

# ENSafrica telecoms and media in brief

Below, please find issue 13 of ENSafrica's telecoms and media in brief, a snapshot of the latest telecommunications and broadcasting developments in South Africa.

## broadcasting

- **Submission Deadline for the Pre-Registrations of Community Sound Broadcasting Services Extended**
  - On 30 April 2020, the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa ("ICASA") issued a notice indicating that it had resolved to extend the submission deadline for pre-registrations in respect of applications for Class Community Sound Broadcasting Service and Radio Frequency Spectrum Licences for purposes of providing community sound broadcasting services from 30 April 2020 to 30 June 2020.
- **GG443279– 2020 GEN NN 252: General Notice – Amendment of Information and Communications Technology ("ICT") COVID-19 National Disaster Regulations**
  - On 5 May 2020, ICASA published the amendments to the ICT COVID-19 National Disaster Regulations (published in Notice No. 238. *Government Gazette* No. 43207 dated 6 April 2020) (the "**Amendment Regulations**").
  - ICASA has resolved to grant the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) and all other television and radio services an exemption from complying with the specific programming licence conditions and local content quotas.
  - The Amendment Regulations provide for the following exemptions:
    - television broadcasting service licensees are exempted from compliance with the local television content quotas and specific advertising and programming requirements in terms of licence conditions during the national state of disaster; and
    - sound broadcasting service licensees are exempted from compliance with specific programming requirements and promises of performance in terms of licence conditions during the National State of Disaster.
  - Sound broadcasting service licensees, however, as still required to comply with local content music quotas.
  - The exemptions contained in the Amendment Regulations will automatically cease upon expiry of three months of termination the National State of Disaster.
- **GG4433141– 2020 GEN NN 248: General Notice – The Final Radio Frequency Spectrum Assignment Plan for the Frequency Band 470 to 694 MHz**

- On 22 May 2020, ICASA published the [Final Radio Frequency Spectrum Assignment Plan for the Frequency Band 470 to 694 MHz](#) thereby providing a plan for the phased approach in implementing the analogue television switch-off into Digital Terrestrial Television (“DTT”) through a Single Frequency Network.
- ICASA stated in its media release that “the RSFAP in this frequency band will further expedite and fast track the implementation of DTT, and the concurrent release of the First Digital Dividend and the Second Digital Dividend Spectrum for the deployment of International Mobile Telecommunications (IMT), in order to support the uptake of mobile broadband communications.”

## in the news

- **Vodacom to tackle battery syndicates**
  - Vodacom has said that battery theft and vandalism at its towers across the country is costing the company hundreds of millions of rands.
  - In an effort to curb the continued rise (Vodacom has indicated that the average increase year on year has been a staggering 35%) in vandalism and theft, Vodacom has partnered with local communities.
  - Vodacom has said that it will pay community members to watch over its base stations – especially in areas where it is being hardest hit by battery thieves.
  - In an article published on the Vodacom website, Vodacom states that “Crucially, the number one line of defence against site vandalism is the local community. Therefore, we urge anyone who sees suspicious activity around our base stations to report it to the police. It's in everyone's best interest to act before their signal is cut off. We'd like to urge ordinary members of the community to report incidents of battery theft or site vandalism by calling our toll free number: 0822419952 or SAPS on 10111.”
- **Access to free spectrum to end in November**
  - ICASA has stated in its presentation to parliament on 15 May 2020, that the temporary free spectrum that was released in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic will be closed at the end of November.
  - *BusinessTech* reported that ICASA's acting chairperson Keabetswe Modimoeng, told the committee that ICASA believes that it will get “attractive offers” from bidding companies because they will have “experienced open spectrum” and will want to regain access. He added that ICASA will complete the distribution of spectrum to the wholesale open-access network (WOAN) in 2021.

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