



Independent Communications Authority of South Africa

350 Witch-Hazel Avenue,
Eco-Point Office Park
Centurion

COUNCIL DECISIONS– 17 April 2020

ITEM NO.	AGENDA ITEM	DECISION
<p>1.</p>	<p>Applications for temporary Radio Frequency Spectrum in the 700, 800, 2300, 2600 and 3500 MHz Bands, including use of Television White Spaces</p> <p>The purpose of the submission was to request Council to approve the applications submitted by applicants which met the criteria set by the Authority, for temporary Radio Frequency Spectrum (RFS) assignments in the 700 MHz, 800 MHz, 2300 MHz, 2600 MHz and 3500 MHz bands, including the use of the use of Television Whitespaces (TVWS), in response to COVID-19 outbreak. Amongst others, the applicants included but not limited to Vodacom, MTN, Telkom and RAIN (the Applicants).</p> <p>1.1 On 6 April 2020, the Authority published the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) COVID-19 National Disaster Regulations (COVID-19 Regulations) in the Government Gazette No. 43207 of 2020), wherein the Radio Frequency Spectrum (RFS) in the 700 MHz, 800 MHz, 2300 MHz, 2600 MHz and 3500 MHz bands is made available for licensing on a temporary basis, including use of TV Whitespaces (TVWS).</p>	<p>Applications for temporary Radio Frequency Spectrum in the 700, 800, 2300, 2600 and 3500 MHz Bands, including use of Television White Spaces were approved.</p>

	<p>1.2 The objective of the Regulations was, amongst others, to enable licensees to deal with the anticipated rise in demand for network capacity or data services and to enhance their current services for better coverage.</p> <p>1.3 In terms of Regulation 6 of the COVID-19 Regulations, the 700MHz, 800MHz, 2300MHz, 2600MHz, and 3500MHz bands shall be made available for temporary assignment to current service providers. Annexure A of the COVID-19 Regulations stipulates the following criteria that the Authority will consider in the licensing of the RFS on a temporary basis.</p> <p>1.4 The I-ECS and I-ECNS who sought to access these bands needed to demonstrate the impact on network performance will be with additional spectrum.</p> <p>1.5 Provide the network performance report before the COVID-19 outbreak with the currently assigned spectrum holding.</p> <p>1.6 Indicate the areas that were highly constrained, provide the network projections during the national lockdown, further indicate the band required access to and the bandwidth required (For the immediate use only).</p> <p>1.7 The Authority completed the analysis of applications received in response to the invitation to apply</p>	
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for the temporary RFS assignments in terms of the ICT COVID19 Regulations.

1.8 The Authority considered applications for temporary assignment of RFS assignments in the 700MHz, 800MHz, 2300MHz, 2600MHz and 3500MHz bands, including the use of TVWS in an effort to ensure connectivity for all during the National State of Disaster period.

1.9 The Authority noted that those bands were in demand, however, due to the fact that analogue and digital Television Broadcasting services were still operating within the 700MHz and 800MHz frequency bands, sharing and co-existence in these frequency bands would have to be implemented systematically through a geographic separation of International Mobile Telecommunication (IMT) Systems and Broadcasting Services in affected areas in accordance with the updated 2013 Terrestrial Broadcasting Frequency Plan as published.

1.10 Telkom has been temporarily assigned 40MHz, MTN and Vodacom were also temporarily assigned 40MHz each.

Assignment of the Radio Frequency Spectrum in the 2300MHz band

Telkom has been temporarily assigned 20MHz in addition to the 60MHz it already had in the band. Vodacom was temporarily assigned 20MHz in the same band.

Assignment of the Radio Frequency Spectrum in the 2600MHz band

The total amount of available spectrum in the band was 170MHz.

1.11 The following applicants were assigned spectrum as follows:

- 1.11.1 Telkom assigned 40MHz.
- 1.11.2 Vodacom assigned 50MHz.
- 1.11.3 MTN assigned 50MHz.
- 1.11.4 RAIN Networks assigned 30MHz in addition to the 20MHz it already has in this band.

Assignment of the Radio Frequency Spectrum in the 3500MHz band.

1.12 The total amount of available spectrum in that band was 116MHz. As in other bands, the temporary assignments in the 3500MHz band were made on the principles of non-discrimination to all qualifying applicants.

1.13 The following applicants were assigned temporary spectrum in the band:

- 1.13.1 Telkom has been temporarily assigned 12MHz out of the 32MHz applied for. It was also important to note that Telkom was currently assigned 28MHz in the 3500MHz band and was assigned 12MHz to afford it adequate capacity spectrum to meet the demand occasioned by the pandemic during this period.
- 1.13.2 Vodacom has been temporarily assigned 50MHz as

applied for.

1.13.3 MTN has been temporarily assigned 50MHz out of the 70MHz applied for.

1.13.4 Liquid Telecoms has been temporarily assigned 4MHz; which added to the 56MHz it already has in this band.

Authorisation to use TVWS during the National State of Disaster

1.14 The Authority received applications from Mthinté Communications, Levin Global and Morai Solutions for the use of TVWS in the 470 – 694 MHz band.

1.15 The authorisation for use of TVWS by these applicants was granted subject to the following conditions:

1.15.1 The applicant must obtain approval from the CSIR, in conjunction with the Authority, with respect to Geo-Location Secondary Database (GLSD) connectivity for compliance with the use of TVWS in South Africa;

1.15.2 The applicant must obtain type approval certification from ICASA for its electronic communications equipment; and:

1.15.3 In the event that harmful interference occurs to existing broadcasters, the applicant must immediately terminate its services and notify the Authority accordingly.

	<p>Conditions associated with the temporary spectrum assignment</p> <p>1.16 All successful licensees for temporary IMT Radio Frequency Spectrum assignments must ensure that they support and create virtual teaching and classrooms as determined by the Department of Basic Education and the Department of Communications and Digital Technologies in various districts during the National State of Disaster.</p> <p>1.17 Furthermore, all Radio Frequency Spectrum licensees must zero rate all COVID-19 sites as identified from time to time by the Department of Health and published in the Government Gazette.</p> <p>1.18 In most of these assignments, applicants were granted additional spectrum as applied for. However, there were a few exceptional cases where the Authority had to apply practical and non-discriminatory principles to ensure that no licensee is prejudiced.</p>	
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**ISSUED BY: Secretariat Office
on behalf of Council**