

4 Radio Astronomy

The Astronomy Geographic Advantage Act, 2007 (Act No. 21 of 2007) (AGA Act) provides for the Minister responsible for Science and Technology to declare any area or part of an area in the Province of the Northern Cape (except Sol Plaatjie Municipal area) as an astronomy advantage area (AAA). AAA's must be protected, amongst others, from harmful radio frequency interference, which may be caused by radio communication services. The Square Kilometre Array (SKA) will be built in the Northern Cape Province. The SKA location, frequencies bands to be protected, protection levels, coordination procedures, etc. are prescribed through regulations. The band 100 MHz to 26.5 GHz are earmarked for the SKA.

Radiocommunications with transmitters located within the AAA's, which operate within the radio frequency range/s identified for radio astronomy purposes will be subjected to the provisions of the AGA Act. All transmitters located, or to be located, within the AAA's will be subject to authorisation according to the prescribed processes. Where authorisation has been granted in accordance with the prescribed procedures, a prospective licensee is still required to submit a spectrum application form for consideration by ICASA.

Where a licensee is required to move its electronic communications facility or migrate to an alternative radio frequency band, ICASA will consult and agree with the licensee regarding the reasonable period within which the licensee must cease to operate its electronic communications facility and migrate to an alternative band.