



Phnom Penh, ៩ July 2022

## NOTIFICATION

The Ministry of Post and Telecommunications (**MPTC**) would like to inform the public that since April 2020, MPTC has created internal reform mechanisms within all subordinate entities and at the Telecommunication Regulator of Cambodia (**TRC**). The reforms include building the capacity of civil servants, strengthening internal financial management, strengthening effectiveness and transparency in the collection of revenue and request for debt payments, digital technology system development, formulation of related legal and regulatory instruments, and strengthening cooperation with development partners as well as contributing to the Royal Government of Cambodia's efforts in preventing the spread of Covid-19.

In addition, MPTC deems the protection of consumers' rights and interests and improvement of the quality of telecom services to be top priority work in order to ensure that consumers receive quality services at a reasonable price. While there have been successes in many areas of the telecom sector, some parts have not been well-reformed yet, such as issues regarding the quality of mobile and internet services. To resolve these issues, MPTC has studied, researched, discussed with related parties, and determined several causes behind service disruptions or poor quality of mobile and internet services as follows:

### A. MOBILE SERVICE ISSUES

1. Some mobile operators continue to employ technology and equipment, which have not been modernized yet, among some base stations.
2. Additional investments, which is not proportional to the increase of users in each base station region, by some operators on upgrading capacity and constructing more base stations are still limited.
3. The increase in the number of high-rise buildings in recent years has blocked signals and prevented areas on the other side of the buildings, which do not have base stations, from receiving good quality service. Thus, operators need to build additional base stations on the other side of the buildings. Within buildings, at least 30-40% of the inside service is lost through signal attenuation. This requires the deployment of an In-Building Solution (IBS) within the building, but there is no IBS in most buildings.
4. While operators are making additional investments to ensure the quality of service, mobile and internet data consumption have also increased significantly, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic.
5. Some base stations provide satisfactory service, but some operators often reduce the capacity of transmitters and receivers in order to save costs.
6. Many base stations use equipment with no type approval from TRC or modified equipment that does not comply with technical standards.

7. Along national roads or in provinces, most of the base stations have been constructed in populated areas but not in between these populated regions.
8. Some users have installed Signal Boosters or Repeaters themselves to enhance mobile service quality. These tools are illegally imported and have not obtained type approval from TRC. Consequently, these Signal Boosters/Repeaters cause interference within the entire premises and surrounding areas.
9. The import of low-quality, second-hand phones or fake phones that have no approval from TRC, do not meet technical standards and can interfere with approved equipment.
10. Mobile and internet service tariffs in Cambodia are still low relative to other countries in the region.
11. Operators' subscription plans with excessive data capacity that allow consumers to freely use data (such as watching video contents on YouTube and other social media, online gaming, downloading) beyond their actual needs and the increase in internet data consumption have disrupted services by exceeding supply capacity.

## **B. INTERNET SERVICE ISSUES**

1. Internet capacity in Cambodia remains insufficient because 1). users purchase internet service packages with the capacity only for one or two devices. However, they use up to four or five devices and/or 2). Internet Service Providers (ISPs) provide internet capacity to customers less than what was agreed upon in their service agreements.
2. ISPs install and utilize low-quality fiber optic cables and equipment that do not meet technical standards.
3. Road construction and development along national or other roads affect the fiber-optic cables.
4. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the volume of internet usage increased by approximately 50%; however, the investment in network expansion remains limited and is not proportional to this significant increase in use.

## **C. MOBILE AND INTERNET SERVICES IN TOWNSHIP (BOREY)**

1. The rapid increase in the development of Boreys with no proper planning or reserved locations for base stations has presented significant service issues within the Boreys. In some Boreys, residents have protested against base station construction, citing unreasonable grounds such as health hazards or effects on property value.
2. Some Boreys are built without any underground telecommunications infrastructure, or such infrastructure are not in accordance with technical standards or properly installed.
3. Some Borey owners have granted exclusive rights to only one ISP operator who does not accept responsibility for providing good services as their capability to provide service cannot support the number of residents living in Boreys. For example, a fiber-optic cable network with the capacity to serve only 100 families is installed to provide services for 300-500 families.
4. Generally, mobile service signal is widely available outdoors but significantly declines inside buildings or houses due to multiple rooms or walls. In Boreys, Signal Boosters/Repeaters are very commonly used.

To resolve the issues mentioned above, MPTC has imposed corrective measures as follows:

1. Five regional working groups have been formed. Each group is responsible for four or five provinces to inspect, gather data, and identify base stations because operators have not provided such information despite MPTC's numerous requests for such information. As a result, MPTC has obtained all data about site locations, equipment, and technology operators use. For the next step, MPTC will push for equipment and technology upgrades and additional base station construction for a better quality of service.
2. Eight working groups have been formed to improve the quality of service in Phnom Penh Boreys. These groups will terminate any exclusive agreements for ISPs and seek cooperation from Borey owners to enhance the quality of service.
3. Five Drive Test devices have been purchased to measure service quality. Results of these tests will be provided to operators to encourage them to improve services or make additional investments.
4. **MPTC Speed Test mobile application** has been launched for consumers to measure the speed of mobile and internet services themselves and to file any complaint to TRC.
5. MPTC's "**Prakas on Telecommunications Quality of Service**" will soon be implemented to impose obligations on operators to improve the quality of their telecommunications services and networks, thereby protecting consumer interests.

At the same time, MPTC would like to call on all consumers to stop using Signal Boosters and/or Repeaters because these tools cause interference and affect the quality of services. Moreover, MPTC requests all relevant parties to stop importing all types of Signal Boosters and/or Repeaters, which have not received type approval from TRC, to avoid legal actions.

MPTC is committed to eliminating passive and negative activities in the telecom sector by enforcing the Law on Telecommunications and relevant regulations. MPTC is confident that participation from telecom operators, all relevant parties, and all consumers will lead to better mobile and internet services.

As such, please, telecom operators, all relevant parties, and the public, be informed and cooperate.

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