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| **Telecommunication Standardization Bureau** |  |
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Geneva, 16 May 2012

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| Ref:  Tel:  Fax: | **TSB Circular 285**  COM 2/RH  +41 22 730 5887 +41 22 730 5853 | - To Administrations of Member States of the Union; |
| E-mail: | [tsbsg2@itu.int](mailto:tsbsg2@itu.int) | **Copy:** - To ITU-T Sector Members  - To ITU-T Associates; - To ITU-T Academia;  - To the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of  all ITU-T Study Groups and TSAG;  - To the Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau;  - To the Director of the Radiocommunication Bureau |

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| Subject: | **Possibility of parallell usage of 2 and 3 digit E.212 Mobile Network Codes (MNCs) under one geographic Mobile Country Code (MCC)** |
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| **Deadline for replies: 1 October 2012** | |

Dear Sir/Madam,

1. At its 21-29 March 2012 meeting, ITU-T Study Group 2 (SG2) received a number of contributions regarding the possible use of 2-digit Mobile Network Codes (MNCs) in parallel with 3-digit MNCs under one geographic Mobile Country Code (MCC). The MCC and the MNC are defined in Recommendation ITU-T E.212.

2. There were also contributions regarding possible new uses of E.212 resources. The possible use of new resources include for the time being:

1. MNCs for private GSM networks
2. New MCC for private GSM networks
3. MNCs for Machine to Machine (M2M) users and/or service providers
4. New MCC for M2M applications
5. New MCC for international messaging services

3. The impact of some of these new uses upon national deployment of E.212 resources could lead to exhaustion sooner than anticipated. To that end SG2 is investigating how to extend the life of a national MCC to support both current and future applications.

4. It is not the intent of this investigation or of this Circular to make retrospective changes to current 2-digit MNC assignments, but rather to understand the implications and possibilities of future flexibility being included in national MNC indentification plans by supporting mixed length in the short term, with the intent of having only 3-digit allocations for new assignements from a date yet to be agreed. If such a change of E.212 will be made, this may have an impact on the current national management and assignment of MNCs.

Since the reason to introduce 3-digit MNCs is to address the possible MNCs exhaustion that may be caused by some new uses, we believe that it is necessary to obtain information from the membership to understand how these new uses consume MNCs, in particular, the rationality of current MNC usage and the volume of MNCs required for these new uses.

5. To assist in its studies of this issue, SG2 would welcome information on the points listed below, which include questions on the the new use of MNCs:

a) What are your present assignment critiera of MNC’s (see Annexes B and F of E.212), for each of the following types of networks? Please provide a short summary.

1. Mobile networks |\_\_|
2. Mobile Virtual Network Operators (MVNOs) |\_\_|
3. Fixed networks |\_\_|
4. Satellite and non-terrestrial networks |\_\_|
5. Universal Persontal Telephony (UPT) |\_\_|
6. SMS service providers |\_\_|
7. Private GSM/mobile networks with non-roaming capabilities |\_\_|
8. Other usage (please specify:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_) |\_\_|

b) How many MNC codes have been assigned to date under your MCC (or MCCs if more than one is assigned to your country) for each of the following types of networks? Please enter the number in the space provided.

1. Mobile networks |\_\_|
2. Mobile Virtual Network Operators (MVNOs) |\_\_|
3. Fixed networks |\_\_|
4. Satellite and non-terrestrial networks |\_\_|
5. Universal Persontal Telephony (UPT) |\_\_|
6. SMS service providers |\_\_|
7. Private GSM/mobile networks with non-roaming capabilities |\_\_|
8. Other usage (please specify: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_) |\_\_|

c) During the past two years, on average how many MNC codes have been assigned to date under your MCC (or MCCs if more than one is assigned to your country) for each of the following types of networks? Please enter the number in the space provided.

1. Mobile networks |\_\_|
2. Mobile Virtual Network Operators (MVNOs) |\_\_|
3. Fixed networks |\_\_|
4. Satellite and non-terrestrial networks |\_\_|
5. Universal Persontal Telephony (UPT) |\_\_|
6. SMS service providers |\_\_|
7. Private GSM/mobile networks with non-roaming capabilities |\_\_|
8. Other usage (please specify: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_) |\_\_|

d) At what date would you expect to exhaust your available MNCs? Please indicate the year.

e) Are you aware of any issues that might arise if 3-digit MNCs are assigned in the future under your existing MCCs?

6. The approach suggested by SG2 to avoid future exhaustion of MNCs is to consider revising E.212 so that only 3-digit MNCs would be assigned at the national level for all new assignments after a certain date. That is, after a certain date there would be no more new 2-digit MNC assignments.

7. The present 2-digit MNCs and the new 3-digit MNC’s would then co-exsit under the same geographic MCC. If such approach is adopted, a new MCC would only be assigned to the country provided that it has switched to 3-digit MNC assignments and the available 3-digit MNCs have been exhausted.

8. As most Member States at present assign 2-digit MNCs, it is important to understand what, if any, modification and impact on existing and future networks would arise if the present   
2-digit MNCs and the new 3-digit MNC’s co-exist. Please provide any information that you may have regarding this issue, either in your reponse to this Circular, or as a contribution to ITU-T Study Group 2.

9. Some additional information is contained in the Liason Statement to 3GPP, 3GPP2 and GSMA that can be found in the Annex of Circular.

10. We would appreciate your replying to this Circular by **1 October 2012**, to the following address:

Telecommunication Standardization Bureau/ITU

Place des Nations

CH-1211 Geneva 20 (Switzerland)

Fax: +41 22 730 5853

Email: [tsbsg2@itu.int](mailto:tsbsg2@itu.int)

Yours faithfully,

Malcolm Johnson  
Director of the Telecommunication  
Standardization Bureau

Annex: 1

ANNEX  
(to Circular 285)  
**Liaison COM 2- LS 129**

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| **itu-old** | INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION | | | | | | **COM 2 – LS 129 – E** |
| **TELECOMMUNICATION STANDARDIZATION SECTOR**  STUDY PERIOD 2009-2012 | | | |  | | |
| **English only**  **Original: English** | | |
| **Question(s):** | | 1/2 | | Geneva, 21-29 March 2012 | | | |
| **Ref.: TD 303 Rev.2 (PLEN/2)-E** | | | | | | | |
| **Source:** | | ITU-T Study Group 2 | | | | | |
| **Title:** | | Assignment of 3 digit MNCs | | | | | |
| **LIAISON STATEMENT** | | | | | | | |
| **For action to:** | | | 3GPP, 3GPP2, GSMA, CDG (CDMA Development Group) | | | | |
| **For comment to:** | | |  | | | | |
| **For information to:** | | |  | | | | |
| **Approval:** | | | **ITU-T Study Group 2 plenary, 29 March 2012** | | | | |
| **Deadline:** | | | 31 January 2012 | | | | |
| **Contact:** | | Philippe Fouquart France Telecom Orange France | | | | Email: [Philippe.fouquart@orange.com](mailto:Philippe.fouquart@orange.com) | |
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# E.212, the ITU-T Recommendation defines the format of IMSIs as follows:



The length of the Mobile Network Code (MNC) is currently “two to three digits”.

At the March meeting of Study Group 2, ITU-T Member States expressed concerns over the increasing demand for MNCs under their respective MCCs as new services requiring MNCs emerge. This new demand may result in the exhaustion of all spare values under some geographic MCCs.

Since, the Recommendation currently allows MNCs to be 2 or 3 digits, one of the scenarios to address this potential exhaustion is that Administrations/NRAs would assign (from a date yet to be determined) only 3 digit MNCs to extend the identification plan capacity. It would be applicable to existing MCCs but only to new MNC assignments within the MCC. In other words a) currently assigned MNCs would not be affected and b) from that date, some MCC with newly assigned MNCs would have MNCs of both 2 and 3 digits.

In light of past discussions on such a scenario, SG2 would appreciate your feedback on the impact, including but not limited to:

* Whether the use of 3-digit MNC has an impact on existing specifications of 2G/3G/4G mobile networks under your purview
* Whether there is a particular issue in having nationally 2 and 3 digit MNCs coexisting under the same MCC (core network, billing and customer care systems, roaming, operational aspects etc.)
* Whether roaming of a 3-digit based subscriber on a 2 digit network is problematic and in what way

The TSB is planning to publish a circular regarding this matter. When it is available, we will send it to you.

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