

## **Advance Notice of Proposed Shorter Consultation Period for Amendments to the FRIACO Intelligent Network Charge**

4 September 2002

On 26 May 2000 the Director General made a Direction, which at paragraph 4.3 permitted BT to make a "reasonable additional charge" for any Intelligent Network services, needed to route FRIACO calls, provided by BT to other operators. These provisions were extended to apply to Single Tandem FRIACO services in a Direction published on 15 May 2002.

Having received complaints about the current level of the IN charge for FRIACO, Oftel is investigating the level of that charge. Oftel considers a modification to BT's licence is necessary to meet Oftel's policy objectives on this matter. Oftel intends to publish a consultation document setting out the proposed licence modification, together with a draft of the Direction to amend the May 2000 Direction and a draft determination setting the proposed charges, by early October 2002.

On 9 August 2001 the Director published a statement setting out Oftel's use of public consultation. This statement declared that "Oftel will avoid over-reliance on a single pattern of written consultation and, where necessary, may propose a shorter period. On each occasion, before finally deciding to allow a lesser period of time, Oftel will notify stakeholders of its intentions, providing reasons for the proposed reduction, and will consider comments from interested stakeholders".

The purpose of this Notice is to inform all interested parties including BT and FRIACO operators that the Director General intends to consult on the proposals for only the 28 days required by statute. Further, Oftel does not intend to hold any comments-on-comments phase during which observations may be made on the representations made by others.

It is proposed to allow a shorter period for responses because stakeholders interested in the IN charge are likely to be confined to industry as the consultation is unlikely to be of direct interest to consumers; and in the light of the regulatory changes expected next year under the EU Directives there is a need to resolve outstanding policy issues under the current regime as quickly as possible.

Comments are, therefore, invited on the published proposals for a shorter consultation by the end of the day on 20 September 2002. Comments should be addressed to:

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