



MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

PUBLIC REPORT ON MOBILE NUMBER PORTABILITY

*Issued pursuant to Section 189(6) of the National Information and Communications Technology Act
2009*

Acceptance of Recommendations and Directive to
Commence MNP Implementation

HON. ROBERT NAGURI, MP

Minister for Information and Communications Technology

October 28, 2026

1. PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

This ‘Public Report’ is released by the Minister for Information and Communications Technology (ICT) pursuant to Section 189(6) of the National Information and Communications Technology Act 2009 (“Act”). It records the extent to which the Minister accepts the recommendations of the National Information and Communications Technology Authority (NICTA) concerning implementation of Mobile Number Portability (MNP) in Papua New Guinea.

Section 189 of the Act sets out the statutory process under which NICTA conducts a public inquiry, provides its final report and recommendations to the Minister, and the Minister seeks public submissions on whether those recommendations should be accepted. After receiving submissions, pursuant to section 189(6) of the Act, the Minister must release a ‘**Public Report**’ identifying the extent of acceptance and, for any recommendation not accepted in whole or in part, the reasons for non-acceptance.

2. LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

The MNP process is governed by Part IX of the NICT Act. Sections 189(1) to 189(4) require NICTA to hold public inquiries and submit a report with recommendations to the Minister. Section 189(6) mandates that *“following receipt of submissions, the Minister shall release a public report – (a) identifying the extent to which the Minister accepts NICTA’s recommendations: and (b) if any recommendations are not accepted (in whole or in part), the reasons why those recommendations are not accepted”*. This Public Report is published to satisfy that legal requirement. Section 189(7) then directs NICTA, in consultation with the Minister, to implement all recommendations that the Minister has accepted.

The Act’s overarching objective under Section 2 is *“to ensure that the ICT industry contributes to the greatest extent possible to the long-term economic and social development of Papua New Guinea”*. Section 3 places emphasis on competitive markets and consumer welfare. For example, Section 2(d) directs NICTA to promote “fair and efficient market conduct and effective competition” in the ICT industry, and Section 3(a) recognizes “the effectiveness of market forces in promoting consumer welfare”. The decision on MNP is guided by these objectives where introducing number portability is expected to stimulate competition, improve consumer welfare and make prices affordable, in line with the Act’s intent.

3. NICTA Inquiry Findings and Recommendation

NICTA’s MNP Inquiry and Recommendation Report, July 2025 (Recommendation Report) synthesized the public submissions and technical analysis on MNP. Key findings included:

- PNG’s mobile market is dominated by a few operators with relatively high prices;
- consumers face switching barriers; and,

- stakeholders generally believed MNP would increase choice. For example, Digicel stated it “does not object to number portability in principle” but stressed that costs must be weighed against benefits.

NICTA noted that the market’s size, the entry of Digitec Communications Limited (Vodafone PNG), competition level and regulatory maturity satisfy the trigger points for MNP implementation.

A detailed cost–benefit analysis (CBA) by NICTA calculated that consumer and market benefits of MNP could be USD 80 to 150 million over five years, while estimated implementation costs were only USD 14 million to 17 million. In addition, international benchmarking showed that mobile prices in PNG are significantly higher than in similar countries with MNP, indicating substantial room for consumer gains. The report thus concluded that *“the potential market benefits from MNP could range between USD 80m and USD 150m outweighing the projected total costs”*.

Based on this evidence and stakeholder input, NICTA recommended implementing MNP. Specifically, the report advised the Government to amend the National Numbering Plan and promulgate formal MNP rules. The key implementation recommendations included:

- Establishment of a centralized porting database;
- Recipient-led porting processes with face-to-face validation;
- One-day porting timeframes.
- Consumer protection measures including win-back restrictions;
- Formation of an MNP Coordination Committee to oversee implementation; and
- No porting charges to consumers.

Subject to Ministerial approval, NICTA proposed that MNP be launched within 24 months of the decision. NICTA expected MNP would *“enhance consumer choice, lower mobile service costs, and strengthen market competition”*, supporting PNG’s ICT sector for efficiency and inclusivity.

The Minister also notes NICTA’s recommendation that fixed number portability could be revisited at a later date.

4. Public Consultation under Section 189(5)

After receiving NICTA’s report, the Minister pursuant to Section 189(5) and 229 of the Act conducted a public consultation inviting NICTA licensees, industry stakeholders and the general public to comment on NICTA’s Recommendation Report. The Minister issued a public notice on the 26 Jan 2026 inviting all stakeholders to submit comments to the Minister on NICTA’s Recommendation Report before 28 February 2026. The notice explicitly cited Section 189(5)’s requirement to seek submissions before deciding, and invited feedback on all aspects of NICTA’s recommendations.

In response to the Minister’s public consultation, three submissions were received from Digicel PNG Limited, Vodafone PNG and Mediafon IT Consultants FZCO, and were considered in making this decision.

5. Minister's Responses to the Submissions

The Minister notes that all respondents - Digicel, Vodafone and Mediafon - generally agreed that MNP should be implemented in PNG.

Vodafone has indicated strong support for implementing MNP citing that the net benefits to the industry and consumers of implementing MNP far outweighs the costs. Vodafone further submitted that MNP would enhance consumer choice, promote greater competition between mobile operators and contribute to improved service delivery and innovation within the telecommunications sector. The Minister notes that Vodafone's views are generally consistent with NICTA's findings that MNP is expected to deliver positive outcomes for consumers and promote a more competitive mobile market.

The Minister also notes that Digicel does not object the implementation of MNP in general but cautioned that the cost and benefits of implementing MNP must be properly and carefully assessed and weighed before MNP is implemented. Digicel submitted that further opportunity should have been provided for the public to comment on the costs and benefits underpinning the proposed implementation of MNP. The Minister, however, finds that NICTA has made a number of public inquiries, between 2016 to 2019 and 2023 to 2024, on implementing MNP detailing the costs and benefits of MNP. All the relevant stakeholders including Digicel were given the opportunity to participate in that process. Accordingly the Minister notes that NICTA's July 2025 assessment on the cost and benefits of implementing MNP is consistent with its findings and recommendations made in the public consultations. The Minister further notes that Digicel raised a number of implementation and operational considerations for MNP as well as considering a recommendation to implement fixed number portability. While these matters warrant consideration during implementation, the Minister is satisfied that they do not alter the overall conclusion that MNP is in the long-term interests of consumers and the development of a competitive telecommunications sector in Papua New Guinea.

The Minister further notes the views of Mediafon IT Consultants of Dubai made through a formal submission which strongly supports the implementation of MNP in PNG. Mediafon's submission drew upon its international experience with number portability and highlighted the benefits that MNP can deliver in promoting competition, consumer empowerment and efficient market outcomes. The Minister notes that these views are supportive of NICTA's recommendations and provide further confidence that the implementation of MNP is consistent with international practice and the policy objectives of the NICT Act.

6. Minister's Decision

After having read and considered the comments and issues raised in these three submissions and NICTA's assessment made in the Recommendation Report, pursuant to section 189(6) of the NICT Act, **the Minister 'Accepts' NICTA's recommendations in full.** No recommendation is rejected,

amended or accepted only in part. Accordingly, there are no recommendations for which reasons for non-acceptance are required under Section 189(6)(b).

The Minister has also carefully considered issues raised during the consultation regarding the MNP cost implementation, including capital expenditure on systems integration, ongoing operational costs of the portability platform, and the equitable allocation of such costs among operations. The Minister is of the view that these operational and transitional matters rest on NICTA's regulatory and administrative competence to manage during the course of implementation, through appropriate cost-recovery mechanisms, phased expenditure schedules and stakeholder engagement processes as recommended in the Recommendation Report.

The extent of the Minister's acceptance is set out in Table 1 below:

Table 1 Extent of Minister's Acceptance - Summary

Recommendation	Matter	NICTA recommendation (summary)	Minister's position
1	MNP implementation	Implement MNP in Papua New Guinea following Ministerial approval.	Accepted in full
2	Effect of MNP rules	Rules governing MNP take effect upon being made and published in the Gazette.	Accepted in full
3	MNP Coordination Committee	Establish a NICTA-chaired industry coordination mechanism for implementation and operational matters.	Accepted in full
4	Recipient-led porting	Use a recipient-led porting process, including the recommended customer initiation and validation approach.	Accepted in full
5	Centralised solution	Use a centralised number portability database/clearinghouse solution.	Accepted in full
6-7	Routing	Apply the recommended routing approach, with international inbound routing matters addressed through implementation coordination.	Accepted in full
8-10	Cost recovery	Each operator to be responsible for its own MNP establishment / setup costs with such cost not being passed onto consumers. NICTA to request MNP coordination committee to apply to consider recovery of MNP clearinghouse establishment costs and its ongoing usage cost set up.	Accepted in full
11	Porting time	Target porting within one working day as recommended.	Accepted in full

12	Validation data	Limit exchange of customer-porting information to the recommended validation data.	Accepted in full
13-14	Customer debt	Keep porting separate from debt management while preserving customers' obligations to settle outstanding amounts.	Accepted in full
15	Win-back protection	Apply the recommended 60-day restriction on donor-operator win-back contact, excluding debt recovery.	Accepted in full
16	Re-porting restriction	Apply the recommended 60-day restriction before a ported number may be ported again.	Accepted in full
17	Implementation target	Seek to complete preparations for commencement of MNP within the recommended implementation period.	Accepted in full
18	Fixed number portability	Consider fixed number portability separately at a future date after launch of MNP, consistent with the statutory process for other forms of number portability.	Accepted in full

7. Reasons for the Decision

The Minister accepts the recommendations having considered NICTA's Recommendation Report together with the submissions received through the consultation process pursuant to Section 189(5). The principal considerations supporting the decision are:

- NICTA's analysis found that the expected economic and consumer benefits of MNP materially exceed the estimated implementation and operating costs;
- MNP is expected to reduce a barrier to switching mobile service providers by allowing customers to retain their mobile numbers, thereby supporting consumer choice and competition;
- NICTA found that the principal market and regulatory pre-conditions for MNP implementation in Papua New Guinea are sufficiently established; and
- The consultation identified broad support for implementation. Cost and funding concerns can be addressed through the detailed implementation, cost-allocation and stakeholder coordination processes rather than requiring rejection or amendment of the recommendation.

8. Implementation

In accordance with Section 189(7), NICTA is to implement the accepted recommendations in consultation with the Minister. The Minister's decision directs NICTA to progress the necessary regulatory instruments, industry coordination, central portability arrangements, operator integration

and testing, consumer awareness, monitoring and compliance, and funding and cost-allocation arrangements.

The implementation framework sequences programme establishment, development of business rules, procurement of the number-portability clearinghouse/platform, operator integration and testing, consumer awareness, service launch and post-launch stabilization. These activities are implementation measures and do not alter the Minister's full acceptance of NICTA's recommendations.

9. Conclusion

For the purposes of Section 189(6) of the Act, the Minister confirms that NICTA's recommendations for the implementation of Mobile Number Portability in Papua New Guinea are accepted in full. NICTA is therefore to proceed, in consultation with the Minister, with implementation of the accepted recommendations in accordance with Section 189(7) and the applicable provisions of the Act.