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**GOVERNMENT NOTICES • GOEWERMENTSKENNISGEWINGS**

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**DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS**

NO. 995

28 SEPTEMBER 2018

**NOTICE INVITING COMMENTS ON POLICY DIRECTIVE REGARDING THE INTRODUCTION OF DIGITAL SOUND BROADCASTING IN SOUTH AFRICA**

I, Nomvula Mokonyane, Minister of Communications, hereby invite comments from interested individuals and parties on the policy directive regarding the introduction of digital sound broadcasting in South Africa drafted in terms of section 3(1) and (2) of the Electronic Communications Act, 2005 (Act No. 36 of 2005).

Interested individuals and parties are requested to make submissions on the suitability of the recommended digital sound broadcasting standards to complement the respective analogue sound broadcasting services. Written comments on the policy directive must be received within 30 (thirty) days of the date of publication of this notice at the following address:

For attention:

Mr Wonder Dlangamandla  
Chief Director: Technology & Engineering Services  
Department of Communications  
Private Bag X745  
Pretoria, 0028

Or deliver to: Tshedimosetso House  
1035 cnr Frances Baard and Festival Streets  
HATFIELD  
Pretoria, 0083

E-mail to: [dsb@doc.gov.za](mailto:dsb@doc.gov.za)

Please note that late submissions may be disregarded

Mr Wonder Dlangamandla can be contacted at 012 473 0087 or e-mail at [wonder@doc.gov.za](mailto:wonder@doc.gov.za)



**MS NOMVULA MOKONYANE  
MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS**

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS****ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS ACT, 2005 (ACT No. 36 of 2005)****POLICY DIRECTIVE ON THE INTRODUCTION OF DIGITAL SOUND  
BROADCASTING IN SOUTH AFRICA**

The Minister of Communications is, under section 3(1) (d) of the Electronic Communications Act, 2005 (Act No. 36 of 2005), issuing a policy directive on the introduction of Digital Sound Broadcasting (DSB) in South Africa.

**PREAMBLE**

**RECOGNISING** the Government Gazette No.39226, Notice 918, published on 22 September 2015, whereby the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (the Authority/ ICASA) issued a moratorium on licensing, as a consequence of scarcity of the Radio Frequency Spectrum in relation to applications for Terrestrial Class Community Broadcasting Services Licences.

**ACKNOWLEDGING** section 3 (1) (d) of the Electronic Communications Act, 2005 (Act No. 36 of 2005) which provides that the Minister may make policies on matters of national policy applicable to the ICT sector, consistent with the objects of this Act and of the related legislation in relation to the application of new technologies pertaining to broadcasting services.

**RECOGNISING** the decision made by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) on the harmonisation within the region such as the following:

- In the Medium Frequency (MF) band, also known as the Medium-Wave (MW) sound broadcasting band, the standard Digital Radio Mondiale (DRM30) standard is considered to be a candidate of digital sound broadcasting technology. Systems based on this standard could co-exist with conventional Amplitude Modulation (AM)



analogue sound broadcasting radio services in the short to medium term and could replace AM analogue sound broadcasting services in the longer term. The MF/MW band could therefore be used for the gradual introduction of DSB services co-existing with AM analogue services;

- In the Very High Frequency (VHF) bands I & II, the standard Digital Radio Mondiale Plus (DRM+) is considered to be a candidate standard that can co-locate and co-exist with existing frequency modulation (FM) analogue technologies. Such can be used to complement analogue FM sound services in the short to medium term and to replace analogue FM services in the long term; and
- In the VHF band III, the standards Digital Audio Broadcasting Plus (DAB+), Terrestrial Digital Multimedia Broadcasting (T-DMB) and Integrated Services Digital Broadcasting for Terrestrial Sound Broadcasting (ISDB-TSB) are considered candidate technologies for the introduction of DSB in the band after the Analogue Switch-Off (ASO) of terrestrial analogue television services.

**ACKNOWLEDGING** that the licensing approach in VHF Band III can be commenced as soon as possible as there is already an ITU co-ordinated DSB radio frequency allocation of 16 MHz (214-230 MHz) incorporated in the National Radio Frequency Plan (NRFP), 2013 as may be amended from time to time. The ICASA Terrestrial Broadcasting Frequency Plan is an allotment plan that provides for two (2) multiplexes for each of the nine provinces;

**CONSIDERING** the Government Gazette 41321 of 15 December 2017 Notice 1411 issued by the Department of Science and Technology (DST) which implies that DST is in the process of finalising regulations on Radio Frequency Spectrum usage in the Northern Cape Province in line with the Astronomy Geographic Advantage Act of 2015.

**TAKING** into consideration the provisions of the Broadcasting Act, 1999 (Act No. 4 of 1999), the Electronic Communications Act, 2005 (Act No.36 of 2005), ITU Radio Regulations of 2016, South African Band Plan, the SADC band plans and the

Broadcasting Digital Migration (BDM) Policy as they intend to achieve the following objectives:

- provide a licensing framework for broadcasting service licensees, signal distributors, electronic communications network service licensees, and new entrants taking into consideration the three-tier system of public, commercial and community broadcasting services;
- provide a framework for managing and monitoring the implementation of Digital Sound Broadcasting (DSB) services in South Africa;
- ensure optimum allocation and assignment of Radio Frequency Spectrum in support of growth and development of the broadcasting sector;
- ensure efficient and effective use of the broadcasting Radio Frequency Spectrum;
- stimulate, where economically feasible, the South African industry in the manufacturing of DSB receivers and ancillary gadgets; and
- encourage investment in the broadcasting sector.

**DESIROUS** to enable broadcasters to remain relevant, current and empowered to compete in an all-IP services and network converged environment; to provide certainty within the broadcasting sector; to ensure that there is spectrum efficiency, quality, and affordability for content developers to develop more much needed content within South Africa; and to attain the goals for universal service and access to all; and

**NOW, THEREFORE** the Minister hereby issues this policy directive on the introduction of Digital Sound Broadcasting in South Africa in terms of section 3(1) (d) of the Act and the Minister's authority in exercising his or her functions as representatives of the Republic in International fora, bilateral and multilateral agreements and international treaties, protocols and conventions.



## 1. DEFINITIONS AND ACRONYMS

- 1.1 “**AM**” means Amplitude Modulation
- 1.2 “**Digital Sound Broadcasting**” means the transmission of digital sound broadcasts by conventional over-the-air radio transmission infrastructure as opposed to internet based or broadband means
- 1.3 “**DRM**” means Digital Radio Mondiale
- 1.4 “**DSB**” means Digital Sound Broadcasting
- 1.5 “**DST**” means Department of Science and technology
- 1.6 “**ECA**” means Electronic Communications Act, 2005 (Act No. 36 of 2005)
- 1.6.1 “**FM**” means Frequency Modulation
- 1.7 “**ICASA**” means Independent Communications Authority of South Africa Act, 2000 (Act 13 of 2000)
- 1.8 “**IP services**” refers to Internet Protocol based services
- 1.9 “**ITU**” means International Telecommunication Union
- 1.10 “**MF**” means Medium Frequency
- 1.11 “**MW**” means Medium-Wave
- 1.12 “**Radio Frequency Spectrum**” means radio frequency spectrum as defined in Electronic Communications Act, 2005 (Act No. 36 of 2005).
- 1.13 “**SADC**” means Southern African Development Community
- 1.14 “**VHF**” means Very High Frequency

## 2. POLICY DIRECTIONS

2.1 ICASA is hereby directed in terms section 3 (2) of the ECA to:

- 2.1.1 Facilitate different licensing methods for broadcasting services in the frequency bands allocated to sound broadcasting services and determine an appropriate licensing methodology to achieve the following goals:

- 2.1.1.1 universal services and access for all;
  - 2.1.1.2 introduction of new entrants;
  - 2.1.1.3 requirements of existing licensees;
  - 2.1.1.4 requirements of consumers;
  - 2.1.1.5 promotion of investment;
  - 2.1.1.6 promote competition;
  - 2.1.1.7 technology neutrality;
  - 2.1.1.8 innovation;
  - 2.1.1.9 sustainability framework;
  - 2.1.1.10 maintain quality of service;
  - 2.1.1.11 reducing costs; and
  - 2.1.1.12 to increase the uptake and usage of digital radio.
- 2.1.2 Ensure that the licensing approach caters for the three-tier system of public, commercial and community broadcasting service.
- 2.1.3 Take into consideration the developments around the introduction of DSB in Africa, SADC region and around the world.
- 2.1.4 Consider the most efficient licensing framework of DSB services in the MW sound broadcasting band, FM sound broadcasting band and the VHF band.
- 2.1.5 Consider harmonisation within the region of the Southern African Development Community (SADC).
- 2.1.6 Consider introducing a licensing framework for DSB in the MF and VHF (band III) bands, taking into consideration the requirements of existing licensees and new entrants. Multipronged licensing approach will assist the government in achieving its objectives of promoting competition, universal access and the efficient utilisation of broadcasting radio frequency spectrum.
- 2.1.7 Taking into account the extensive trials undertaken by the sound broadcasting industry, the Department recommends that ICASA considers, amongst others,

the following digital sound broadcasting standards to complement the respective analogue sound broadcasting services<sup>1</sup>:

- 2.1.7.1 DRM30 to complement AM sound broadcasting service in the band 535.5-1606.5 kHz;
- 2.1.7.2 DRM+ to complement FM sound broadcasting services in the band 87.5-108 MHz; and
- 2.1.7.3 DAB+ to complement VHF sound broadcasting services in the band 214-230 MHz.

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<sup>1</sup> MEETING OF SADC MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND ICT OF 4-7 SEPTEMBER 2017