

AN OPEN LETTER

RESTORING TRUST IN INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS

i3forum is inviting all International Communications Industry ecosystem contributors – international carriers, aggregators, CPaaS players, industry organizations, vendors, and other stakeholders – to an initial “launch” meeting.

To be held **September 7 at 7:00 AM EDT / 1:00 PM CET / 4:30 PM IST / 7:00 PM SGT**, the meeting will open **discussions around the creation of an industry-wide consortium aiming at restoring trust in international communication.**

An unprecedented global challenge

The rapid growth of unwanted and/or illegal communications, e.g. spamming, spoofing, robocalling, and more, is severely damaging public trust in communications.

As a result, the National Regulatory Authorities (NRAs) are compelled to impose new requirements, not only domestically but also on the international communications industry. This legitimate effort to eradicate such unwanted and/or illegal international inbound communications, is unfortunately highly uncoordinated across the various countries and globally suboptimal.

Challenges lie in a number of areas, in particular in the following two:

1. The unsustainable cost and complexity that the International Communications Industry has to face to comply with multiple, disconnected, and often inconsistent requirements
2. The limited efficiency of diverse independent approaches taken by the NRAs that have limited authority on International Traffic and focus their action on the consequences (in the terminating country) rather than the root cause (in the originating country)

The current approach creates confusion, slows adoption of potential solutions, creates loopholes internationally that fraudsters are quick to exploit (“whack-a-mole” situation). It also constitutes a growing burden for NRAs. In some instances, requirements on international traffic can also lead to negative outcomes for genuine communications presented as “high risk” traffic.

A new vision

This global challenge calls for an unprecedented and highly innovative response: one rooted in collaboration not only within the International Communications Industry, but also with National Regulatory Authorities (NRAs) – and ideally, directly or indirectly, between NRAs.

Industry and NRAs share same objectives:

- Reduce unwanted and/or illegal communications in general – spoofing, spamming, robocalling, and more
- Restore trust in international communications
- Enable trusted and branded communications

No individual stakeholder – industry or regulatory – can successfully address those issues alone. Collaboration at all levels is an absolute requirement.

The proposed approach

i3forum is developing the launch of a global initiative to build an inclusive, agile, and coordinated framework to restore trust in International Communications. Today we are soliciting your feedback during the meeting to which you are hereby invited.

This approach starts with the International Communications Industry rallying around one shared objective: collaborating to build the unified guidance and solutions that are required to efficiently fight unwanted and/or illegal communications, that will address both NRAs and Industry concerns.

Together, we will build a framework for standardized global guidance and industry viable solutions, such as starting with international calls with National CLI inbound to country level.

This approach also calls for the Industry to engage with NRAs and co-develop joint or self-regulated mechanisms to implement, operate, and enforce such a framework on an opt-in basis. It will ensure that compliance drives benefits and non-compliance causes significant negative consequences.

1) Self/Joint Regulation Framework

- Joint/self-regulation framework to enforce unified guidance and solutions
- Opt-in framework for Carriers and NRAs
- Compliance at Carrier or trunk level
- Compliance monitoring and enforcement
- Compliance may bring “Trusted Partner” benefits from participating NRAs and fellow Industry players
- Non-compliance results in Industry and NRAs penalties

2) Joint Governance

- Joint overall management of the joint/self-regulation framework by NRAs and Industry
- Jointly address NEW issues, adapting and improving framework

A good place to start is tackling immediate issues such as legitimate International Traffic using National CLI. There are several current use cases to address:

- Roaming
- International Call Center outsourcing
- International DIDs

More complex areas requiring advanced NRAs and Industry cooperation include:

- CLI Validation (KYC / KYT) through the traffic chain
- International interworking between national solutions
- International Call Traceback (including registration, single global database, operation, and enforcement)
- Trusted and branded communications

An immediate step

To build the “Industry voice” with NRAs and as a neutral vehicle for collaboration, the i3forum is spearheading the creation of “One Consortium” as an essential component of the “Restore Trust in International Communications” initiative.

Inviting all International Communications Industry ecosystem contributors, One Consortium needs to achieve the following:

- Industry collaboration – One Consortium contributors will design and build solutions to Restore Trust in International Communications.
- Industry representation – One Consortium will engage with NRAs globally on behalf of the entire International Communications Industry in order to co-develop, implement, and operate solution(s) to Restore Trust in International Communications.

- Shared resources management – One Consortium members will collectively fund the Consortium activities required to execute the agreed upon strategy, thus benefiting from pooled resources and economies of scale.
- Liaison – One Consortium will liaise on behalf of the International Communications Industry with other non-contributing organizations (e.g. ITU, National Associations...).

The structure considered for One Consortium would be governed by some key principles, including:

- Not for profit
- Inclusivity – All International Communications Industry stakeholders are invited to join carriers, aggregators, CPaaS players, but also industry organizations, vendors etc.).
- No membership dues – This is not “yet another industry organization.” Participants contribute to the various activities of One Consortium, both financially and/or with resources.
- Leadership is owned by the entities who are facing the challenge: companies carrying international traffic that need to comply with NRA requirements.
- Other members, such as industry organizations and vendors, support the efforts of One Consortium, but will not lead it.
- Ownership and engagement – Participants collaborate directly to build the guidance and solutions, as well as discuss with the NRAs with appropriate expert support, but without delegating issues to third parties.

Get things started

i3forum is inviting all interested to participate in an informal “pre-consortium” working group.

The agenda of the call will be to discuss, refine, and agree on the One Consortium vision, mission, and strategy, to then formalize plans and decide upon the organization's incorporation and structure.

Join us for the initial “launch” virtual meeting on September 7th at 7:00 AM EDT / 1:00 PM CET / 4:30 PM IST / 7:00 PM SGT.

RSVP at <https://i3forum.org/one-consortium/>