8887, 8989 8889

8181 1888, 8282 2888, 8383 3888, 8484 4888,  
8585 5888, 8686 6888, 8787 7888, 8989 9888  
8181 1188, 8282 2288, 8383 3388, 8484 4488,  
8585 5588, 8686 6688, 8787 7788, 8989 9988  
8181 8811, 8282 8822, 8383 8833, 8484 8844,  
8585 8855, 8686 8866, 8787 8877, 8989 8899  
8181 1111, 8282 2222, 8383 3333, 8484 4444,  
8585 5555, 8686 6666, 8787 7777, 8989 9999  
8181 8888, 8282 8888, 8383 8888, 8484 8888,  
8585 8888, 8686 8888, 8787 8888, 8989 8888

9292 2229, 9393 3339, 9595 5559, 9696 6669, 9797 7779, 9898 8889  
9292 9222, 9393 9333, 9595 9555, 9696 9666, 9797 9777, 9898 9888  
9292 9992, 9393 9993, 9595 9995, 9696 9996, 9797 9997, 9898 9998  
9292 2999, 9393 3999, 9595 5999, 9696 6999, 9797 7999, 9898 8999  
9292 2299, 9393 3399, 9595 5599, 9696 6699, 9797 7799, 9898 8899  
9292 9922, 9393 9933, 9595 9955, 9696 9966, 9797 9977, 9898 9988  
9292 2222, 9393 3333, 9595 5555, 9696 6666, 9797 7777, 9898 8888  
9292 9999, 9393 9999, 9595 9999, 9696 9999, 9797 9999, 9898 9999

3456 3344, 3456 4433, 3456 4455, 3456 5544, 3456 5566, 3456 6655  
3456 3355, 3456 5533, 3456 6633, 3456 3366, 3456 4466, 3456 6644  
3456 3444, 3456 3555, 3456 3666, 3456 4333, 3456 4555, 3456 4666  
3456 5333, 3456 5444, 3456 5666, 3456 6333, 3456 6444, 3456 6555

6789 6677, 6789 7766, 6789 7788, 6789 8877, 6789 8899, 6789 9988  
6789 6688, 6789 8866, 6789 9966, 6789 6699, 6789 7799, 6789 9977  
6789 6777, 6789 6888, 6789 6999, 6789 7666, 6789 7888, 6789 7999  
6789 8666, 6789 8777, 6789 8999, 6789 9666, 6789 9777, 6789 9888

2222 2233, 3333 2233, 6666 2233, 7777 2233, 8888 2233  
2222 2266, 3333 2266, 6666 2266, 7777 2266, 8888 2266  
2222 2288, 3333 2288, 6666 2288, 7777 2288, 8888 2288  
2222 2299, 3333 2299, 6666 2299, 7777 2299, 8888 2299  
2222 3322, 3333 3322, 6666 3322, 7777 3322, 8888 3322  
2222 3366, 3333 3366, 6666 3366, 7777 3366, 8888 3366  
2222 3388, 3333 3388, 6666 3388, 7777 3388, 8888 3388  
2222 3399, 3333 3399, 6666 3399, 7777 3399, 8888 3399  
2222 6622, 3333 6622, 6666 6622, 7777 6622, 8888 6622  
2222 6633, 3333 6633, 6666 6633, 7777 6633, 8888 6633  
2222 6688, 3333 6688, 6666 6688, 7777 6688, 8888 6688  
2222 6699, 3333 6699, 6666 6699, 7777 6699, 8888 6699  
2222 8822, 3333 8822, 6666 8822, 7777 8822, 8888 8822  
2222 8833, 3333 8833, 6666 8833, 7777 8833, 8888 8833  
2222 8866, 3333 8866, 6666 8866, 7777 8866, 8888 8866  
2222 8899, 3333 8899, 6666 8899, 7777 8899, 8888 8899  
2222 9922, 3333 9922, 6666 9922, 7777 9922, 8888 9922  
2222 9933, 3333 9933, 6666 9933, 7777 9933, 8888 9933  
2222 9966, 3333 9966, 6666 9966, 7777 9966, 8888 9966  
2222 9988, 3333 9988, 6666 9988, 7777 9988, 8888 9988

## Schedule 2

### Secondary Special Numbers

A secondary special number is an 8-digit number other than a primary special number:

- a) the last 4 digits of which are in one of the following combinations:

0123, 1234, 2345, 3456, 4567, 5678, 6789, 7890

0987, 9876, 8765, 7654, 6543, 5432, 4321, 3210

0000, 0011, 0022, 0033, 0044, 0055, 0066, 0077, 0088, 0099

1100, 1111, 1122, 1133, 1144, 1155, 1166, 1177, 1188, 1199

2200, 2211, 2222, 2233, 2244, 2255, 2266, 2277, 2288, 2299

3300, 3311, 3322, 3333, 3344, 3355, 3366, 3377, 3388, 3399

4400, 4411, 4422, 4433, 4444, 4455, 4466, 4477, 4488, 4499

5500, 5511, 5522, 5533, 5544, 5555, 5566, 5577, 5588, 5599

6600, 6611, 6622, 6633, 6644, 6655, 6666, 6677, 6688, 6699

7700, 7711, 7722, 7733, 7744, 7755, 7766, 7777, 7788, 7799

8800, 8811, 8822, 8833, 8844, 8855, 8866, 8877, 8888, 8899

9900, 9911, 9922, 9933, 9944, 9955, 9966, 9977, 9988, 9999

1001, 1221, 1331, 1441, 1551, 1661, 1771, 1881, 1991

2002, 2112, 2332, 2442, 2552, 2662, 2772, 2882, 2992

3003, 3113, 3223, 3443, 3553, 3663, 3773, 3883, 3993

4004, 4114, 4224, 4334, 4554, 4664, 4774, 4884, 4994

5005, 5115, 5225, 5335, 5445, 5665, 5775, 5885, 5995

6006, 6116, 6226, 6336, 6446, 6556, 6776, 6886, 6996

7007, 7117, 7227, 7337, 7447, 7557, 7667, 7887, 7997

8008, 8118, 8228, 8338, 8448, 8558, 8668, 8778, 8998

9009, 9119, 9229, 9339, 9449, 9559, 9669, 9779, 9889

0101, 0202, 0303, 0404, 0505, 0606, 0707, 0808, 0909

1010, 1212, 1313, 1414, 1515, 1616, 1717, 1818, 1919

2020, 2121, 2323, 2424, 2525, 2626, 2727, 2828, 2929

3030, 3131, 3232, 3434, 3535, 3636, 3737, 3838, 3939

4040, 4141, 4242, 4343, 4545, 4646, 4747, 4848, 4949  
5050, 5151, 5252, 5353, 5454, 5656, 5757, 5858, 5959  
6060, 6161, 6262, 6363, 6464, 6565, 6767, 6868, 6969  
7070, 7171, 7272, 7373, 7474, 7575, 7676, 7878, 7979  
8080, 8181, 8282, 8383, 8484, 8585, 8686, 8787, 8989  
9090, 9191, 9292, 9393, 9494, 9595, 9696, 9797, 9898

0111, 0222, 0333, 0444, 0555, 0666, 0777, 0888, 0999  
1000, 1222, 1333, 1444, 1555, 1666, 1777, 1888, 1999  
2000, 2111, 2333, 2444, 2555, 2666, 2777, 2888, 2999  
3000, 3111, 3222, 3444, 3555, 3666, 3777, 3888, 3999  
4000, 4111, 4222, 4333, 4555, 4666, 4777, 4888, 4999  
5000, 5111, 5222, 5333, 5444, 5666, 5777, 5888, 5999  
6000, 6111, 6222, 6333, 6444, 6555, 6777, 6888, 6999  
7000, 7111, 7222, 7333, 7444, 7555, 7666, 7888, 7999  
8000, 8111, 8222, 8333, 8444, 8555, 8666, 8777, 8999  
9000, 9111, 9222, 9333, 9444, 9555, 9666, 9777, 9888

0001, 0002, 0003, 0004, 0005, 0006, 0007, 0008, 0009  
1110, 1112, 1113, 1114, 1115, 1116, 1117, 1118, 1119  
2220, 2221, 2223, 2224, 2225, 2226, 2227, 2228, 2229  
3330, 3331, 3332, 3334, 3335, 3336, 3337, 3338, 3339  
4440, 4441, 4442, 4443, 4445, 4446, 4447, 4448, 4449  
5550, 5551, 5552, 5553, 5554, 5556, 5557, 5558, 5559  
6660, 6661, 6662, 6663, 6664, 6665, 6667, 6668, 6669  
7770, 7771, 7772, 7773, 7774, 7775, 7776, 7778, 7779  
8880, 8881, 8882, 8883, 8884, 8885, 8886, 8887, 8889  
9990, 9991, 9992, 9993, 9994, 9995, 9996, 9997, 9998

8808, 8818, 8828, 8838, 8848, 8868, 8878, 8898, 8088,  
8188, 8288, 8388, 8488, 8688, 8788, 8988  
1288, 1388, 1688, 1788, 1988, 1168, 1628, 3288, 1668

1223, 1228, 1323, 1328, 1368, 1623, 1868, 1938, 2238,  
2268, 2338, 2388, 2638, 2688, 2838, 3328, 3668, 6268,  
6338, 6638, 6833, 6988, 8238, 8328, 8663, 9228, 9328,  
9838, 9899

b) the last 4 digits are made up of numbers in the same order or in the  
reverse order of the numbers in the first 4 digits



Provided that it is not used for the provision of Direct Dialling In (DDI) services<sup>7</sup>.

Note: The TA may further designate any numbers identified and recommended by the operators in an allocated number block but not included in a) or b) above as secondary special numbers.

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<sup>7</sup> If numbers on this list are used for the provision of DDI services, they will not be considered as Special Numbers. This is in view of the technical difficulty in disabling individual Secondary Special Numbers within a DDI block in case the subscriber does not wish to pay for them.

## Schedule 3

### Special Number Blocks and Access Codes<sup>8</sup>

A special number block is the group of numbers the first 3 digits of which are in one of the following combinations:

222, 333, 444, 555, 666, 777, 888  
234, 345, 456, 567, 678, 789, 890  
202, 212, 232, 242, 252, 262, 272, 282, 292  
303, 313, 323, 343, 353, 363, 373, 383, 393  
404, 414, 424, 434, 454, 464, 474, 484, 494  
505, 515, 525, 535, 545, 565, 575, 585, 595  
606, 616, 626, 636, 646, 656, 676, 686, 696  
707, 717, 727, 737, 747, 757, 767, 787, 797  
808, 818, 828, 838, 848, 858, 868, 878, 898  
909, 919, 929, 939, 949, 959, 969, 979, 989

*(For the purpose of SNA, a special number block shall consist of at least one number, and shall not include numbers listed in Schedules 1 and 2.)*

A special access code is one of the following:

001, 002, 0030, 0033, 0038, 0039, 004, 005, 006, 007, 008, 009  
101, 111, 121, 131, 123  
1500, 1511, 1515, 1522, 1533, 1555, 1566, 1577, 1588, 1599  
1600, 1608, 1611, 1616, 1618, 1622, 1623, 1628, 1633, 1638  
1668, 1683, 1688, 1632, 1648, 1655, 1658, 1661, 1662, 1663  
1666, 1672, 1677, 1678, 1680, 1681, 1682, 1686, 1687, 1689  
1692, 1693, 1696, 1698, 1699  
171, 181

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<sup>8</sup> Certain numbers and codes will not be made available for allocation under the special number arrangement. For example, numbers with leading digit "4" & "5" will be reserved for network operation and for migration to new numbering plans in future.

## **Overseas Experience in SNA**

### ***Netherlands***

In the Netherlands, customers can ask the National Regulatory Authority of the Netherlands for assignment of their preferred numbers at a premium rate. For example, short numbers (eight digits or less) in both the 0800 and 090x number ranges are available. The initial and annual fees for each short number are about HK\$ 500 respectively. For normal telephone numbers (eight digits or more), the initial and annual fees are about HK\$100 respectively. In order to conserve short number resources, users assigned with short numbers should have at least 10,000 calls and 4,500 call attempts per month.

### ***Norway***

2. The Norwegian Post and Telecommunications Authority has made available 8,000 5-digit numbers for use by customers. These numbers are classified into 5 categories in accordance with different digit patterns. e.g. 02000 and 03000 are Category A numbers while 02345 and 03456 are Category D numbers. The annual charges of these numbers range from about HK\$85,000 (Cat. A numbers) to HK\$21,000 (Cat. E numbers). These numbers are mainly used by companies for large marketing campaigns.

### ***Singapore***

3. In Singapore, Infocomm Development Authority (IDA), the regulatory authority for telecommunications, has defined certain easy to remember patterns of telephone numbers to have certain values. Currently, they have identified 486 “golden numbers” in each number block of 10,000 numbers. IDA will charge telecommunications operators a fixed sum of SG\$50 for each of these golden numbers at the time of number block allocation. i.e. an amount of SG\$24,300 for each number block.

4. Having been allocated with the number block, the operators are free to auction these golden numbers to their customers. For example, Singtel, the dominant fixed network operator, imposes a minimum bid of SG\$515 for a single golden number such as xxx1166, xxx3388, and SG\$2000 for some designated

golden numbers such as xxx1111, xxxx2222, etc.

### ***United Kingdom***

5. In United Kingdom, the Office of Telecommunications (OFTEL) has conducted a consultation on “Developing Numbering Administration” in July 1998 and proposed the introduction of individual number allocation. In a Statement issued by OFTEL on May 1999, OFTEL concluded that individual number allocation and charges for the allocation of individual numbers should be introduced.

6. In the OFTEL Numbering Forum held on September 2000, it was reported that the plans to introduce individual number allocation and charging for number allocation remained firm but had been deferred because legislation to obtain powers to charge at above-cost would not be possible until the 2001/2002 Parliamentary session.