



DECISION NOTICE

Quality of Service Parameters to be Measured by Providers of Internet Access Services and Publicly Available Interpersonal Communications Services

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1 ABBREVIATIONS

BEREC	Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications
ECNSR	Electronic Communications Networks and Services (General) Regulations (Subsidiary Legislation 399.48 of the Laws of Malta)
EECC	Directive (EU) 2018/1972 of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the European Electronic Communications Code
ETSI	European Telecommunications Standards Institute
IAS	Internet Access Service
ITU	International Telecommunications Union
MCA	Malta Communications Authority
PA-ICS	Publicly Available Interpersonal Communications Services
QoS	Quality of Service
S.L.	Subsidiary Legislation
VCS	Voice Communications Services

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Context

As competition in the electronic communications market grows and end-user expectations continue to rise, Quality of Service (hereafter 'QoS') and customer support are becoming increasingly important. With more providers offering similar core services, end-users are placing greater emphasis on service reliability, responsiveness, and overall experience. In a digital age where communication is essential for both personal and professional life, providers that prioritise QoS and customer care are better positioned to differentiate themselves, retain end-users, and maintain a positive reputation in a competitive market.

The measurement and publication of QoS information by providers has become critical to achieve transparency, accountability, and end-user confidence in the electronic communications sector. The publication of key performance indicators empowers end-users to make informed decisions on service reliability and value. This practice also encourages healthy competition, as providers strive to improve their standards to attract and retain end-users. Additionally, regulatory bodies can use this data to monitor compliance with service obligations and identify areas requiring improvement, ultimately driving higher service quality across the industry.

2.2 Background

In February 2025, the Malta Communications Authority (hereafter 'MCA') issued a public consultation document titled ['Quality of Service Parameters to be Measured by Providers of Internet Access Services and Publicly Available Interpersonal Communications Services'](#) (hereafter 'MCA's Consultation'). The purpose of this public consultation was to enable the MCA to determine:

- i. the QoS parameters to be measured by providers;
- ii. the methodologies to be used to measure the identified QoS parameters; and
- iii. the frequency and manner in which the performance results of the QoS parameters measured by providers are to be published.

Prior to this initiative, the MCA had conducted an earlier consultation in 2020 on the same subject (hereafter 'MCA's 2020 Consultation'). Following that consultation, the MCA undertook additional work to address key concerns raised by stakeholders, which required further analysis and consideration. These efforts were also guided by ongoing discussions at the Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications (BEREC), which culminated in the publication of updated [BEREC Guidelines on QoS parameters](#) on 7th March 2024.

Given these developments, and the significant time elapsed since the 2020 consultation, the MCA considered it necessary to conduct a new round of consultation on its revised proposals prior to issuing a final decision. As a result, a new Consultation Document was published on the 5th of February 2025.

2.3 Responses to the Consultation

The consultation period concluded on 7th March 2025, during which the MCA received submissions from two stakeholders: GO plc (hereafter 'GO') and Melita Limited (hereafter 'Melita').

Following a comprehensive assessment of the feedback received during the public consultation, the MCA is now publishing a Decision Notice titled 'Quality of Service Parameters to be Measured by Providers of Internet Access Services and Publicly Available Interpersonal Communications Services'. This Decision Notice establishes a set of mandatory QoS parameters to be measured by providers and also requires providers to publish the resulting performance data in a standardised format.

The implementation timelines for the MCA's decisions are detailed in Section 6 of this Decision Notice.

3 LEGAL BASIS

The legal instruments referenced below provide the legal basis for the requirements being mandated through this Decision Notice.

3.1 The Electronic Communications Networks and Services (General) Regulations¹ ('ECNSR')

Regulation 89 of the ECNSR empowers the MCA to mandate obligations on QoS related to internet access services (hereafter 'IAS') and publicly available interpersonal communications services (hereafter 'PA-ICS').

Regulation 89 (1) states that the MCA:

'may require providers of internet access services and of publicly available interpersonal communications services to publish comprehensive, comparable, reliable, user-friendly and up-to-date information for end-users on the quality of their services, to the extent that they control at least some elements of the network either directly or by virtue of a service level agreement to that effect, and on measures taken to ensure equivalence in access for end-users with disabilities'.

In addition to the above, Regulation 89 (4) states that:

'the Authority shall specify, taking utmost account of BEREC guidelines, the quality of service parameters to be measured, the applicable measurement methods, and the content, form and manner of the information to be published, including possible quality certification mechanisms. Where appropriate, the parameters, definitions and measurement methods set out in the Tenth Schedule, shall be used'.

3.2 BEREC Guidelines detailing Quality of Service Parameters

Under Article 104(2) of the European Electronic Communications Code (hereafter the 'EECC'), BEREC is mandated to develop guidelines outlining the pertinent QoS parameters to be measured and disclosed by service providers. In this context, in 2020, BEREC issued guidelines detailing QoS parameters to assist national regulatory authorities and to promote a harmonised approach on the measurement and publication of QoS information across Member States. These 'BEREC Guidelines' were updated by BEREC in 2024 following a public consultation which was launched in October 2023 and which was concluded in

¹ The Electronic Communications Networks and Services (General) Regulations, Subsidiary Legislation 399.28 of the Laws of Malta.

November 2023. The updated ['BEREC Guidelines'](#) have been duly taken into account in the context of this Decision Notice.

3.3 Amendments to this Decision Notice

In accordance with the legal provisions it administers, the MCA reserves the right to introduce other QoS parameters to be measured in addition to those being proposed in this Decision Notice. Any such new measures or amendments to this Decision Notice shall be subject to a public consultation process, during which interested parties will be able to submit their views and feedback.

3.4 Applicability of other Legal Obligations

This Decision Notice of the MCA is without prejudice to any other obligations arising under applicable legal instruments, including, inter alia, the European Union's Regulation on ['Open Internet Access'](#)² and MCA's decision entitled ['Broadband QoS Framework'](#).

² Regulation (EU) 2015/2020 of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down measures concerning open internet access.

4 FEEDBACK RECEIVED AND MCA'S FINAL DECISIONS

This Section discusses the feedback received regarding MCA's proposed measures presented in MCA's Consultation published in February 2025 and sets out the final decisions being adopted by the MCA through this Decision Notice.

The MCA solicits all providers to refer and adhere to the definitions and measurement methodologies established in the [ETSI ES 202 057-1 V2.1.1](#) standards (hereafter 'ETSI's Standards') unless otherwise specified in this Decision Notice.

4.1 QoS Parameters to be Measured by Providers

In its Consultation Document, following extensive evaluation, the MCA proposed a set of QoS parameters to be measured by providers. These parameters placed greater emphasis on customer care, provider responsiveness, and the overall user experience. The proposed QoS parameters included:

- Supply Time for Initial Connection
- Fault Rate per Access Line
- Fault Repair Time
- Bill Correctness Complaints
- Response Time for Operator Services (Customer Care Services – Help Desk)
- Customer complaints resolution time
- Number of customer complaints per data collection period

For each of the QoS parameters identified, MCA's Consultation Document proposed that providers adhere to the definitions and methodologies established in ETSI's Standards. These standards reflect current best practices and are consistent with the 2024 BEREC Guidelines on QoS parameters.

Both respondents to the consultation agreed with the MCA's position that end-users should be provided with a clear and consistent set of QoS parameters to enable comparisons between service levels offered by different providers. The MCA acknowledges and supports the observations made by one respondent who emphasised the importance of ensuring that all providers adhere to the established methodology when compiling these parameters and cautioned that the benchmarking process should not disadvantage providers who have invested in innovative service models.

A number of comments were received on the proposed QoS parameters, including requests for clarification on the definitions and measurement methods. These comments, together with the MCA's clarifications and final decisions, are addressed in the following parts of this Section.

For the avoidance of doubt, while Regulation 89 empowers the MCA to apply this decision notice to providers of internet access services (IAS) and publicly available interpersonal communications services (PA-ICS), the MCA wishes to clarify that, for the time being, it considers that the requirements outlined in this decision notice should only apply to the provision IAS and voice communications services (hereafter 'VCS'). Accordingly, the MCA will amend the wording in this Decision Notice to reflect that, at this stage, the mandated requirements apply solely to IAS and VCS. However, the title of the Decision Notice will remain unchanged, as the scope may be extended in the future. As previously stated, any future amendments to this Decision Notice will be subject to a public consultation process, during which stakeholders will have the opportunity to submit their views and feedback.

4.1.1 Supply Time for Initial Connection

One respondent acknowledged the clarifications provided by the MCA in the consultation document, where the Authority explained that, in accordance with the measurement methodology provided for in ETSI's Standards for Supply Time for Initial Connection (Section 5.1):

- i. When calculating the times within which the fastest 50%, 95%, and 99% of orders are completed, service providers may exclude instances where delays are requested by the customer³ (refer to Section 5.1, Clause 5.1.4.3 of ETSI's Standards).
- ii. When measuring all the service quality parameters listed under 'Supply Time for Initial Connection' in Annex 1, titled 'QoS Parameters to be Measured by Providers of IAS and VCS, service providers must exclude orders that are cancelled by customers (refer to Section 5.1, Clause 5.1.1.1 of ETSI's Standards).
- iii. Instances where essential access to customer premises is not provided by the customer on the agreed date and time may also be excluded from all the service quality parameters listed under 'Supply Time for Initial Connection' in Annex 1, titled 'QoS Parameters to be Measured by Providers of IAS and VCS' (refer to Section 5.1, Clause 5.1.4.3 of ETSI's Standards).

No further feedback was received on this parameter. Accordingly, this parameter is being included in the list of QoS parameters to be measured by providers, as outlined in Annex 1 of this Decision Notice.

4.1.2 Fault Rate Per Access Line

One respondent acknowledged the clarifications provided by the MCA in its consultation document, which made reference to the definition of '*Fault report rate per fixed access line*' as provided for in Section 5.4 of ETSI's Standards, which defines a fault report as:

³ For the scope of this decision notice, the term 'customer' shall be equivalent to 'subscriber'.

'A fault report is a report of disrupted or degraded service that is notified by the customer to the published point of contact of the service provider and is attributable to the fixed access line, and that is not found to be invalid. Faults in any equipment on the customer side of the network termination point and faults which are attributable to the core network or other networks are excluded'.

In line with this definition, the MCA had noted in its consultation document that providers should exclude from the measurement any faults *'in any equipment on the customer side of the network termination point and faults which are attributable to the core network or other networks'*.

Another respondent stated that the measurement of fault rate per access line should differentiate between issues stemming from the service provider's infrastructure and those arising from customer owned equipment or external factors such as weather conditions or third-party damages. As previously noted, the MCA confirms that faults arising from customer-owned equipment should be excluded from this measurement. The MCA however notes that ETSI's Standards do not provide for the exclusion of fault reports arising from external factors such as adverse weather conditions or third-party damages. As such, these must be included in the measurement.

One respondent further stated that the MCA's consultation document appeared to broaden the scope of faults to include reports of degraded service, intermittent faults, and slow internet speeds rather than limiting the measurement to *'valid service outages'*. This respondent requested that the MCA clarifies *'how intermittent or degraded service issues should be distinguished from valid access line faults, particularly in cases where a reported degradation is later found to be unrelated to the provider's network'*.

In response, the MCA clarifies that it has not extended the scope beyond what is already defined by ETSI's standards. As outlined in the ETSI's definition of *'Fault report rate per fixed access line'* referred to above, a fault should include reports of *'disrupted or degraded service that is notified by the customer to the published point of contact of the service provider'*. Accordingly, reports of degraded service, intermittent issues, and slow internet speeds fall within this definition and cannot be excluded.

Furthermore, the MCA confirms that providers are not required to categorise or differentiate between types of faults (such as intermittent faults or degraded performance) when measuring this QoS parameter. All faults, as defined in Section 5.4 of ETSI's standards may be aggregated for reporting purposes.

Finally, the MCA reiterates that faults attributable to equipment on the customer side of the network termination point, or to the core network or other networks, must be excluded from the measurement. Therefore, if a reported fault is later determined to be invalid it may be omitted from the reporting dataset.

No further feedback was received on this parameter. Accordingly, this parameter is being included in the list of QoS parameters to be measured by providers, as detailed in Annex 1 of this Decision Notice.

4.1.3 Fault Repair Time

In its Consultation Document, the MCA provided several clarifications aimed at offering clearer guidance to providers on measuring the QoS parameters listed under the heading '*Fault Repair Time*' in Annex 1 of the document.

One respondent welcomed these clarifications which the MCA is reiterating below for ease of reference:

- i. In accordance with ETSI's Standards (Section 5.5, Clause 5.5.1), the timeframe for the measurement of this parameter refers to *'the duration from the instant a fault report has been made to the instant when the service element or service has been restored to normal working order.'*
- ii. With reference to the measurement of the *'percentage of faults cleared within any time stated as an objective by the service provider'*, in accordance with Section 5.5, Clause 5.5.1.1 of ETSI's Standards *'the "standard repair" times are the times stated in the terms and conditions of the service provider'*.

Another respondent stated that that providers should be permitted to exclude delays resulting from customer unavailability for on-site visits by providers. The MCA agrees with this respondent's suggestion and refers to Section 5.5, Clause 5.5.9 of ETSI's Standards which allows for the exclusion of certain cases from the measurement of this parameter, specifically when the:

- repair depends upon access to the customer's premises and this access is not possible at the desired time; or
- customers request a delay.

For the sake of transparency, ETSI also states that *'When calculating the repair time, service providers who choose to include these cases may subtract from the measured time the delay introduced by the customer'*.

No further feedback was received on this parameter. Accordingly, this parameter is being included in the list of QoS parameters to be measured by providers, as detailed in Annex 1 of this Decision Notice.

4.1.4 Bill Correctness Complaints

One respondent stated that it is very challenging for providers to accurately capture and categorise complaints from all customer interaction channels. The MCA recognises the challenge involved to capture and categorise complaints across the full range of customer

interaction channels, including phone, email, chat, social media, and in-person contacts. Billing complaints however remain one of the most common issues raised by end-users and therefore the measurement and publication of this information is important to promote transparency, enable oversight, and support service improvement across the sector.

Whilst acknowledging the complexities raised by this respondent to gather this data across different interaction channels, the MCA notes that, given the technological tools and systems currently available, providers should possess the necessary technical capability be able to implement this measure effectively.

This respondent also raised challenges in ensuring that only justified bill correctness complaints are recorded. The MCA clarifies that ETSI's standards (Section 5.11, Clause 5.11.3) state that '*statistics should include all billing complaints received in the reporting period, regardless of the validity of the complaint*'. This means that in order to adhere to the measurement of this parameter correctly as provided for in ETSI's standards, a billing complaint found not to be justified, must still be included in the statistics.

In response to the request for more clarity on how to tell the difference between a billing query and a complaint, the MCA considers that the key difference is that a billing query refers to a request for information (for example, where a customer asks for an explanation of a charge or seeks to understand how their bill has been calculated). In contrast, a complaint arises when the customer alleges that a bill is incorrect or unfair, or expresses dissatisfaction with the charges incurred. Sometimes, an interaction may begin as a query but evolve into a complaint, for instance, where a customer initially asks about a charge and subsequently challenges its validity or expresses dissatisfaction with the response. In these cases, the interaction should be classified as a complaint, as it fits the definition provided by ETSI.

In addition to the above, as reiterated in its Consultation Document, the MCA states that goodwill compensations by service providers not due to billing inaccuracies (e.g. compensation offered as a goodwill gesture for faults experienced by end-users), should not be recorded as bill correctness complaints.

No further feedback was received on this parameter. Accordingly, this parameter is being included in the list of QoS parameters to be measured by providers, as detailed in Annex 1 of this Decision Notice.

4.1.5 Response Time for Operator Services (Customer Care Services – Help Desk)

The MCA received feedback from one provider, expressing concern that evaluating only the performance of the customer support services offered via telephone overlooks the full range of available support channels. This respondent suggested that the MCA should reconsider its approach and include other customer support methods most notably digital platforms when measuring how quickly service providers respond to customers. This respondent stated that

providers that have invested in digital support tools should not be put at a disadvantage compared to others.

To support this suggestion, the respondent cited two studies carried out by MISCO in 2019 and 2022. These studies show a drop in customer preference for phone support, from 71% in 2019 to 58% in 2022, and a growing interest in digital channels. The respondent also noted that by 2022, a majority of its customer interactions were happening through digital channels. Despite this clear shift in customer behaviour, the respondent noted that the MCA continues to focus only on telephone support, overlooking both market changes and its own survey results.

The respondent also pointed out that although the consultation document refers to BEREC and ETSI guidelines, which currently focus only on phone response times, this should not be used as a reason to ignore digital support. In fact, telephone support is not listed among the QoS indicators in Annex X of the EECC.

The respondent explained that it already tracks how long it takes to respond on its digital platforms and believes there is no reason why a standard method for measuring digital response times could not be introduced for all local providers.

While the MCA acknowledges the ongoing evolution of consumer behaviour and the increasing relevance of digital support, it has decided, at this stage, to proceed with the measurement of telephony customer care response times only. This approach aligns with established guidance from both ETSI and BEREC, which both focus on measuring response times specifically and only for telephony customer care response.

Although we recognise that digital support channels like live chat, email and messaging apps are becoming more popular, the latest 2022 MISCO survey still shows that a majority (58%) of respondents prefer telephony as their customer care channel. This suggests that, despite the shift, telephone support continues to be the most widely used and preferred method.

It's also important to point out that digital channels vary significantly across providers, and no harmonised methodology currently exists to ensure fair and consistent measurements across the sector. While the respondent did share that they track these times internally, no clear proposal or framework was provided on how such measurements could be standardised across the industry.

The MCA considers the introduction of telephony customer support response time as an appropriate first step, given that it remains the most traditional and preferred support channel, and importantly, is the only one for which a recognised industry measurement standard currently exists and is applied.

This Decision Notice does not preclude the future inclusion of performance measurement for other modern customer support channels. The MCA remains open to reviewing and updating the QoS parameters to be measured by providers, particularly in the event that competent

bodies such as ETSI and BEREC, develop and adopt internationally recognised standards for the measurement of such channels.

In the meantime, providers are encouraged to publish any data they already collect on other customer care channels, if they wish, where such information is meaningful and of value to end-users, and aligns with the spirit and objectives of this Decisions Notice, particularly in promoting transparency and continuous improvement in customer service.

The respondent also raised a valid point about the number of hours during which customer support is available. Providers who offer longer support hours give customers more access throughout the day, but this also requires more resources to maintain good response times. This is a fair observation, and to address this, the MCA will introduce a new transparency measure. Providers will now be required to publish the operating hours of all their customer care channels. Details about this requirement are provided in Annex 2 titled 'Quality of Service Performance Report Template' in the table titled 'Customer Care Response Time (Fixed and Mobile Services)', which outlines what information must be included.

No further feedback was received on this parameter. Accordingly, this parameter is being included in the list of QoS parameters to be measured by providers, as detailed in Annex 1 of this Decision Notice.

4.1.6 Customer Complaints⁴ Resolution Time

One respondent expressed concern about the practicalities and fairness of counting complaints resolved at first contact, highlighting potential impacts on service providers. This respondent explained that issues resolved during the initial interaction are logged as queries in their system and that a complaint is only formally recorded when a matter cannot be resolved during the initial contact and requires further escalation, typically through the creation of a ticket. This respondent argued that including first-contact resolutions in complaint statistics would not accurately represent the volume of formal complaints and may inadvertently reflect the interpretation of data, leading to an unrepresentative picture of the customer experience. Accordingly, this respondent suggested that the measurement approach be revised to focus only on formally recorded complaints that remain unresolved after the initial contact.

The MCA acknowledges this concern but notes that, in accordance with ETSI's Standards (Section 5.10, Clause 5.10.1), there is no provision to exclude complaints resolved at a provider's published point of contact. ETSI's Standards stipulate that all customer complaints

⁴ A complaint is defined in ETSI 202 843V1.2.1 (page 25) as a 'statement by a user or customer expressing dissatisfaction due to a gap between the expected and the delivered benefits from the use of a service NOTE: A complaint may be made in various forms, writing, electronic means, or in person. From ITU-T Recommendation E.800 [i.13]'.

notified to the published point of contact of a service provider should be included in the measurement of this QoS parameter, regardless of the stage at which they are resolved.

Excluding complaints resolved at first contact would result in a significant number of customer complaints not being captured in the data thereby undermining the integrity of the data. While the MCA recognises that providers may adopt different internal systems for categorising and handling complaints, the purpose of this parameter is not to penalise efficient resolution, but to reflect all instances where a customer has expressed dissatisfaction or concern regardless of how quickly the matter was addressed. The MCA therefore considers it essential to adopt a consistent and inclusive measurement approach that fully aligns with ETSI's Standards.

In response to the request for clearer guidance on distinguishing between new complaints and continuations, the MCA confirms that where a customer re-contacts the provider regarding an unresolved issue that remains part of an open case, this should be treated as a continuation. Conversely, a new complaint should be recorded if the original case has been formally closed or if the issue raised is substantively different. The MCA will continue to monitor this area and, should providers encounter difficulties in determining whether to treat cases as new or ongoing, the Authority will consider issuing further guidance to promote consistency in data collection.

This respondent also referred to MCA's clarification in its Consultation Document, citing ETSI standards, which state that:

- when calculating the complaint resolution time, service providers may subtract from the measured time any delay introduced by the customer; and
- if the resolution of a complaint is delayed because the collaboration of the customer is needed but cannot be obtained in a reasonable term, the instance may be excluded from the statistics.

The respondent requested a clearer definition of 'reasonable term', noting that timelines can vary *'depending on the nature of the complaint, the availability of the customer, and the specific circumstances'*. This respondent emphasised that the providers' ability to resolve complaints often depends on the customer's responsiveness, which is beyond the provider's control and noted that clear definition would promote consistency and avoid misinterpretation across providers.

The MCA clarifies that the term 'reasonable term' is drawn directly from ETSI standards, which intentionally refrain from providing a rigid definition. Imposing a strict interpretation would risk undermining the flexibility envisaged by the standard and could unduly limit providers' discretion to assess each case in context. The MCA considers that factors such as customer availability, the urgency of the issue, and technical complexity, amongst others, should be considered in this case-by-case evaluation.

That said, the MCA will continue to monitor how this provision is applied in practice and remain open to issuing further guidance if consistent issues or misuse are identified.

As previously stated in its consultation document, the MCA reiterates that if a complaint is received within the data collection period but is not resolved in time to meet the provider's stated objective, it should be counted in the following reporting period.

No further feedback was received on this parameter. This parameter is being included in the list of QoS parameters to be measured by providers, as detailed in Annex 1 of this Decision Notice.

4.1.7 Number of customer complaints per data collection period

One respondent requested clarification about whether the measurement should be based on the number of unique customers, or whether every fixed or mobile service should be counted, even when multiple services are held by the same customer.

Another respondent noted that the Consultation Document stated that the number of complaints should be recorded per customer, per data collection period, with the published result rounded to two decimal places. However, the respondent noted that it is unclear whether this parameter refers to:

- i. the total number of complaints received during the period, divided by the total number of customers of a provider;
- ii. or whether the MCA is seeking an alternative method for the measurement of this parameter.

This respondent expressed concern that using the first approach could result in very small figures, which could fail to reflect the scale of the complaints in a meaningful way.

In response to stakeholder feedback it has been noted that the equation provided for in Section 5.9.3 of ETSI's standards defines the measurement as the total number of customer complaints received during a defined data collection period. The equation in this section provides the following:

$$P9[\text{Number}] = \sum_{t_1}^{t_2} R$$

where:

$P9$	Number of customer complaints per data collection period
t_1	Start of data collection period
t_2	End of data collection period
R	Requests/complaints in data collection period t_1 to t_2

This indicates that the standard treats the metric as a simple aggregate count of customer complaints received over a defined period. Although the definition description includes a reference to 'complaints logged "per customer"' this phrasing is not reflected in the actual calculation method, which clearly does not include the total number of customers of a provider in the formula.

To ensure consistency with ETSI's standards and avoid introducing interpretation divergence, the MCA confirms that this parameter shall be measured using the absolute count approach (i.e. measuring the total number of customer complaints received during a specific data collection period) in line with the ETSI formula. This ensures consistency with the established standard and avoids introducing additional interpretation or modification that could affect comparability or reporting consistency. It also simplifies the reporting process for providers by removing the need to calculate customer base figures for this purpose.

Furthermore, the MCA clarifies that the results of this parameter are to be submitted to the MCA for internal monitoring purposes only. Providers will not be required to publish this data. As a result:

- i. the field titled "Number of customer complaints per data collection period (Fixed and Mobile Services)" is being removed from Annex 2 attached to this Decision Notice;
- ii. this field is instead incorporated in a newly added Annex titled '*Annex 3: Quality of Service Performance Report Template to be sent to the MCA*';

Decision 2 of this Decision Notice has been amended accordingly to reflect this change.

The following text will be incorporated into Decision 2 of this Decision Notice:

'Submission Requirements to the MCA

Providers of IAS and VCS shall submit to the MCA the performance of the QoS parameters indicated in 'Annex 3: Quality of Service Performance Report Template to be sent to the MCA' using the format specified therein.

The report shall be submitted bi-annually and shall cover the periods '01 January – 30 June' and '01 July – 31 December' of each year and must be submitted within three months commencing from the last day of the period being reported. The completed report, shall be submitted to the MCA in writing (by email to customercare@mca.org.mt)

All QoS parameters published or submitted to the MCA are to be measured in accordance with Decision 1 of this Decision Notice'.

One respondent also requested clarification on whether the statistics should include all complaints received during the data collection period, regardless of the validity or subject of the complaint. This respondent stated that if complaints which are deemed unjustified are to be included, this could risk an unrealistic representation of customer feedback.

The MCA confirms that for the purpose of the measurement of this parameter all customer complaints received during the data collection period must be included, in accordance with ETSI standards (Section 5.9, clause 5.9.4), which state that '*statistics should include all complaints received in the data collection period, regardless of the validity and subject of the complaint*'.

This approach ensures consistency and prevents subjectivity and the risk of bias. A complaint that may seem unjustified to the provider could still reflect a genuine concern from the end user's perspective. While all complaints must be included for the purpose of this measurement, providers may carry out a further internal analysis on the validity of complaints for services improvement purposes, provided such analysis does not affect the integrity of the data submitted under this Decision Notice.

This respondent also sought guidance regarding how multiple complaints made by the same customer should be interpreted. The MCA solicits providers to refer to the guidance provided in Section 5.9, Clause 5.9.4 of ETSI's standards which specifies that: *'where more than one complaint is made by the same customer on the same subject, each instance of the complaint should be counted separately in the statistics. If a customer complains again before an existing complaint has been closed, then this should not be treated as a separate complaint but as a continuation of the first unclosed complaint'*.

Another respondent requested clarification on whether two separate variables are required (one for fixed and one for mobile services) or if a single aggregated figure will be requested for both fixed and mobile complaints per customer. The MCA reiterates its position outlined in the Consultation Document: where a QoS parameter applies to more than one electronic communications service, providers are not required to disaggregate results by service type. Instead, a single aggregated result should be reported comprising all electronic communications services together.

Finally, as specified in Sections 4.1.4 and 4.1.6 of this Decision Notice, the MCA reiterates the importance of recording all complaints reported to any publicly available point of contact of a service provider (across all interaction channels) including those resolved at first contact, when measuring this QoS parameter.

No further feedback was received on this parameter. Accordingly, this parameter is being included in the list of QoS parameters to be measured by providers, as detailed in Annex 1 of this Decision Notice.

4.1.8 Other Feedback

In its Consultation Document, the MCA had proposed that the QoS parameters to be measured comprise the performance of the QoS provided to both consumers and businesses in aggregate. No feedback was submitted regarding this proposal. Accordingly, this requirement is being confirmed and maintained in this Decision Notice.

In addition to the above, as previously stated, where a QoS parameter applies to more than one electronic communications service, providers shall report a single consolidated result across all applicable services. Separate reporting per individual service type (e.g. fixed or mobile) is not required unless explicitly stated in this Decision Notice.

Decision 1

Providers of IAS and VCS shall measure the QoS parameters listed in 'Annex 1: QoS Parameters to be Measured by Providers of IAS and VCS'.

The measurement of these parameters shall be completed in accordance with the methodologies set out in this same Annex 1. The QoS parameters to be measured shall comprise the performance of the QoS provided to both consumers and businesses in aggregate.

Where a QoS parameter applies to multiple electronic communications services, providers shall report a single aggregated result encompassing all relevant services, unless otherwise specified in this Decision Notice.

5 PUBLICATION AND SUBMISSION OF INFORMATION ON THE PERFORMANCE OF QoS PARAMETERS MEASURED BY PROVIDERS

In its Consultation Document, the MCA proposed a set of requirements intended to ensure that the information about the performance of the QoS parameters published by service providers is:

- easily comparable across providers;
- accessible and understandable to end-users; and
- regularly updated to ensure relevance.

In order to facilitate comparability, the MCA proposed that the information about the performance of QoS parameters is published by providers in a standardised format. A proposed template 'Annex 2: Quality of Service Performance Report Template' was attached to the Consultation Document to guide publication by all providers.

The MCA supports the feedback submitted by one respondent, emphasising that to ensure consistency and accuracy in the reporting framework, any amendments to the structure, content, or reporting obligations set forth in Annex 2 should be made in alignment with the observations and recommendations provided in relation to the measurement methodologies outlined in Annex 1. The MCA confirms that any updates to Annex 2 introduced through this Decision Notice have been made in full alignment with the corresponding changes in Annex 1.

5.1 Frequency of Publication

In order to ensure that the publication of this information remains reliable, accurate and relevant to end-users, in the Consultation Document the MCA proposed that providers publish periodic reports about the performance of the quality parameters of their services twice yearly. One respondent suggested that publishing this information once a year would be sufficient and would align with the minimum publication requirements set out in the BEREC's guidelines⁵.

While the MCA acknowledges that the BEREC's Guidelines state that '*service providers can be obliged to publish information showing the most recent update of data at a minimum frequency on an annual basis*', it is important to note that this constitutes a minimum threshold, and more frequent publication is also envisaged and permissible. Moreover, the ETSI

⁵ See Guideline 56 (Section 4.1) BEREC Guidelines detailing Quality of Service Parameters

standards (Section 4.7 of ES 202 057-1) recommend that QoS data intended for long-term comparisons be collected and calculated on a quarterly basis. However, the MCA considers that quarterly collection and publication would impose an unnecessary administrative burden on providers, and that the marginal benefits of increased reporting frequency do not outweigh the corresponding operational effort.

At the same time, the MCA considers annual publication insufficient to capture evolving service quality issues or emerging trends in a timely manner. Conversely, bi-annual publication strikes the right balance between data relevance and operational manageability. It ensures that end-users have access to up-to-date information, enabling them to make more informed decisions based on recent service performance.

Furthermore, this six-monthly reporting cycle aligns with the MCA's own complementary publication on end-user affairs, which provides an analysis of the complaints and queries received by the Authority during the same reporting periods.

In view of the above, the MCA is maintaining the requirement for bi-annual publication of the measurement results in this Decision Notices, as it offers the right balance between information relevance and operational practicality.

5.2 Timeframe for Publication

The Consultation Document originally proposed that performance results be published within one month from the end of the data collection period. One respondent suggested extending the publication timeframe to three months, while another respondent stated that they did not have sufficient time to assess the time required to develop the reports and extract the information in line with the BEREC guidelines and ETSI standards and stated that certain parameters, might require extensive work to extract figures in accordance with the ETSI methodology.

The MCA acknowledges the effort involved in extracting the measurement results and completing the quality of service report templates. In view of the feedback received, the MCA is therefore accepting the proposal to extend the publication and submission timeframe to three months from the end of the data collection period. This extension is also being granted to ensure the completeness and integrity of the published and submitted data.

5.3 Visibility of Published Information

The MCA also proposed that the information gathered by service providers is published on their respective websites, and is linked in a clear and visible manner on any of their webpages where an offer, plan or package is presented.

One respondent highlighted the need for such requirements to be implemented in a way that aligns with each provider's overall website design and branding. The MCA agrees that the intended visibility and accessibility objective can be achieved without compromising the overall

user interface or creating confusion regarding the key characteristics of the service being offered.

Accordingly, while the core visibility and accessibility requirements set out in the Consultation Document will be retained in this Decision Notice, providers will have flexibility in how to integrate the link within their website's design, provided that it remains clear, prominent, and accessible, particularly on all webpages where an offer, plan or package is presented.

Decision 2

Publication Requirements

Providers of IAS and VCS shall publish information on the performance of the QoS parameters contained in 'Annex 2: Quality of Service Performance Report Template' using the format provided therein. The report shall be published bi-annually, covering the periods '01 January – 30 June' and '01 July – 31 December' of each year, and shall be made publicly available within three months commencing from the last day of the period being reported.

The report shall be published on the provider's website on a dedicated webpage, hereafter referred to as 'target page'. All webpages on a provider's website publicising the details of a service offer/s or plan/s, shall provide a distinct and clearly visible hyperlink to the target page. The anchor text, i.e. the visible clickable text in the hyperlink, shall be titled 'Quality of Service Results' and must be:

- visually distinct (e.g. in 'Bold Font' and/or in 'Capital Letters'); and,
- appear in a font size equal or larger than that used for highlighting the main characteristics of the service offer/plan.

Submission Requirements to the MCA

Providers of IAS and VCS shall submit to the MCA the performance of the QoS parameters indicated in 'Annex 3: Quality of Service Performance Report Template to be sent to the MCA' using the format specified therein.

The report shall be submitted bi-annually and shall cover the periods '01 January – 30 June' and '01 July – 31 December' of each year and must be submitted within three months commencing from the last day of the period being reported. The completed report, shall be submitted to the MCA in writing (by email to customer@ca.org.mt).

All QoS parameters published or submitted to the MCA are to be measured in accordance with Decision 1 of this Decision Notice.

6 ENTRY INTO FORCE OF MCA'S FINAL DECISION NOTICE

In its consultation document, the MCA proposed that providers begin measuring specific QoS parameters starting from the period from 01 January 2026 to 30 June 2026. As no responses were received regarding this proposal, the MCA is now formalising this requirement in its final decision notice. Accordingly, and in line with Decisions 1 and 2 of this notice, the MCA requires that:

- i. The initial QoS parameters to be measured by providers shall cover the period 01 January 2026 to 30 June 2026;
- ii. Providers shall publish the first completed report, using the template in Annex 2, covering the period from 01 January to 30 June 2026, by no later than 30 September 2026;
- iii. Providers shall submit the completed report, using the template in Annex 3 covering the period from 01 January to 30 June 2026, to the MCA by no later than 30 September 2026.

Following this initial period, providers shall continue measuring, publishing, and reporting the required QoS parameters for each subsequent six-month period (i.e., 01 July to 31 December 2026, and thereafter) in accordance with this Decision Notice.

7 Application of this Decision Notice in its Entirety

For the avoidance of doubt, the obligations and measures set out in this Decision Notice shall be interpreted in light of the full content of this document. This includes not only the operative decisions formally stated herein under Decisions 1 and 2, but also all supporting considerations, clarifications, justifications, and implementation modalities referenced in the accompanying sections and annexes.

Accordingly, providers are required to comply with the Decision as a whole, including any interpretative guidance or procedural instructions that form an integral part of its application.

Annex 1 - QoS Parameters to be Measured by Providers of IAS and VCS

1. Applicable to Fixed Services Only

Supply Time for Initial Connection⁶	
Definition	Measurement method
ETSI ES 202 057-1 (clause 5.1)	ETSI ES 202 057-1 (clause 5.1.3)
<p>The duration from the instant of a valid service order being received by a direct service provider to the instant a working service is made available for use. This should exclude cancelled orders.</p>	<p>It is measured by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the times by which the fastest 50%, 95% and 99% of orders are completed; b) the percentage of orders completed by the date agreed with the customer and, where the percentage of orders completed by the date agreed with the customer is below 80%, the average number of days, for the late orders, by which the agreed date is exceeded. <p>Statistics for all fixed access networks.</p>

⁶ The supply time for the initial connection of 'fixed wireless internet' subscriptions is to be excluded from this statistic.

Fault Rate per Access Line	
Definition	Measurement method
ETSI ES 202 057-1 (clause 5.4)	ETSI ES 202 057-1 (clause 5.4.3)
The number of reported faults per fixed access line.	Statistics for all fixed access lines.

Fault Repair Time	
Definition	Measurement method
ETSI ES 202 057-1 (clause 5.5)	ETSI ES 202 057-1 (clause 5.5.3)
The duration from the instant a fault report has been made to the instant when the service element or service has been restored to normal working order.	<p>It is measured by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the time by which the fastest 80% and 95% of valid faults on access lines are repaired (expressed in clock hours); and b) the percentage of faults cleared any time stated as an objective by the service provider. <p>Statistics for all access fixed networks.</p>

2. Applicable to both Fixed and Mobile Services

Bill Correctness Complaints	
Definition	Measurement method
ETSI ES 202 057-1 (clause 5.11)	ETSI ES 202 057-1 (clause 5.11.3)
The proportion of bills resulting in a customer complaint about the correctness of a given bill.	It is measured by a percentage.

Response Time for Operator Services (Customer Care Services – Help Desk)	
Definition	Measurement method
ETSI ES 202 057-1 (clause 5.6.1)	ETSI EG 202 057-1 (clause 5.6.3)
Time elapsed between the end of dialling to the instant the human operator answers the calling user to provide the service requested.	It is measured by: a) mean time to answers; b) percentage of calls answered within 20 seconds.

Number of customer complaints per data collection period⁷	
Definition	Measurement method
ETSI ES 202 057-1 (clause 5.9.1)	ETSI ES 202 057-1 (clause 5.9.4)

⁷ As outlined in section 4.1.7, this parameter shall be measured using the absolute count approach (i.e. measuring the total number of customer complaints received during a specific data collection period) based on the ETSI formula provided in the same section.

<p>The number of complaints logged per customer per data collection period.</p>	<p>The number of complaints logged per customer per data collection period should be provided. Statistics should include all complaints received in the data collection period, regardless of the validity and subject of the complaint.</p>
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<h2 style="text-align: center;">Customer complaints resolution time</h2>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Definition</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Measurement method</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">ETSI ES 202 057-1 (clause 5.10.1)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">ETSI ES 202 057-1 (clause 5.10.3)</p>
<p>The duration from the instant a customer complaint is notified to the published point of contact of a service provider and is not found to be invalid to the instant the cause for the complaint has been resolved.</p>	<p>It is measured by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the time by which the fastest 80% and 95% of complaints have been resolved (expressed in clock hours); and b) the percentage of complaints resolved any time stated as an objective by the service provider.

Annex 2 - Quality of Service Performance Report Template

{Name of Provider}

Covering Period: {day/month/year} till {day/month/year}

Date of Publication: {day/month/year}

Supply Time for Initial Connection (Fixed Services)	
Parameter	Result
The time by which the fastest 50% of orders are completed	_____ days
The time by which the fastest 95% of orders are completed	_____ days
The time by which the fastest 99% of orders are completed	_____ days
The percentage of orders completed by the date agreed with the customer	_____ %
Where the percentage of orders completed by the date agreed with the customer is below 80%, the average number of days, for the late orders, by which the agreed date is exceeded	_____ days

Fault Rate and Fault Repair Timeframes (Fixed Services)	
Parameter	Result
Fault rate per access line	_____ reports
The time by which the fastest 80% of valid faults on access lines are repaired	_____ hours
The time by which the fastest 95% of valid faults on access lines are repaired	_____ hours
The percentage of faults cleared any time stated as an objective by the service provider	_____ %

Bill Correctness Complaints (Fixed and Mobile Services)	
Parameter	Result
The proportion of bills resulting in a customer complaint about the correctness of a given bill	_____ %

Customer Care Response Time (Fixed and Mobile Services)	
Parameter	Result
Mean time to answer calls	_____ seconds
Percentage of calls answered within 20 seconds.	_____ %
Operating hours of all customer care channels offered:	
<i>Free text to be included by providers</i>	

Customer Complaints Resolution Time (Fixed and Mobile Services)

Parameter	Result
The time by which the fastest 80% of complaints have been resolved	_____ hours
The time by which the fastest 95% of complaints have been resolved	_____ hours
The percentage of complaints resolved any time stated as an objective by the service provider.	_____ %

Annex 3 - Quality of Service Performance Report Template to be sent to the MCA

Number of customer complaints per data collection period (Fixed and Mobile Services)	
Parameter	Result
The number of customer complaints per data collection period.	_____reports



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