

Transamerica Life (Bermuda) Ltd., Singapore Branch (“TLBSG”)
Comments to
PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON REVIEW OF THE PERSONAL DATA PROTECTION ACT
2012 – PROPOSED DATA PORTABILITY AND DATA INNOVATION PROVISIONS

17 July 2019

Transamerica Life (Bermuda) Ltd., Singapore Branch (“TLBSG”) is supportive of PDPC proposal to introduce provisions for data portability and data innovation under Singapore’s Personal Data Protection Act 2012 (“PDPA”).

Please find our response to the proposed consult paper:

1. Industry

While it seems feasible in specific industry, i.e. Telecommunications, where consumers are attracted to swing between telecommunication providers every for better value, however it may not be applicable in the life insurance industry. Buying a life insurance policy is a long-term commitment, early termination could impinge a consumer financially and affect his/her needs.

As such, we would like to clarify if data portability should be applied consistently across all industries and sectors rather than specifically tailoring to the more specific area where consumer will tend to benefit more. We agree to the extent where porting of user data is useful during onboarding for the purchase of new policies but not to replace existing policies without any sound financial advice.

Q1a) Will there be consideration to only apply data portability for specific industry and sectors?

Q1b) Please clarify the potential benefits of data portability for life insurance industry for both the consumers and insurers.

2. Data scope and portability

On the scope of user-provided data, we may have concerns if it involves confidential data including but not limited to financial details, medical underwriting, etc. Certain data (regardless if they are derived or not) are of confidential/proprietary nature where it may not be justified for data portability if disclosed, would create unfairness to the consumer or the organisation.

In life insurance industry, although it may seemed that the product offerings are similar in nature, the products are not entirely the same as there may be differences in terms of product features and riders involved. Typically, the sale of whole life insurance products impact the consumer on his/her life for the long term.

While we accept the proposal from PDPC to allow organisations to levy a fee for data port request, we may not be able to justify a fee that is deemed suitable for both the consumer and also from the organisation perspective.

Q2a) Please clarify and share examples of user provided data and user activity data within the life insurance industry that could be beneficial to the consumer.

Q2b) What is an acceptable benchmark of a reasonable fee to support data portability? Could this be different across each industry? Please share the basis and consideration factors to determine the reasonable fee.

3. Systems readiness

Under the proposed changes, an organisation must, at the request of the individual, provide the user's data that is in the organisation's possession or under its control in electronic form, to be transmitted to another organization in a commonly used machine-readable format.

On this note, it will require substantial amount of investments and time into technology infrastructure to support the portability of data. Not all organisations have the ready infrastructure to support it at this moment. In addition, there may be internal resources constraints, business prioritization and management decisions to consider how best each organisation can support data portability.

Q3a) What is the lead time provided for an organisation where it does not have the ready infrastructure to support data portability?

Q3b) Will organisation be able to refuse data portability? Please share valid examples on this area. This is raised from the perspective that it would be a high cost to the organisation to provide the support for data portability.

In summary, we are supportive of the proposed changes. However considerations and clarity need to be in place for a smooth implementation of such changes.

Thank you for your attention.