

Request for Information

Telecommunication Services Supplier Mapping Project

25-January-2019



Introduction

Mobile Network Operators (MNO), Aggregators and Digital Service Providers provide access to telecommunication services, such as Short Messaging Service (SMS), Unstructured Supplementary Service Data (USSD), Interactive Voice Response (IVR), other voice services, mobile data and mobile money. These communication channels, widely used by NGO's to drive development projects globally, allow quick and easy access to a large populace at a go.

There is limited online data available on aggregators and digital service providers, causing poor visibility of which countries and services are accessible to integrate for launching services. This brings about excessive time spent by NGO's to find the right aggregator and or digital service provider to launch their services.

Current Scenario

NGOs dedicate a reasonable amount of time in searching suitable aggregators and digital service providers that provide the required communication services in countries they wish to run their projects. This activity not only turns out to be time consuming, but expensive and could be a hit-or-miss where services committed do not meet the requirements of the NGOs or technical integrations turn out to be a lengthy process.

Purpose

This is a Request for Information (RFI) only, and does not constitute a commitment, implied or otherwise, that the Digital Impact Alliance (DIAL) will take procurement action. DIAL will not be obligated to contract any company as a result of this RFI. Responders are solely responsible for all expenses associated with responding to this RFI.

DIAL's strategy is to bridge the gap between aggregators, digital service providers and NGOs. DIAL intends to design an easily accessible repository for NGOs detailing telecommunication services and value-added services for NGOs providing detailed information regarding aggregators and digital service providers globally.

The responses to this RFI will not only identify aggregators and digital service provider capabilities but assist DIAL in enhancing the ICT4D strategies to address challenges faced by NGOs. Dependent on the evaluation results from this RFI, DIAL may potentially release an RFP to specific aggregators and digital service providers to actively participate in DIAL's overall ICT4D strategy.

Most of the information gathered will remain confidential and proprietary to DIAL, but the participants will work closely with DIAL to determine what information can be released to the public.

RFI Schedule

All communications regarding this RFI may be directed to:

Digital Impact Alliance at the United Nations Foundation
Platform & Services

1750 Pennsylvania Ave.
NW, #300,
Washington, DC 20006

Email: tsinghnatt@digitalimpactalliance.org

Tentative Schedule	Date
RFI issued	Thursday, 25 January 2019
Deadline for Submission of Questions and Requests for Clarification	Friday, 1 February 2019
Amendment with Responses to Questions and Requests for Clarification issued approximately (if required)	Friday, 8 February 2019
Deadline for Submission of Responses	Friday, 22 February 2019

Questions and Requests for Clarification

Please submit any questions or requests for clarifications about this RFI in writing to tsinghnatt@digitalimpactalliance.org by the deadline for submission of questions and requests for clarification identified in the RFI Schedule. Preferred method of submission is email.

Disclosure of Information and Compliance

All information submitted become the property of DIAL.

Response Format and Content

Respondents are asked to provide responses in excel for service details (refer Appendix 1) and word for other company details in the following format:

A. Introduction

Please provide your company profile which includes:

- Contact name, phone number, and email
- Business name, address, and phone number
- Number of Employees (technical, operations etc)

- Country presence (Head Office, local offices, contacts)
- Products and Services offered
- Knowledge / Experience with the Development Sector
- A list of at least three (3) client references for solutions implemented and scope of the solution proposed. References must include some or all the core mobile services, and if applicable value add (content delivery, monitoring and evaluation etc). For each reference, the following information should be included at minimum:
 - a. A brief solution overviews
 - b. The client agency name and location
 - c. Client contact including name, title, phone number and email address

B. Technical Response

Refer Appendix 1: RFI Response Template

C. Cost Estimate

Respondents are asked to provide estimated costs per service i.e. cost per One Way SMS, Two Way SMS, Bulk SMS, USSD, IVR etc to help DIAL understand acquisition and on-going costs. Any cost estimates requested are for budgeting purposes only. Responders will not be held to price estimates provided as part of the RFI.

D. Enclosures

Respondents are asked to list the documentation submitted below:

1. Insert a list of the type of enclosures submitted.
Examples: Company Profile, Capabilities, specifications, product literature, services etc

Scope

The data provided in response to this RFI, will be used to develop an online repository that shall map MNO and country availability, telecommunication services and value-added services offered. Below is a high-level breakdown of the data expected: -

- Mobile Network Operators available (identify if direct or indirect MNO integration)
- Country Presence
- National Aggregators
- International Aggregators
- Approximate Timelines for SMS, USSD, IVR integration and Short Code provisioning
- Communication services available:
 - SMS
 - USSD
 - Voice
 - Mobile Data
 - Airtime
 - Mobile Money
 - Short Code Provisioning (identify dedicated or shared codes)
 - Long Code Provisioning
 - Over-The-Top (OTT) (WhatsApp, Messenger services)
 - Rich Communication Services (RCS)
 - Additional Services
- Reporting
- Security (Data, Connectivity)
- Pricing
- Bandwidth / Capacity / Traffic
- Service Level Agreement offered
- Quality Assurance commitment

Target Users

This RFI is intended to serve as a guideline for NGOs who are considering gathering information on MNO and Aggregators to integrate with and launch their services.

NGOs and Governments: The online repository solely accessible by NGOs and Governments will provide access to available aggregators and digital service providers, detailing services offered as provided.

Appendix 1

RFI Response Template

RFI Response Template					
General Information					
Company Name and Address:					
Company Overview		Please provide your company profile which includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of Employees (technical, operations etc) - Country presence (Head Office, local offices, contacts) - Products and Services offered - Knowledge / Experience with the Development Sector 			
Service Offering		NOTE: Identify per country per MNO and integration type: D = Direct MNO Integration I = Indirect MNO Integration			
Core Services	Country 1	Country 2	Country...	Average Cost (USD \$)	Remarks
SMS					
One Way (MT)	MNO1(I)	MNO1(I), MNO2(D), MNO3(D)	MNO1(I), MNO2(D)		
Two Way (MT & MO)					
Bulk SMS					
Delivery Reports (MT & MO)					
Sender ID Configuration / Number Masking					
Standard Billing					
Premium Billing					
Zero Rating					
Reverse Billing					
Dedicated Short Code Provisioning					
Shared Short Code: Keyword Provisioning					
Long Code Provisioning					
SMS SPAM Filter					
Automated regulatory compliance					
Traffic / Capacity / Bandwidth (Transaction Per Second)					
USSD					
One Way (MT)					

RFI Response Template

Two Way (MT & MO)					
Session Reports					
Standard Billing					
Premium Billing					
Zero Rating					
Reverse Billing					
Hosted Menu					
Short Code Provisioning					
Traffic / Capacity / Bandwidth (sessions)					
VOICE					
Interactive Voice Response (IVR)					
Leased Lines					
VoIP					
Premium Billing					
Zero Rating					
Reverse Billing					
Hosted IVR Menu					
Short Code Provisioning					
Long Code Provisioning					
Reporting					
Traffic / Capacity / Bandwidth					
Airtime					
Transfer to Subscriber(s)					
Transfer to Business					
Balance Check					
Delivery Notification					
Reporting					
Mobile Money					
Business to Subscriber(s)					
Subscriber(s) to Business					
Bulk Transfer					
Balance Check					
Delivery Notification					
Reporting					
Over-The-Top Services					
WhatsApp					
Facebook Messenger					
Media Streaming					

RFI Response Template					
User Interface					
Graphical User Interface					
Customized User Creation					
Operations & Monitoring					
Alarm Support					SMS, EMAIL
Consolidated Reports (Balance, Delivery, Fail, Success)					Reports: SMS, USSD, IVR, Mobile Data
Automated realtime alerts					SMS, EMAIL
Configure & Monitor Message length					
Threshold Monitoring					Availabile Messages, Minutes, MB
SPAM Control					Filtering, Block List, Do-not-Disturb List
Hosted Services					
Content Management					
Subscription Management					
Campaign Management					
Portal Management					
Recommendation Engine					
Advertisement Platform					
Analytics and Reporting					
Service Level Commitment					
Reliability % (Uptime, SMS Delivery, Voice)					
High Availability					
Redundancy					
Support (Customer Care)					
Security Policies					
Data Integrity					
Connectivity Options					
SMPP					
HTTP					
HTTPS					
XML / RPC					
XML / HTTP					
FTP					
GUI / Self Service					
Data Integrity					
VPN					
Other API support (SOAP, XML RPC, REST)					

Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition	Example
Mobile Network Operator (MNO)	Is an organization that provides wireless communications services	Verizon, Telus, MTN, Vodafone, Vodacom
Mobile Aggregator	Is an organization that integrates with various MNOs, providing access to MNO communication services through their aggregation application.	Cellulant, Twilio, Nexmo, InfoBip, Africa's Talking, Synq Africa
Digital Service Provider (DSP)	Is an organization that either integrates with various MNOs or integrates with a mobile aggregator to provide access to MNO communication services. DSPs along with aggregation services provide value added services such as content delivery, conducting surveys, setting up hotlines through the various communication services.	Praekelt, EngageSpark, TolaData, Mobile Accord, Souktel

Mobile Capabilities	Description
SMS	A text messaging service (Short Message Service) used to communicated with Subscribers or Applications
SMS One Way (to Subscriber)	Text Message sent by an application to a Subscribers mobile device e.g. Bulk SMS is a popular product offered by Service Providers.
SMS Two Way	Interactive text messaging services, initiated by a Subscriber or Application and optional to respond to e.g. services such as mAgri services.
SMS Delivery Reports	Detailed report for successful and unsuccessful delivery and receipt of text messages.
	Aggregator: Notification of SMS delivery receipt to Aggregator from the Application and / or Aggregator to the Operator ONLY.
	Operator: Notification of SMS delivery receipt to Subscriber from the Operator ONLY.
SMS Zero Rating	The service is configured as non-chargeable i.e. text messages sent or received are not billed.
SMS Reverse Billing	The service is configured where by the Digital Service Provider is billed for both sending and receiving text messages.
Host Flows	An intelligent automated interactive text messaging service between a Subscriber and an Application, which is normally hosted by a Digital Service Provider
Message Counter	A text message length "calculator" that informs a user if they have exceeded 160 Latin or 70 non-Latin characters
Automatic Character Substitution	An automated solution that identifies and replaces special characters such as ^, {, }, \, [,], ~, "" and €
Maximum Spend Limits	An automated solution where a user can define a threshold on spend amount for messaging services e.g. fix the spend for a messaging service to \$100 regardless the number of SMS sent.
Send re-attempt	A feature which queues and schedules undelivered text messages for a delivery retry

SMS Sender ID	Short / Long Code associated by an Alphanumeric ID. Useful for adding credibility to a message e.g. signalling that a message originates from an organization (e.g. the telco) or a ministry (e.g. Ministry of Health).
Mobile Originated (MO)	MO messages are initiated by a Subscriber or Application which are delivered to Subscribers or Application
Mobile Terminated (MT)	MT messages are messages that have been delivered to a Subscriber or Application
USSD	<i>The Unstructured Supplementary Service Data (USSD) is a protocol primarily used to delivery text messages to Subscribers or Applications within a defined USSD Session (refer USSD Session Reports)</i>
USSD One Way (to Subscriber)	<i>Network Initiated:</i> Mobile Network Operator initiated USSD Session to inform the Subscriber of services, warning or updates.
	<i>Service Provider Initiated:</i> Digital Service Provider initiated USSD Session to inform the Subscriber of services, warning or updates.
	Typically, USSD Flash Messages cannot be saved to the device.
USSD Two Way	Interactive USSD session initiated by a Subscriber using their mobile device by dialling a USSD short code e.g. *123#, or initiated by an Application for Subscriber feedback
USSD Session Reports	USSD interactions are defined in session lasting from 60 seconds to 180 seconds. A USSD session report maintains data of successfully and unsuccessfully initiated USSD sessions of subscribers and or applications.
USSD Zero Rating	The service is configured as non-chargeable i.e. USSD sessions are not billed.
USSD Reverse Billing	The service is configured where by the Digital Service Provider is billed for the USSD session.
Hosted Flows	An intelligent automated interactive USSD service between a Subscriber and an Application or vice versa, which is hosted by either the Digital Service Provider or Mobile Network Operator
Voice	A Mobile Telephone Service used as a communication where Voice is the medium.
Inbound Calling (IVR)	Normally, a subscriber-initiated call to an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) platform which routes calls to an Individual or an intelligent automated voice service e.g. customer care.
Outbound Dialling	A B2C initiated call to Subscribers.
Call Queue / Forwarding	An automated service where inbound calls are kept either put on hold till e.g. A customer care agent is available or redirected to a service a Subscriber requires
Call Detail Record	This is data detailing Subscribers network usage related to calls, text messages, data usage etc
Zero Rating	The IVR service is configured as non-chargeable i.e. voice calls are not billable.
Reverse Billing	The service is configured where by the Digital Service Provider is billed for the call e.g. Toll Free or Collect Call.

Hosted Flows	An intelligent automated interactive voice service between a Subscriber and an Application or vice versa, which is hosted by either the Digital Service Provider or Mobile Network Operator
Provisioning	This is an activity carried out by, primarily, the Mobile Network Operator with some input from Digital Service Providers to configure network services / channels for specialized projects e.g. configuration of reverse / zero billing for text messaging services.
Dedicated Short Codes	Is a 5 to 6-digit number acquired and solely owned by a specific organization to address SMS traffic to Subscribers or Applications
Share Short Codes	Is a 5 to 6-digit number acquired and owned by an Aggregator to address SMS traffic to Subscribers or Applications for multiple organizations
Standard Short Code	Is a 5 to 6 digit randomly generated non-sequential number to address SMS traffic to Subscribers or Applications
Premium Short Code	Is a 5 to 6-digit sequential number requested by an Organization e.g. 435763 which spells "HELPME"