



## **Afghanistan Telecommunications Regulatory Authority**

### **Mobile Number Portability**

### **(Draft) PROCEDURES, 2018**

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## **PART I**

### **Scope and Objectives**

1. These Procedures are made to provide a regulatory framework for the operation of Mobile Number Portability (MNP) in Afghanistan.
2. These Procedures shall guide the administration of the MNP system throughout Afghanistan and shall apply to the NPC Administrator, all licensed telecommunication service providers in Afghanistan, other Authorized Parties and by extension to the Customers of the various Mobile Service Providers.
3. The objectives of these Procedures are:
  - a. To ensure an effective and efficient porting regime.
  - b. To foster and strengthen the relationships between Mobile Service Providers and other Authorized Parties and to create a level playing field for all operators.
  - c. To safeguard Customers' rights and ensure Customers' satisfaction with the MNP process.
  - d. To sustain quality of service delivery by Mobile Service Providers and Other Authorized Parties in order to ensure a seamless launch and continued improvement in the MNP process and by extension, the telecommunications sector in Afghanistan.

## **PART II**

### **Business Rules**

4. The MNP Business Rules as may be amended from time to time are hereby incorporated by reference into these Procedures and shall always operate in strict conformity with these Procedures.
5. Notwithstanding the provisions of Section 4, these Procedures shall in all cases supersede the provisions of the MNP Business Rules whenever there is a conflict in the application of their respective provisions in the implementation of the MNP service.

## **PART III**

### **Administration of the Number Portability Clearinghouse (NPC)**

6. (1) There shall be an NPC set up to be administered by the NPC Administrator. The NPC Administrator shall use the NPC for the performance of the following functions:
  - a. relaying of messages between the Donor and Recipient Operators and maintaining of status information for each individual and bulk porting transaction;
  - b. management of the porting process to monitor the compliance with target porting timelines by the Mobile Service Providers;
  - c. Verification of the validity of porting transactions;
  - d. Interworking with the Customer Information (SIM Registration) Database to verify Customer Registration status to validate Customer porting transactions;
  - e. reception and checking of SMS messages from Customers confirming the request to port;
  - f. communicating with the Customers and advising them by SMS on the status of their porting requests;
  - g. real-time broadcasting of information to all Mobile Service Operators of the identity of the Recipient Operator serving a number after porting for the purpose of updating Routing arrangements;

- h. updating of the SIM Registration Database to reflect the migration of successfully ported numbers from Donor Operators to Recipient Mobile Service Providers;
- i. collection of logs on all port activities;
- j. collection of statistics on porting;
- k. maintenance of the servicing operator status for every mobile number in Afghanistan in real-time to reflect changes effected through the completion of porting transactions;
- l. storage of information of the history of each porting transaction excluding any personal Customer data, which should be kept once a porting has been completed only to the extent allowed by Law;
- m. managing daily or weekly porting quotas between the Mobile Service Providers in the interests of ensuring consistent porting performance and timescales between all Mobile Service Providers at all times;
- n. maintaining a Reference Data Base of all ported numbers and the provision of download of this information to any Mobile Service Provider, especially new entrants; and management of ancillary porting functions as required, including, return to Number Range Holder, Cooling Off and emergency repatriation processes etc.

(2) The Number Portability Clearinghouse and the Number Portability System to be deployed in Afghanistan shall be administered and run in accordance with the provisions of the Act, these Procedures, the MNP Business Rules as amended and the respective Customer and Inter-Operators' Code of conduct issued from time to time.

(3) The NPC Administrator shall, in every case, ensure the operation of a maintenance period, for any period of time falling between the hours of [00:00hrs and 04:00hrs] to ensure minimal disruption of the MNP Service and the administrative system.

7. (1) The NPC Administrator shall set-up and operate an MNP helpdesk with the responsibility for:
- a. monitoring the continuity and quality of service of the NPC;
  - b. identifying and resolving service impacting faults and issues;
  - c. receiving, reviewing and resolving queries and complaints from Mobile Service Providers and ATRA; and
  - d. other responsibilities as determined by ATRA from time to time.

(2) The NPC Administrator will operate its MNP helpdesk during the Prescribed Porting Period. The NPC Administrator outside the normal porting hours shall set-up and operate monitoring and fault resolution of the NPC. Such out of hours monitoring and fault resolution may be performed from within the NPC Administrator's Afghan premises or from its remote external location.

(3) The NPC Administrator shall not be responsible for dealing directly with complaints from individual Customers.

8. (1) Each Mobile Service Provider shall have a customer complaint unit within its organization with the responsibility of receiving, reviewing and resolving the complaints made by a Customer(s) in respect of the Number Portability services rendered to them.

(2) A Customer may lodge a complaint by placing a call to the customer complaint desk designated by the NPC Administrator, which is routed straight to the customer complaint unit of the Recipient Operator for due attention.

- (3) Notwithstanding the provisions in any other Procedures issued by ATRA, the Recipient Operator's customer complaint unit shall respond to Customers' complaints within two (2) hours after a problem is reported.
- (4) The Recipient Operator's customer complaint unit shall give a progress update to the Customer concerning efforts being made by it to address the problem reported by the Customer, every day until the problem is resolved.
- (5) The Recipient Operator's customer complaint unit shall record the Customer's complaints and take all necessary steps to ensure that the complaint or query is resolved within a maximum of twenty-four (24) hours from the time the Customer makes the complaint.
- (6) The Recipient Operator's customer complaint unit shall keep records of all complaints made to it and any issues arising from these complaints shall be identified and serve as suggested points for the review of the Code of Practice.
- (7) The Recipient Operator and Donor Operators shall work positively and collaboratively to ensure that Customers porting complaints are investigated and resolved promptly and fairly.
- (8) Where a Recipient Operator and Donor Operator are unable to agree on the actions to resolve a Customer's complaint or query within the twenty-four (24) hours timeframe, the Recipient Operator shall refer in a timely manner such complaint/incident to ATRA for resolution.
9. (1) The Mobile Service Providers and the NPC Administrator shall keep confidential and shall not disclose any data supplied by the Customers to any of them in connection with the MNP System or Service.
- (2) The NPC Administrator and the Mobile Service Providers shall put in place a suitable mechanism for safeguarding the data provided by porting Customers from unauthorized interception or unauthorized access and shall ensure that such data is used solely for the purposes of porting of mobile numbers and not for any other purpose.
- (3) The NPC Administrator and the Mobile Service Providers shall ensure that data collected and used to process porting requests shall be authenticated by the Customer Information Database. The NPC Administrator and the Mobile Service Providers, shall as required by ATRA amend the design and operations of the porting process and systems to align with the requirements of and future changes to the Afghan Customer Information registration process and systems.
- (4) Provided that the provisions of this sub-section (3) above shall not prevent such Mobile Service Providers from providing such data or access to such data for monitoring purposes to the designated security agencies and authorized personnel of ATRA.
- (5) The use of the word authorized persons in this clause shall include authorized personnel of ATRA, law enforcement agencies and other relevant regulatory bodies.
- (6) The NPC Administrator and all Licensed Operators shall offer the MNP services in compliance with the Inter-Operator Code of Practice and MNP Consumer Code of Practice.

## Part IV

### Relationship of Mobile Service Providers and NPC Administrator

10. (1) All existing interconnect agreements or arrangements between Operators, shall, upon the coming into force of these Procedures, stand amended so as to conform to the provisions of the Procedures as regards routing of traffic to and from ported and non-ported mobile numbers using the direct routing approach mandated by ATRA and the corresponding routing prefixing allocated by ATRA.

(2) Other Licensed Operators in Afghanistan shall before the launch of MNP service establish connectivity from their respective MNP gateway to the main and Disaster recovery sites of the NPC Administrator at their own cost;

Provided that –

- a. A Licensed Operator having licenses in more than one licensed service area may establish such connectivity to the main and Disaster recovery site(s) of the NPC Administrator common for all its licensed service areas; and
- b. A Licensed Operator, who is also a fixed interconnect exchange and/ or international gateway Operator providing carriage service to another Licensed Operator, may establish such connectivity to the main and Disaster recovery sites of the NPC Administrator common for all its licensed activities and share its Local Number Portability Database across its various licensed activities for the purpose of implementing MNP System:

Provided further:

- i. that no Licensed Operator shall share its Local Number Portability Database with another Licensed Operator;
- ii. that a Licensed Operator that is sharing its Local Number Portability Database across its licensed activities shall ensure that such sharing of Local Number Portability Database enables it to directly route traffic to ported mobile numbers.

(3) Every Licensed Operator on whose network traffic originates shall be responsible for the correct routing of such traffic.

(4) A Licensed Operator shall not be permitted to charge Additional Conveyance Charges for direct routed traffic originated and terminated in Afghanistan.

(5) Calls received from Licensed Operators with no access to the Reference Data Base shall be routed to the original block service provider, and where the number has been ported, the call shall be routed to the current Mobile Service Provider on whose network the number called is active.

(6) Other Authorized Parties who are able to port but do not possess the capability for automated porting platforms or interfaces may provide porting services through the NPC. The NPC Administrator will, however, be entitled to charge such an Authorized Party separately for this service at a commercially competitive rate to be approved by ATRA.

(7) In case of International incoming messages, the International Gateway Operator carrying such messages shall be responsible for correct direct routing of traffic to the terminating operator through All Call Query direct routing via its own Local Number Portability Database.

(8) The International Gateway Operator or Number Range Holder may, as directed by ATRA, levy an Additional Conveyance Charge for performing the All Call Query Direct routing of incoming international traffic to ported numbers. Such Additional Conveyance Charges will be set by ATRA and will be charged by the International gateway operator or Number Range Holder to the terminating or Recipient Operator.

### **Rights and Obligations**

11. (1) The Donor Operator shall continue to provide all subscribed telecommunication services to the Customer who has sought porting of his mobile number until completion of the porting process.  
  
(2) The Donor Operator shall maintain records of all mobile numbers for which porting requests have been rejected by it for a minimum period of twelve (12) months from the date of rejection of request.
12. (1) The Recipient Operator shall pay the NPC Administrator, the transaction porting fee for every number successfully ported at the rate specified by ATRA in sub-section (1) of section 20 from time to time, within thirty (30) days of receipt of the bill from the NPC Administrator or within such other time limit as may be mutually agreed upon.  
  
(2) The Recipient Operator shall maintain records in respect of all mobile numbers for which porting requests have been processed and granted for a minimum period of twelve (12) months from the date of the successful porting of such mobile numbers.
13. (1) The NPC Administrator shall make all efforts to facilitate expeditious porting of numbers through effective coordination with the Donor Operator and Recipient Operator.  
  
(2) The NPC Administrator shall generate specific sets of statistics and reports including but not limited to, the number of porting requests received, the number of porting carried out successfully, the number of failed porting requests with reasons for failures and the response times of Mobile Service Providers at each stage of the porting process and such other statistics and reports as may be determined by ATRA or in accordance with the Business Rules.  
  
(3) In the event that a Recipient Operator fails to pay the Transaction Porting Fee within the time limit specified in sub section (1) of section 12, the NPC Administrator shall, before taking any action, issue a notice to such Recipient Operator, and within the period of fifteen (15) days from the specified time limit, call upon such Recipient Operator to make payment of the outstanding dues within such period.  
  
(4) Notwithstanding the issue of notice to the Recipient Operator under sub-section (3), the NPC Administrator shall in no case discontinue the provision of Mobile Number Portability Service to a defaulting Recipient Operator.
14. (1) Any dispute arising between the Recipient Operator and the Donor Operator regarding number portability processing of individual Customer numbers or related to specific Customer complaints; or any Mobile Service Provider and the NPC Administrator pursuant to the legal framework of the MNP System in Afghanistan shall in the first instance be resolved amicably between the concerned parties.

(2) In the event that the dispute is not resolved amicably between the parties within seven (7) days of the existence of the dispute, the dispute shall be resolved in accordance with the Business Rules.

(3) The porting obligations of the Mobile Service Provider shall subsist during the pendency of any dispute until a final determination is made in accordance with the Business Rules or by ATRA.

## **PART V**

### **General Porting Guidelines**

15. (1) The provision of the MNP Service to all Customers shall be the collective responsibility of all Mobile Service Providers and the NPC Administrator on a non-discriminatory basis, within the timelines set out in the Business Rules as amended from time to time.

(2) The Customer shall initiate the porting process by visiting the Recipient Operator's representative office, customer care shop, or retail point of sale. The Recipient Operator shall then have primary responsibility for ensuring that the porting process is successfully completed.

(3) Every Mobile Service Provider shall ensure that its network enables a Customer to send the porting approval SMS at no charge to the Customer even where the customer has zero credit balance.

(4) A Donor Operator may not deliver the SMS if the Customer is already barred or suspended from making outbound calls or sending SMS.

16. (1) Every Customer shall be eligible to make a request for porting his mobile number. Provided that:

- a. a period of Ninety (90) days has expired from the date of activation of his mobile number after its last porting, in the case of a mobile number which has been ported earlier;
- b. the mobile number has been registered on the Customer Information (SIM Registration) Database and the Customer's identity details match those held by the Donor Operator and the Customer Information Database, in accordance with the MNP process requirements determined by ATRA in the Business Rules;
- c. the mobile number is not blocked or subject to restricted service provisions by the current Mobile Service Provider at the time the porting request is submitted;
- d. there is no pending request for change of ownership of the mobile number; and
- e. porting of the concerned mobile number has not been prohibited by a Court of Law.

17. (1) The Porting Request Form shall, inter alia, incorporate:

- a. the eligibility criteria as stated in Section 16 above;
- b. an undertaking by the Customer that he is eligible/authorized to request porting of the mobile number and that the number has not been reported stolen or lost, nor is the number subject to fraudulent or inappropriate activity;
- c. in the case of a pre-paid Customer, an undertaking by the Customer to the effect that he understands and agrees that, upon porting of the mobile number, the balance amount of air time on that account, if any, at the time of porting shall lapse and in the case of a post-paid Porting Request Form Customer porting does not extinguish the

Customer's liability to pay the Donor Operator where there are outstanding payments due to the Donor Operator;

- d. an undertaking by the Customer to the effect that he understands and agrees that, upon porting of the mobile number, ancillary services such as voicemail, SMS and MMS messages saved by the Customer may be lost;
- e. an undertaking by the Customer to the effect that he understands and takes direct responsibility for recovering from the Donor Operator all outstanding monies held and corresponding mobile banking accounts registered to the mobile number that is the subject of the porting request, at the time the porting request is lodged with the Recipient Operator; and
- f. Such details of the Customer as prescribed by ATRA from time to time.

(2) Each porting request shall be accompanied by:

- a. a completed porting application form
- b. the Customer's photo identification, driver's license, National Identity card or International Passport; and
- c. a declaration that the mobile number to be ported has already been successfully registered in the Customer Information (SIM Registration) Database.

18. The Recipient Operator shall confirm the eligibility of the Customer based on the criteria itemized in Section 17 and upon such confirmation send a Porting Approval Request Message to the Number Portability Clearinghouse. The Recipient Operator shall at the successful initiation of the porting process issue the Customer a new SIM.

19. The MNP procedure and timelines shall be as provided in the MNP Business Rules as amended from time to time.

## **PART VI**

### **Transaction Charges and Reporting Requirement**

20. (1) ATRA shall approve a Per Port Transaction fee which shall be levied on the Recipient Operator by the Number Portability Clearinghouse for each successful porting transaction completed and such fees shall be paid to the NPC directly by the Recipient Mobile Service Provider. No payments shall however be made for unsuccessful portings.

(2) All operators and Interconnect Exchanges shall be provided with access to the Central NP Database free of charge to enable proper transiting and routing of calls. Provided that such operator or Interconnect Exchange has in place an All Call Query infrastructure to enable it interconnect with the Central NP Database.

(3) The All Call Query response system of the MNP System shall be provided by the NPC to other network providers, Interconnect Exchange service providers and other authorized parties at a dipping charge to be approved by ATRA where such parties do not have their own ACQ infrastructure.

(4) The operators and interconnect exchanges shall provide other authorized parties with access to the information in the Central NP Database at a charge to be approved by ATRA.

(5) The Number Range Holder operator shall be entitled to levy on the originating operator a transit charge approved by ATRA for all national calls to the Number Range Holder operator where the number has ported to a Recipient Operator. The transit charge shall be invoiced to the Originating Operator by the Number Range Holder

operator and be treated as part of the routine interconnect billing activities between Mobile Service Providers.

(6) The charge for the All Call Query response system shall be approved by ATRA within thirty days from the date of publication of these Procedures.

21. (1) ATRA may, by order or direction in writing, from time to time, intervene, for the purpose of protecting the interest of the Customers or the Mobile Service Providers for monitoring and ensuring compliance with these Procedures so as to promote and ensure the continued growth of the telecommunications sector in Afghanistan.

(2) ATRA may review and modify the Per Port Transaction charge and Dipping charge when the NPC Administrator revises such charges or at such intervals as ATRA may consider appropriate, but not more often than annually.

## **PART VII**

### **Sanctions and Penalties**

22. (1) ATRA may exercise its supervisory and disciplinary powers against the NPC Administrator, any Licensed Operator in Afghanistan and Mobile Service Providers in Afghanistan in the manner prescribed in these Procedures.

(2) The general provisions of the Act and Enforcement Procedures shall apply in all respects for the enforcement of the sanctions and penalties pursuant to these Procedures.

(3) ATRA may, where necessary, stipulate penalties for non-compliance with the provisions of these Procedures in addition or in the alternative to any other penalties that may be contained in the Act or the Enforcement Procedures.

23. (1) Notwithstanding the terms and conditions contained in the MNP License, ATRA reserves the right to revoke the MNP License upon the occurrence of the following:

- a. Failure of the NPC Administrator to implement MNP Systems and procedures within the timelines set by ATRA for the implementation of MNP in Afghanistan.
- b. Failure of the NPC Administrator to establish an Interconnecting and/or interworking agreement with Mobile Service Providers and Other Authorized Parties or discrimination and inequality in honoring such existing agreements.

(2) The failure of the NPC Administrator to perform its reporting obligations under these Procedures including reporting and repatriation of inactive ported numbers as and when directed by ATRA shall subject the NPC Administrator to a penalty of one-hundred thousand Afghanis (Afs. 100,000) for every report period of the default; provided, however, that ATRA shall not impose such penalties where the failure was not as a result of willful neglect of the NPC Administrator and the issue is resolved within ten (10) days of occurrence.

24. (1) ATRA may impose a penalty on a Mobile Service Provider or Other Authorized Party in any of the following circumstances:

- a. Failure of a Mobile Service Provider to submit a porting approval request on behalf of each qualified requesting Customer within the set timeframe.

- b. Failure of a Mobile Service Provider to comply with the approved time for the completion of any porting activity including but not limited to the delivery or communication of porting responses to the NPC.
- c. Failure of the Donor Operator to permit Customers to send free SMS to NPC at the assigned short code unless entire account is barred.
- d. Failure of a Mobile Service Provider or Other Authorized Parties to:
  - i. Synchronize or take downloads of data from the Central NP Database to the Local NP Database upon receipt of port completion messages and within the set time.
  - ii. Failure of a Mobile Service Provider to directly route traffic using a Local NP Database infrastructure in accordance to All Call Query Direct Routing approach mandated by ATRA;
  - iii. Failure of a Mobile Service Provider to take appropriate steps to accord Customers the desired win-back protection provided under the MNP Business Rules.
- e. Rejection of a porting approval request by Donor Operator without citing a true and permitted basis.
- f. Donor Operator contacting a porting Customer prior to completion of the porting process.
- g. Abuse of the emergency restore process to circumvent the ninety (90) day onward porting rule.

(2) The fine to be imposed as penalty shall be a minimum fee of ten thousand Afghanis (Afs. 10,000) for each act or omission and twenty thousand Afghanis (Afs. 20,000) for each incidence of violation.

25. (1) A Mobile Service Provider shall pay to ATRA the sum of fifty thousand Afghanis (Afs. 50,000) for each act of contravention and ten thousand Afghanis (Afs. 10,000) for each day that the contravention continues to occur for an act falling under any of the following categories:

- a. Submission of a porting approval request without Customer's consent on an approved and completed porting request form.
- b. Any contract or communication by the Donor Operator to a customer at the commencement of a port transaction calculated at or likely to dissuade the Customer from completing the port transaction.
- c. Provision of false, inaccurate, or misleading information related to the porting process through any medium of communication.
- d. Provision of false information in any report to ATRA.
- e. Failure of the Recipient Operator to obtain Customer's informed consent to porting before submitting a porting approval request in his/her behalf.
- f. A Mobile Services Provider providing false or misleading information regarding network attributes and Customer proposition to a potential Customer with the intent of enticing him or her to assent or dissent to porting.
- g. Failure to provide ATRA access to employees and agents in the course of an investigation.

26. Any person who carries out or attempts an unauthorized porting of a number shall be guilty of an offence and upon conviction be liable to a fine of fifty thousand Afghanis (Afs. 50,000).

## PART VIII

### Miscellaneous

27. ATRA shall issue related Procedures as required in order to implement MNP in Afghanistan.

28. In these Procedures, unless the context otherwise specifies:

- a. **“Act”** means the Telecommunications Services Regulation Act, published on 08/10/2005 in the Official Gazette No. 863, as amended.
- b. **“Additional Conveyance Charges”** means the additional costs incurred in routing each and every call to ported number. These utilization costs are Current Expenditure (Opex) costs.
- c. **“All Call Query (ACQ)”** means an “off-switch” number portability solution which routes the call directly from the Originating Operator’s network to the Recipient Operator’s network, bypassing the involvement of the Donor Operator’s network. A consequence of this solution is that all calls will involve a query to data provided on or by the Central Number Portability Database.
- d. **“Authorized Parties”** means any stakeholder duly authorized by ATRA, involved in the provision of mobile services in Afghanistan, including MNP services.
- e. **“Central Number Portability (NP) Database”** means a non-real-time database that is used to store Afghanistan's number portability routing data. These data can directly provide routing information or are stored in a format which request further processing in order to render routing information.
- f. **“Customer Information (SIM Registration) Database”** means the non-real-time database used to store the information of mobile service users in Afghanistan.
- g. **“Donor Operator or Donor Service Provider”** means the Mobile Service Provider from whom the number was initially ported
- h. **“Enforcement Procedures”** means procedures specifically developed by ATRA other than the present procedures, aimed at enforcing the implementation of MNP in Afghanistan.
- i. **“Inter-Operator’s Code of Conduct”** means non-legally-binding guidelines prepared by the licensed operators to manage the relations amongst them.
- j. **“International Gateway”** means a switching system used to aggregate inbound and outbound wholesale international traffic with provisions for allowing physical monitoring of it.
- k. **“International Gateway Operator”** means an operator authorized to establish, maintain and operate an International Gateway in Afghanistan.
- l. **“Licensed Operator”** means any person providing Telecom Services to any end user or to any other person in Afghanistan under a license issued by ATRA.
- m. **“Local Number Portability Database”** means a real-time database, typically operated by each Mobile Service Provider, that stores number portability data that are updated from the Central Number Portability Database, including in principle the number portability routing information to be used for routing.
- n. **“MNP Business Rules”** means extension of MNP Procedures used to manage the service between mobile service providers and between any third-party supplier of a centralized service and the Mobile Operators.
- o. **“MNP Consumer Code of Practice”** means procedures that govern the provision of services by licensed Mobile Serviced Providers in Afghanistan and related consumer practices.
- p. **“MNP Service”** means the provision of MNP to the end users.
- q. **“Mobile Number Portability (MNP)”** means the ability for a mobile subscriber to change subscription network within the same country whilst retaining their original MSISDN(s).

- r. **“Mobile Service Provider”** means any person who provides mobile services in Afghanistan.
- s. **“Number Portability Clearinghouse (NPC)”** means a centralized order-handling platform which allows automation of port orders between participating operators and the Central Number Portability Database of ported numbers.
- t. **“Number Portability System”** means all the elements and platforms used in the provision of MNP services in Afghanistan.
- u. **“Number Range Holder”** means any Mobile Service Provider who is responsible for the administration and allocation of numbers within a particular range.
- v. **“NPC Administrator”** means the person managing the Number Portability Clearinghouse in Afghanistan under a license issued by ATRA.
- w. **“Originating Operator or Originating Service Provider”** means the operator of the network serving a calling end user.
- x. **“Porting Approval Request Message”** means a message sent by the Recipient Operator to the NPC confirming the eligibility of a Customer requesting MNP services for initiation of the porting process.
- y. **“Porting Request Form”** means a physical or electronic form filled out by the Customer requesting MNP services.
- z. **“Prescribed Porting Period”** means the time established for porting a number, not to exceed two (2) working days.
- aa. **“Recipient Operator or Recipient Service Provider”** means the Mobile Service Provider to whom the number is ported and which typically operates the recipient network.

29. These Procedures may be cited as the Mobile Number Portability Procedures, 2018.