Full SMS Sender ID Registration to be required by January 2023

Public Consultation shows strong support for IMDA's proposed measures

SINGAPORE, 14 Oct 2022 - The Infocomm Media Development Authority (IMDA) is set to implement two new measures following a public consultation.

First, registration with the Singapore SMS Sender ID Registry ("**SSIR**") will be mandatory for all organisations that use SMS Sender IDs, so that only bona fide organisations can use such Sender IDs.

Second, telecom operators will implement SMS anti-scam filtering solutions within their mobile networks, to automatically filter potential scam messages before they reach consumers.

This is part of the multi-pronged effort by IMDA and other stakeholders to further safeguard SMS as a communications channel.

Full SMS Sender ID Registration

With the setting up of the SSIR in March 2022, there was a 64% reduction in scams through SMS from Q4 2021 to Q2 2022. Scam cases perpetrated via SMSes make up around 8% of scam reports in Q2 2022, down from 10% in 2021.

The current SSIR is a voluntary regime, which means only organisations that want to proactively protect their Sender IDs register with the SSIR. Moving forward, registration will be made mandatory. This means that only bona fide Sender IDs belonging to organisations, will be allowed. All other Sender IDs will be blocked. The full registration requirement will take effect on 31 January 2023. This will build stronger anti-scam capabilities.

IMDA noted the support for the proposal by both the public and merchants. Implementation by January 2023 is driven by the need to act proactively to strengthen the SSIR.

As some organisations may need more time to prepare and register, their SMS cannot be clearly differentiated from other SMS that come from unknown sources and may be scam messages. Therefore, as a transition measure, all non-registered SMS Sender-IDs after 31 January 2023 will be channelled to a Sender ID with the header ***"Likely-SCAM".*** This is akin to a "spam filter and spam bin" and will be in place for around 6 months. Consumers are advised to exercise caution upon receiving such SMS as these are non-registered Sender IDs. Merchants are also urged to have their Sender IDs registered as early as possible with the SSIR.

Anti-Scam SMS Filtering Solutions

Machine-reading technology has made it possible to identify and filter potential scam messages upstream. Specifically, these solutions can detect malicious links within SMSes sent via our telecoms network. IMDA notes the public's support for this proposal. Key mobile operators (Singtel, Starhub, and M1) will implement anti-scam filtering solutions in their networks from end-October 2022.

If the public has any information relating to scams, including malicious SMS, URLs and other links, please submit it online at www.police.gov.sg/iwitness. They can also submit information on malicious SMSes via the ScamShield app or website (www.scamshield.org.sg/report).

IMDA continues to partner the public in the fight against Scams

These new measures form part of an ongoing multi-layered approach to strengthen protection against scams. This has been done with the telecom operators to systemically reduce scam calls and SMS coming through the communication networks. (Please see Annex A for a summary of the multi-layered approach to combat scam SMS and scam calls).

Combatting scams is a whole of society effort, and the public should continue to remain vigilant. Scammers will continue to change their methods and tactics and there is no fool-proof measure even as we continue to monitor and implement additional safeguards. IMDA will continue to work with other stakeholders in the fight against scams. A discerning public is the key in this fight, where consumers are individually alert and raise collective awareness by sharing scam prevention tips with friends and loved ones.

QUOTES FROM ORGANISATIONS

Quote from Singapore Business Federation

"SMS is a convenient and effective channel which many businesses rely on to communicate with their customers. However, given the increase in number of SMS scams, it is important for businesses to assure their customers that these are from legitimate sources. SBF welcomes the Full SMS Sender ID Registry (SSIR) Regime which further strengthens the security of this communication channel. This new regime will be helpful to businesses and enable them to continue providing timely and trusted information to customers via SMS."

Mr Wong Wai Meng, Chairman, Singapore Business Federation Digitalisation Committee

Quote from Singapore International Chamber of Commerce

"Everyone must play their part by staying vigilant as scammers will continue to adapt their tactics to try and deceive the public. As a Chamber, we support IMDA's efforts to combat scams and make it safer for businesses to communicate through telecommunications channels."

Victor Mills, Chief Executive

Quote from European Chamber of Commerce (Singapore)

"EuroCham is committed to supporting any collaboration between European companies and Singaporean authorities to tackle new and emerging threats to the Singaporean community, including scams where digital technologies are misused for malicious purposes. The Proposed Full SMS Sender ID Regime by IMDA will significantly reduce the ability for fraudsters to send messages that impersonate a brand and block fraudulent messages and will ensure that SMS remains a trusted channel of communication for brands and consumers alike"

Nele Cornelis, Executive Director

ISSUED BY INFOCOMM MEDIA DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
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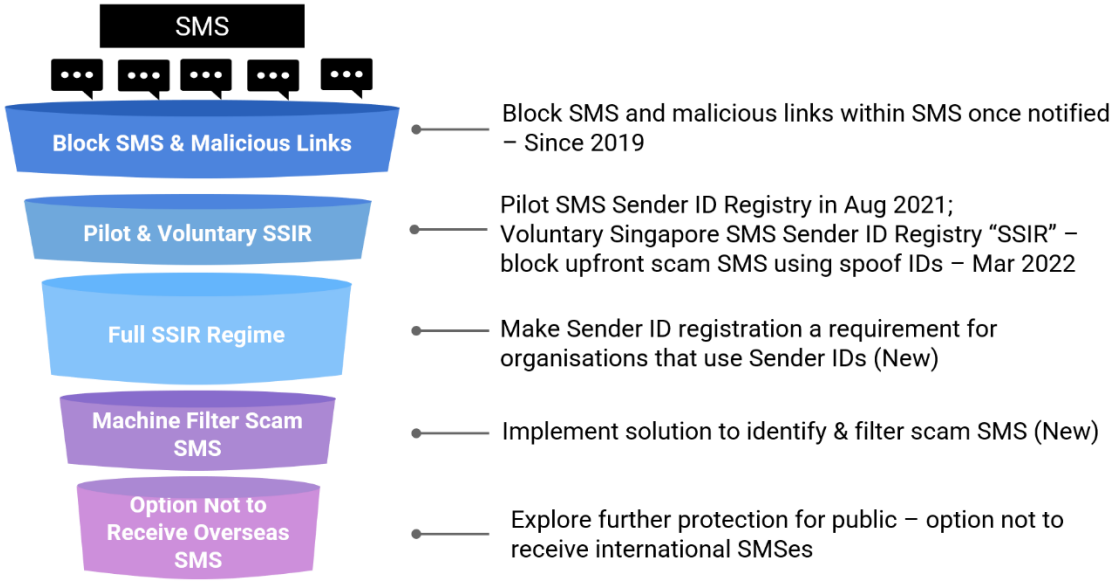
ANNEX A

Summary of Multi-Layered Approach to address Scam SMS



Summary of Multi-Layered Approach to Protect Public from Scam Calls