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18th June 2009

The Chairperson  
Mr Paris Mashile  
ICASA  
Block D, Pinmill Farm  
164 Katherine Street  
SANDTON

Dear Mr Mashile

**Response to Government Gazette number: 32211:  
Application for I-ECNS and I-ECS licences by Broadband Infraco (PTY) Ltd  
In terms of Section 9 (1) (d) of the Electronic Communications Act no. 36 of 2005.**

The Meraka Institute, (Meraka) an operating unit of the CSIR, wishes to submit a written submission in support of the I-ECNS and I-ECS licence application made by Broadband Infraco (PTY) Ltd.

Broadband Infraco (PTY) Ltd (BBI) is mandated in terms of the Broadband Infraco Act 33 of 2007, to expand the availability and affordability of access to electronic communications infrastructure through the deployment of ECNS and ECS services.

BBI is closely linked to large Department of Science and Technology (DST) projects of national importance, such as the South African National Research and Education Network (SANReN) and the Astronomy projects, MeerKAT and SKA.

The CSIR has been mandated by DST to implement the SANReN project. This project is a key element in providing the research network component for MeerKAT and SKA, as well as for the broader Cyber-Infrastructure project. Indeed our mandate specifically requires Meraka, to support other government initiatives such as BBI wherever possible.

All these projects require access to affordable national and international electronic communications network infrastructure. The BBI participation in an international connectivity initiative, comprising a submarine cable which will be deployed between South Africa and the United Kingdom along the west coast of Africa is crucial to the connection of SANReN to other National Research Networks (NRENs) in the rest of the World, especially for the delivery of the capacity required for MeerKAT and SKA.

We are of the opinion that the granting of I-ECNS and I-ECS licences to BBI is crucial to the success of SANReN.

We fully support the application by BBI as described in the above Government Gazette.

The CSIR wishes to avail itself of an opportunity to make oral representations at any public hearings on the 29<sup>th</sup> June 2009, should ICASA decide to hold public hearings on the application.

Regards  
Kagiso Chikane  
Centre Manager  
Meraka Institute  
CSIR