

Telecommunications Users and Consumers Advisory Committee (“TUCAC”)

Minutes of the 24th Meeting held at 3:00 p.m.

on 30 June 2022 (Thursday) in Conference Room,

Office of the Communications Authority (“OFCA”),

29/F Wu Chung House, Wan Chai

Present:

Mr. Sanda CHEUK, JP (Chairman)	Deputy Director-General
Mr. Francis HO	Representative of Consumer Council
Dr. Anthony NG	Representative of Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce
Mr. Keith LI	Representative of Hong Kong Wireless Technology Industry Association
Ms. Maura WONG	Representative of the aged community services
Mr. Y C SIU	Representative of the disabled
Dr. K W TANG	Member appointed on an ad personam basis
Mr. K L CHAN	Representative as a member of the public
Mr. Y M KUNG	Representative as a member of the public
Mr. H C HUNG	Representative as a member of the public
Ms. Katy LAU	Representative as a member of the public
Dr. K W LAU	Representative as a member of the public
Mr. Richard TSANG	Representative as a member of the public
Ms. Avon YUE	Representative as a member of the public
Mr. Henry LIN	Representative of Education Bureau
Ms. Jamay WONG (Secretary)	OFCA

In attendance:

Ms. Sharis TAM	OFCA
Mr. Matthew WONG	OFCA
Ms. Christine CHIM	OFCA
Ms. Tara NG	OFCA
Miss Edith YAU	OFCA

Absent with apologies:

Mr. Ricky CHONG	Representative of Communications Association of Hong Kong
Mr. Eric YEUNG	Representative of Small and Medium Enterprises
Mr. C M CHUNG	Representative of the disabled
Mr. K K LAU, MH, JP	Member appointed on an ad personam basis
Ms. P Y CHAN	Representative as a member of the public

Mr. W T CHAN
Ms. W K CHENG
Ms. Peony CHEUNG
Ms. Eva LAU

Representative as a member of the public
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I. Minutes of the 23rd Meeting of the Telecommunications Users and Consumers Advisory Committee (“TUCAC”)

1. The Secretary had not received any proposed amendment to the draft minutes of the 23rd meeting from members prior to the meeting and no amendment was proposed by the members at the meeting. The Chairman announced that the minutes of the 23rd meeting were confirmed.

II. Implementation of the Real-name Registration Programme for SIM Cards

2. Ms. Sharis TAM briefed members on the implementation of the Real-name Registration Programme for SIM Cards (“Real-name Registration Programme”), including the implementation timetable, information required for registration, registration channels, list of telecommunications service providers providing pre-paid SIM (PPS) card services, format of notification via SMS messages sent by telecommunications service providers on real name registration, general registration steps, and OFCA’s relevant publicity and support services. Related information was set out in TUCAC Paper No. 1/2022.

3. Ms. Maura WONG enquired (1) whether SIM service plan (SSP) card users should also be required to complete real name registration before service activation; (2) whether real name registration should be completed by the purchasers or the users of SIM cards if they were not the same persons; and (3) some of the sellers of built-in SIM devices in the market asserted that consumers were not required to make real name registration for their products (e.g. smart watches). She asked whether such statement was true, and under such circumstances, whether the consumers who

purchased such smart devices would be held responsible if no real name registration was made.

4. Ms. Sharis TAM replied that according to the Telecommunications (Registration of SIM Cards) Regulation (“Regulation”), starting from 1 March 2022, all newly issued SIM cards (including SSP and PPS cards) were required to have real-name registration completed before service activation, while the existing SSP users were not required to re-register unless they changed to another service provider or subscribed to a new phone number. It was noted that some members of the public (e.g. the elderly) might need to rely on relatives to purchase SIM cards and complete registration for them, the Government thus encouraged those who acted on their behalf (e.g. their children) to help them complete real name registration.

5. The Chairman added that if the built-in SIM cards were issued by a local telecommunications service provider and were intended for person-to-person communications (including voice, data and/or SMS services), such kind of SIM cards were required to have real name registration completed before service activation. Contrarily, if the SIM cards in the devices were only used for providing Internet data connection to download and update the product information for the devices, these SIM cards were considered being used for the purpose of machine type connection, and hence not included in the Real-name Registration Programme. Generally speaking, the SIM cards being supplied in the market for individual users could all be used for person-to-person communications, completion of real name registration was thus required. For built-in SIM devices with a SIM card that could not be removed and/or used separately, but used only for machine type connection, they were not covered by the Real-name Registration Programme. Therefore, the requirements for actual registration would depend on the configuration and purposes of the related devices.

6. Mr. Richard TSANG said that some social welfare agencies or non-governmental organisations had purchased a large amount of PPS cards for distribution or donation to the grass-roots amid the pandemic. Supposing the recipients were single families with several children under the age of 16 and decided not to add value for various reasons after the balance of the PPS cards was used up but chose to use another

SIM card given by another social welfare agency, the number of registrable PPS cards for the fathers or mothers of these families might soon reach the upper limit. He asked whether the Government had ever thought of the ways to deal with such circumstances.

7. Ms. Sharis TAM said that telecommunications service providers would deregister a PPS card when its balance was used up. Besides, each individual user could register up to 10 PPS cards with each telecommunications service provider, and there were a large number of telecommunications service providers providing PPS card services in the market, the number of registrable PPS cards for each individual user would thus be more than ten in reality. It was believed to be enough for daily usage. Moreover, if some of the registered PPS cards were no longer in use, the users could contact their respective telecommunications service providers for deregistration, in order to free up more registration quota for other PPS cards.

8. The Chairman pointed out that the Government's implementation of the Real-name Registration Programme mainly aimed at plugging the loophole arising from the anonymous nature of PPS cards to assist law enforcement agencies in the detection of crimes involving the use of PPS cards, thereby safeguarding the effective use of telecommunications services and the integrity of the communications networks, as well as law and order. Mobile services were very popular in Hong Kong. Many underage persons were also users of mobile services. Parents might think carefully whether it would be more appropriate to register the SIM cards under their children's names. In any case, according to the Regulation, users aged below 16 who intended to register their PPS cards in an individual capacity were required to be endorsed by an adult aged 18 or above. The personal information of that adult was also required to be registered. Law enforcement agencies might contact anyone based on the registered information as and when necessary. Furthermore, the Chairman said that real-name registration systems set up by the respective telecommunications service providers were all made easy to use as far as possible. PPS card users could make use of the systems to check the number of PPS cards registered under their names. The real-name registration systems of some telecommunications service providers also enabled support for deregistration of PPS cards.

9. Mr. Francis HO would like to know whether the Regulation had stipulated the retention period that the information provided by SIM card users for real-name registration could be kept and set out the circumstances under which such information would be destroyed.

10. Ms. Sharis TAM said that the Regulation required that telecommunications service providers should retain the information of a SIM card for at least one year after it was deregistered. Telecommunications service providers were also required to observe the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance in the collection and management of personal data.

11. Ms. Katy LAU enquired whether SIM card users could transfer their SIM cards after completing the real-name registration.

12. Ms. Sharis TAM said that telecommunications service providers had provided ways for SIM card users to arrange for transfer of a SIM card. The existing real-name registered user could first deregister his or her SIM card in order to allow the new user to make real-name registration with his or her own personal information.

13. Dr. K W TANG would like to confirm whether the process for transferring a SIM card or changing to another service provider would be handled by telecommunications service providers.

14. The Chairman replied that telecommunications service providers would make the relevant arrangements. Moreover, if PPS card users were to port out their mobile numbers to another telecommunications service provider, the procedure was basically the same as that for SSP users. They simply had to furnish the new telecommunications service provider with the relevant information for application. The original service provider would only verify the customer's information in the course of number porting but would not pass any personal information of the customer to the new service provider.

15. Mr. Richard TSANG enquired about the situation of real-name registration for multi-user service plan and how the number of users was counted for registration.

16. Ms. Sharis TAM said that there was no upper limit on the number of registrable SSP cards. According to her understanding, there was generally one account registrant only for a multi-user service plan. If it so happened that law enforcement agencies had to contact the account registrant, it was believed that the account registrant would be able to provide the information of different SIM card users under the multi-user service plan so as to facilitate the investigation of law enforcement agencies.

III. Latest Progress on the Subsidy Scheme for Encouraging Early Deployment of 5G

17. Mr. Matthew WONG briefed members on the latest progress of the Subsidy Scheme for Encouraging Early Deployment of 5G (the “Subsidy Scheme”), including the content of the Subsidy Scheme and its latest status as well as the aspects of the approved projects and applications. He also showcased examples of the approved projects. Related information was set out in TUCAC Paper No. 2/2022.

18. The Chairman pointed out that the Government had already announced an extension of the deadline for the Subsidy Scheme to 31 December 2022. Some examples of approved projects had also been uploaded onto OFCA’s website. Any persons interested in the Subsidy Scheme could make reference to the examples in order to come up with an idea and work out the design of applications that helped enhance the operation efficiency and service quality of various sectors and submit an application to OFCA accordingly.

19. Dr. K W LAU noticed that the aspects of approved projects covered the areas of agriculture, forestry and fishery. He said that he had raised the Subsidy Scheme for discussion at another advisory committee on agriculture and fisheries industry and learnt that some members of the industry intended to design 5G

applications for the advancement of the agriculture industry. However, they held back from making application to the Subsidy Scheme as they worried that the application procedure would be complicated and that a detailed account of the project in writing was required. Dr. K W LAU enquired whether OFCA would provide assistance in this regard.

20. Mr. Matthew WONG said that basic information of the applicants and details of their projects had to be provided when making application under the Subsidy Scheme. OFCA was aware that at present some information technology firms or mobile network operators offered business solutions with deployment of 5G. They could also assist applicants in filling out the application forms by providing detailed description of their projects and acting as their project coordinator. Applicants could consider contacting such firms or operators for consultation. All in all, OFCA would not immediately reject an application for the reason of inadequate information at the time of submission. Instead, the applicant or project coordinator would be given sufficient time to provide supplementary information and documents.

21. Dr. K W TANG expressed that he understood the situation of the agriculture and fisheries industry in making application for subsidy as mentioned by Dr. K W LAU. He also pointed out that currently some intermediaries (such as Hong Kong Productivity Council) could provide matching services for this kind of clients to find suitable information technology firms or technology providers. Dr. K W TANG said that at Hong Kong Productivity Council he had contact with clients who were interested in the Subsidy Scheme. However, these clients did not submit any applications as they were not familiar with the Subsidy Scheme. He hoped that people from various sectors could have a better understanding of the Subsidy Scheme through OFCA's publicity work and would make application for a grant in the future, such that 5G technology could be used widely for the benefit of all sectors.

22. The Chairman said that OFCA would review carefully the details of every application received for the Subsidy Scheme in order to examine about the concept of the projects as well as the effect of improving operation efficiency and service quality

in the use of 5G technology. OFCA's staff would strive to provide assistance to the applicants, enabling them to state clearly their project details for consideration and approval by the assessment committee and OFCA. The Chairman said that while he understood that as mentioned by Dr. K W LAU and Dr. K W TANG, many interested applicants were not practitioners of the information technology sector and might have come across certain difficulty in drafting the project description, he suggested that the applicants should consider contacting mobile network operators or information technology firms for assistance.

23. Mr. Henry LIN said that as far as the education sector was concerned, applications of 5G technology were found more effective in the countryside, such as field trips, excursions and hiking than in activities held within the school campus. However, almost all extra-curricular activities were cancelled over the past two years due to class suspension and the special vacation. The teachers' progress in project design had thus delayed or come to a halt. Fortunately, the deadline of the subsidy scheme was now extended and hopefully the teachers could resume their work after class resumption. Mr. Henry LIN continued that some teachers in the school sector who are tech-savvy and familiar with 5G technology had borrowed equipment from telecommunications operators for testing their 5G applications. It was hoped that he could share more information and results of their work with everybody in the near future.

24. Mr. Keith LI said that Hong Kong Wireless Technology Industry Association had organised seminars on 5G Wireless Internet of Things (WIOT) services and met with overwhelming response. However, as the service providers might not be effective in finding buyers of such services, he fully supported the proposal of match-up arrangements as mentioned by Dr TANG. Although the prospective applicants were well aware of the needs of their industry, they were in lack of the specialised know-how to put such application technology into practice; while the IT sector or the solution providers possessed the expertise in technological aspect, they had not fully grasped the service demand of their products in other professions. As such, matching up both sides would definitely boost the number of application and better serve the purpose of the subsidy scheme. The Chairman thanked Mr. Keith LI

for his advice.

25. Mr. Francis HO would like to take the opportunity to give his view to OFCA about the Consumer Council's observations from its handling of complaints against the telecommunications industry. He hoped that OFCA could convey the concerns to the telecommunications operators for reference on improving their services. Mr. Francis HO noticed that, in handling the consumer complaints, it was common for the telecommunications operators to respond only to the ultimate request of individual complainants, rather than inquiring of the complainants about the real causes of their complaints. For instance, an elderly sought assistance from the Consumer Council for failing to effect an early termination of his contract with the telecommunication operator unconditionally. Upon inquiry into the complaint, the Consumer Council learned that the complainant was living in a newly-developed housing estate at a relatively remote area. Due to poor reception of his mobile service and that no improvement was shown, he demanded termination of the service. After the Consumer Council's referral and mediation, the telecommunications operator eventually arranged for a site test and proposed a solution for improvement. Finally, the complainant acknowledged that the service had improved and was willing to continue his subscription of service with the telecommunications operator concerned. The case was satisfactorily settled. In addition, the Consumer Council also noticed that since the case was resolved, the number of similar complaints received by the Consumer Council regarding that location had also dropped. Therefore, he hoped that the telecommunications operators would dig into the reasons behind the complaints rather than just handling the cases with regard to a complainant's request. This would help achieve a win-win situation.

26. The Chairman said that he understood the situation as relayed by Mr. Francis HO. He pointed out that the extension of mobile phone network was a gradual progress. When studying the possibility of setting up a radio base station for improving network coverage, the telecommunications operators would take into consideration various factors, including those in technical aspect (e.g. whether or not antennae and other equipment could be installed at the location), objective condition (e.g. power supply, consensus with the responsible person of the property and whether

or not the residents would oppose to the installation) as well as the commercial cost. OFCA had been encouraging operators to keep in view the market development and respond proactively to the customers' demands, so as to further improve their network coverage and enhance the service quality.

27. Mr. Francis HO understood that it took time to extent the network coverage and believed that the management of the operators were willing to enhance their network coverage as the quality of service would be a major concern for customers to decide which telecommunications operator and services to subscribe to. Mr. Francis HO hoped that the operators could enhance training of their frontline staff in order to let them understand that they should look into the reason behind a complaint, which would be a key to success in handling and resolving complaint cases.

28. Dr. K W TANG shared his view that some services were provided on the basis of a fixed telecommunications network. Once the network had shown signs of ageing, the quality or stability of the services would thus be affected. If the frontline staff could identify the issue at an earlier stage and carry out follow-up action in turn, it could avoid aggravation of the problem and hence resulting in service suspension.

29. The Chairman thanked Mr. Francis HO and Dr. K W TANG for their views.

IV. Any Other Business

Latest Statistics on Consumer Complaints

30. The Secretary reported that the CA had received 284 and 254 cases of consumer complaints in the 4th Quarter of 2021 and the 1st Quarter of 2022 respectively. All cases (100%) in the said two quarters were outside the CA's jurisdiction. These complaints primarily involved dissatisfaction with customer services, disputes over contracts/service termination, dissatisfaction with the quality of mobile communications/fixed network/Internet services and disputes over billing. No substantiated case was confirmed to be in breach of the Telecommunications

Ordinance or licence conditions in the said two quarters. The latest consumer complaint statistics are in Annex 1.

Current Term

31. The Chairman said that the present meeting would be the last of the current term of membership. The Chairman thanked the members for taking time out of their busy schedules to attend the meetings and provide valuable opinions on the development of telecommunications services. He hoped that members of the next term would continue to help OFCA promote the development of the telecommunications market from the perspectives of consumers and users.

32. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

Report on Consumer Complaints on Telecom Services

The Telecommunications Users and
Consumers Advisory Committee
The 24th Meeting
30 June 2022



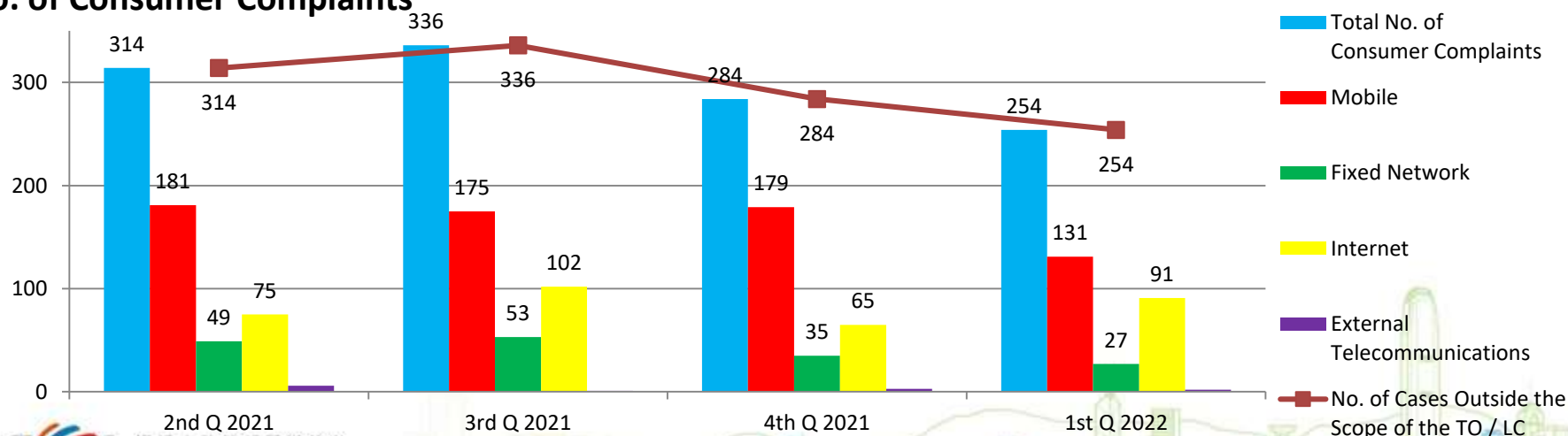
Overview (4th Quarter 2021 and 1st Quarter of 2022)

(Categorised by service types)

	<u>2nd Q 2021</u>	<u>3rd Q 2021</u>	<u>4th Q 2021</u>	<u>1st Q 2022</u>	<u>4th Q 2021</u>	<u>1st Q 2022</u>
Total No. of Consumer Complaints	314	336	284	254	284	254
Mobile	181	175	179	131	179	131
Fixed Network	49	53	35	27	35	27
Internet	75	102	65	91	65	91
External Telecommunications	6	1	3	2	3	2

No. of Cases Outside the Scope of the Telecommunications Ordinance ("TO") / Licence Conditions ("LC")

No. of Consumer Complaints



No. of Complaints (4th Quarter 2021 and 1st Quarter of 2022)

In the 4th Quarter of 2021, the Communications Authority (“CA”) received 284 cases of consumer complaints, representing a significant drop of 15.5% from the 336 cases received in the 3rd Quarter. In the 1st Quarter of 2022, the number of CA received consumer complaints decreased 10.6% to 254 cases.

No. of cases not involving any breach of the TO or LC : 284 and 254 cases in the 2 Quarters respectively

The cases mainly involved :

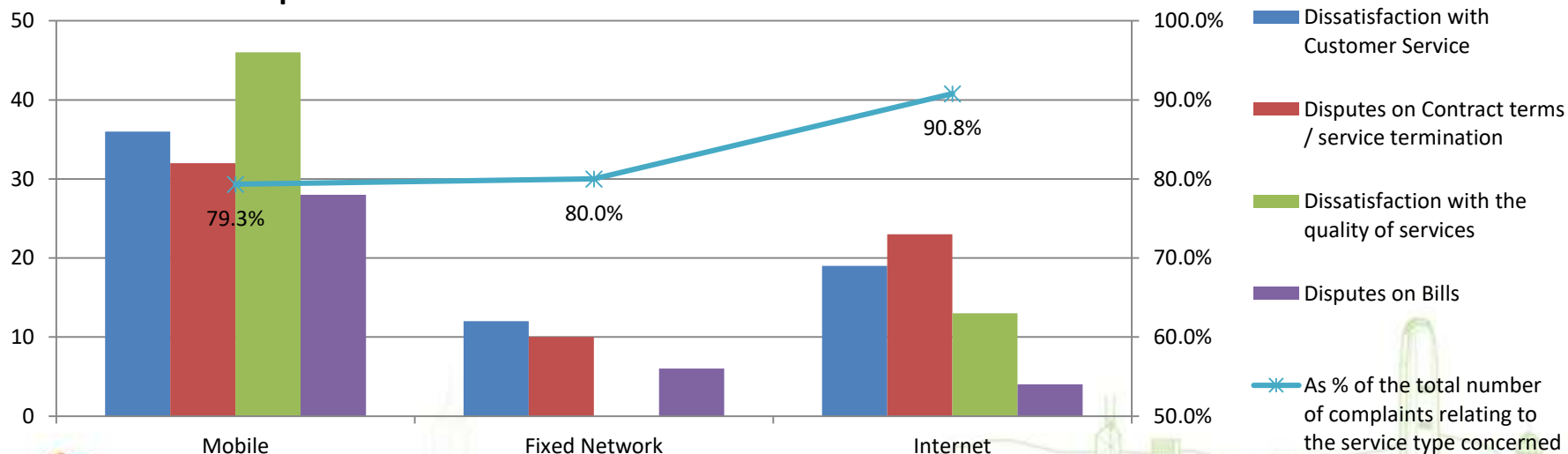
	<u>4th Q 2021</u>	<u>1st Q 2022</u>
➤ Dissatisfaction with customer service :	68 cases	80 cases
➤ Disputes on contract terms / service termination :	65 cases	59 cases
➤ Dissatisfaction with the quality of mobile/ fixed network/Internet services :	60 cases	55 cases
➤ Disputes on bills :	41 cases	23 cases

No. of cases involving possible breach of the TO or LC : 0 case in the 2 Quarters

No. of Complaints (4th Quarter of 2021)

<i>(Categorised by major service types)</i>	<u>Dissatisfaction with customer service</u>	<u>Disputes on contract terms / service termination</u>	<u>Dissatisfaction with the quality of services</u>	<u>Disputes on bills</u>	<u>As percentage of the total number of complaints relating to the service type concerned</u>
Mobile	36	32	46	28	79.3%
Fixed Network	12	10	0	6	80.0%
Internet	19	23	13	4	90.8%

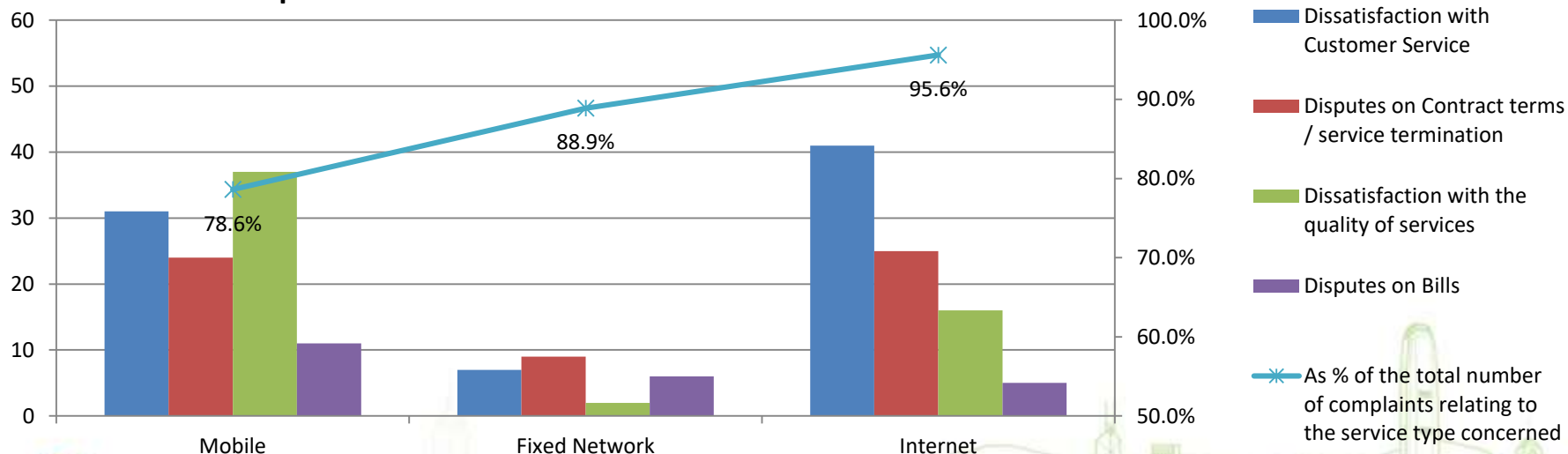
No. of Consumer Complaints



No. of Complaints (1st Quarter of 2022)

<i>(Categorised by major service types)</i>	<u>Dissatisfaction with customer service</u>	<u>Disputes on contract terms / service termination</u>	<u>Dissatisfaction with the quality of services</u>	<u>Disputes on bills</u>	<u>As percentage of the total number of complaints relating to the service type concerned</u>
Mobile	31	24	37	11	78.6%
Fixed Network	7	9	2	6	88.9%
Internet	41	25	16	5	95.6%

No. of Consumer Complaints



No. of Complaints (4th Quarter 2021 and 1st Quarter of 2022)

Case Analysis of Breach of the TO / LC

In the 4th Quarter 2021 and 1st Quarter of 2022, there was no substantiated case of breach of the TO/LC.



Thank You

