

COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE¹

Date of Hearing: 1 July 2016

CASE NUMBER 151 /2015

IN RE: AMOBIA COMMUNICATIONS (PTY) LTD

PANEL: Prof JCW van Rooyen SC
Councillor Nomvuyiso Batyi
Mr Jacob Medupe
Prof Kasturi Moodaliyar
Mr Jack Tlokana
Ms Mapato Ramokgopa

For the Respondent: Ms Sumaiyah Makda from Ellipsis Regulatory Systems cc
From ICASA Compliance (ECS and ECNS) Ms V Matane and Ms C Mhlongo
In attendance from the Office of the Coordinator: Mr T Mtolo; Coordinator: Ms
Lindisa Mabulu

JUDGMENT

JCW VAN ROOYEN SC

[1] On 15 January 2009 Amobia Communications (Pty) Ltd (“AMOBIA”) was issued with an Individual Electronic Communications Service Licence and an Individual Electronic Communications Network Service Licence by the

¹ An Independent Administrative Tribunal at ICASA set up in terms of the Independent Communications Authority Act 13 of 2000. The CCC was recognised as an independent tribunal by the Constitutional Court in 2008. It, inter alia, decides disputes referred to it in terms of the Electronic Communications Act 2005. Such a decision is, on application, subject to review by a Court of Law. The Tribunal also decides whether complaints (or internal references from the compliance division or inspectors at ICASA) which it receives against licensees in terms of the Electronic Communications Act 2005 or the Postal Services Act 1998 (where registered postal services are included) are justified. Where a complaint or reference is dismissed the matter is final and only subject to review by a Court of Law. Where a complaint or reference concerning non-compliance is upheld, the matter is referred to the Council of ICASA with a recommendation as to sanction against the licensee. Council then considers a sanction in the light of the recommendation by the CCC. Once Council has decided, the final judgment is issued by the Complaints and Compliance Committee’s Coordinator. A licensee, which is affected by the sanction imposed, has a right to be afforded reasons for the Council’s imposition of a sanction. In the normal course, where Council is satisfied with the reasons put forward to it by the Complaints and Compliance Committee, further reasons are not issued. The final judgment is, on application, subject to review by a Court of Law.

Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (“ICASA”). ICASA’s Compliance Division (ECS and ECNS licences), which has a delegated monitoring function, referred this matter to the Complaints and Compliance Committee (“CCC”), alleging that AMOBIA had not filed financial statements for the financial years 2011-2012 and 2012-2013, that no contribution had been made in terms of the Universal Service and Access Fund (“USAF”) and no licence fees paid.

[2] An affidavit on behalf of AMOBIA by its Managing Director states the following: (1) the 2011–2012 statement and proof of payment were finalised in September 2012; after the statement was required by the Finance Division of ICASA, it was forwarded to it; (2) the 2012-2013 financial statement and proof of payment were finalised in November 2013 and were sent to the Compliance and Finance divisions of ICASA on 4 November 2013.

NON-COMPLIANCE

[3] The fact that the statements were ultimately filed and the debts paid, does not absolve AMOBIA from being found to have been in contravention of the Regulations in regard to the omissions as to the 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 financial years. A high standard of compliance is expected from a licensee and this was lacking in the present case. In *S v Wag lines Pty Ltd and Another*² Judge Didcot held that “ignorance of or mistake about the law is cognisable by the courts only if that excuse is an acceptable one. The answer would depend on the care he took or did not take to acquaint himself with the true legal position. That person has a duty to acquaint himself with the true legal position, *particularly when he is engaged in a trade, occupation or activity which he knows to be legally regulated.*” To ensure consistency and orderly management within the licensing regime, negligence (*culpa*) would generally suffice for a finding against a licensee. Compare *S v Long-distance Natal Pty Ltd*³ where Nicholson, Acting Judge of Appeal, stated as follows at 284:

² 1986(4) SA 1135(N) and regulation of the Standard Terms and Conditions for Individual Electronic Communications Network Service 2010 – both came into operation on 11 September 2011.

³ 1990 (2) SA 277 (A).

“*Men’s rea*⁴ in the form of *culpa*⁵ is sufficient for convictions under para (a) or (b) of s 31(1) of the Act. Accused No 4 and the corporate accused were engaged in the specialised field of road transportation, which is strictly controlled by an Act of Parliament and regulations made thereunder. It was plainly their duty to take all reasonable care to acquaint themselves with what they were permitted and what they were not permitted to do. (*C S v De Bloom* 1977 (3) SA 513 (A) at 532G.)

[4] Thus, even if it were to be accepted that AMOBIA did not act with intent in not filing financial statements and not paying fees and had rectified all the omissions, it must still be found to have been in contravention of the 2011 Regulations (see the addenda to this judgment) for not having filed its 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 financial statements and not having paid the amounts due for USAF and licence fees in those years timeously. As a licensee AMOBIA should at least have obtained legal advice as to its obligations in the light of the judgments referred to above, alternatively, managed its business with a higher degree of dedication. The fact that it has, at this stage, paid all its outstanding fees and filed financial statements is an extenuating circumstance in the consideration of the sanction which we should consider in our advice to Council.

[5] AMOBIA is, accordingly, found to have been in breach of the 2011 Regulations by not having filed its financial statements and paid USAF contributions and licence fees for the years 2011-2012 and 2012-2013.

ADVICE TO THE ICASA COUNCIL AS TO SANCTION

[6] In the light of the fact that AMOBIA was *bona fide* in its omission to file the financial statements and pay licence and USAF fees for the years 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 and all other dues have been taken care of, it is not necessary to issue more than a desist order in terms of section 17E (2) (a) of the ICASA Act. That sub-paragraph provides as follows: The Complaints and Compliance Committee may recommend that one or more of the following orders be issued by the Authority, namely –

(a) direct the licensee to desist from any further contravention;

The order of Council, it is advised, should read as follows:

Amobia Communications (Pty) Ltd is ordered to desist in future from not filing its duly confirmed financial statements within six months after its

⁴ Translated: “a guilty mind”.

⁵ Translated: negligence.

financial year-end and paying its USAF contributions and licence fees as determined by ICASA within the time limit set by ICASA.

The said order is legally enforceable, should it be breached in future.⁶



19 July 2016

PROF JCW VAN ROOYEN SC

CHAIRPERSON

The Members of the CCC agreed with the finding on the merits and the advice to Council on the sanction.

See the Addendum for the relevant Regulations

⁶ See section 17H (1) (f) of the ICASA Act 2000 as amended.

ADDENDUM: RELEVANT REGULATIONS

INDIVIDUAL ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS SERVICES LICENCES (Commencement: 12 September 2011)

1. Definitions

In these regulations terms used have the same meaning as in the Electronic Communications Act, (No. 36 of 2005) unless otherwise defined in these regulations:

“Act” means the Electronic Communications Act, 2005 (Act No. 36 of 2005) as amended;

“ECN” means an Electronic Communications Network;

“ECNS” means an Electronic Communications Network Service;

“ECS” means and Electronic Communications Service;

“Effective date” means the date on which the Licence is issued;

“Licence” means the individual ECS Licence issued to the Licensee in the form contained in Annexure C of these regulations;

“Licensee” means the person named in Licence and issued with a licence

To provide services in terms of Chapter 3 of the Act.

“PECN” means a private electronic communications network; and

“Schedule” means the schedule to the Licence containing the specific terms and conditions which the Authority has imposed upon the Licensee in terms of section 9(7) of the Act and the related legislation.

2. Notification of licensee details and information

(1) A Licensee must submit written notice to the Authority within seven (7) days of the occurrence of the following changes in its licence:

- (a) The name of the Licensee;
- (b) Contact details;
- (c) Shareholder; and
- (d) Notices and addresses

(2) Any change or transfers of shares undertaken in terms of 2(1) (c) above must comply with all licence terms and conditions and the Act.

3. Licence area

The licence area for operations under this Licence is the Republic or any part thereof.

4. Duration of the licence

The Licence is valid for fifteen (20) years from the effective date.

5. Commencement and operation of service

(1) A Licensee must commence operation of the ECS specified in the Licence within six (6) months from the effective date, unless the Authority grants, on good cause shown, an extended commencement period on written application, prior to the expiry of the six (6) months.

(2) Where a Licensee cannot provide the licensed service due to circumstances beyond its control, for a continuous period of twelve (12) hours or longer, a Licensee must notify the Authority in writing of such circumstances within twenty four (24) hours of the occurrence thereof.

6. Services to be provided by the licensee

A Licensee must provide ECS by means of an ECN operated by ECNS Licensee or a licence-exempt PECN operator.

7. Safety measures

A Licensee must, in respect of all apparatus, equipment and installations that it owns, leases or uses, take such safety measures as may be prescribed and in any event such reasonable and necessary safety measures to safeguard life or property, and to limit exposure to electromagnetic emission, radiation and related risks.

8. Provision of information

(1) The Authority may, in the course of carrying out its obligations under the Act, require a Licensee to provide information, so as to enable it to:

(a) Monitor and enforce consumer protection, quality of service, competition, compliance with licence conditions and other requirements of the Act and related legislation;

(b) Allow for the assessment and allocation of applicable fees and related requirements;

(c) Facilitate the efficient use of scarce resources; and

(d) Collect and compile information to be used for the purposes of sectoral analysis, planning, reporting and conducting inquiries.

(2) In respect of each information request referred to in sub-clause (1), except where otherwise addressed in applicable regulations, the Authority will provide, among other things, detailed specifications of its information request, applicable response times and a contact person to whom queries may be addressed.

(3) The licensee must provide the information in accordance with such format as may be prescribed by the Authority.

9. Publication of tariffs and fees

(1) A Licensee may not provide any service for a charge, fee or other compensation, unless the price(s) for the service and other terms and conditions of the provision of such service:

(a) Have been made known to the end-user by:

(i) making such prices and terms and conditions available for inspection at its offices during business hours; and

(ii) Providing such details to anyone who requests same at no charge;

(b) Have been filed with the Authority at least seven (7) days prior to the provision of the said service. In making such a filing, a Licensee must utilise a format approved by the Authority in writing.

(2) A Licensee must submit to the Authority, on a bi-annual basis, a record of the actual services provided and the actual tariffs charged therefore during the previous six months.

10. Metering and billing arrangements

(1) A Licensee shall install and operate metering and billing systems which accurately record the extent of the service(s) provided to any end-user.

(2) A Licensee must provide an accurate invoice with a detailed statement of services rendered to any end-user at no charge.

(3) The invoice must include information for the entire period covered by such invoice as follows:

(a) Details of services rendered to the end-user;

(b) Breakdown of charges associated with services, and

(c) Such other relevant information associated with the end-user's account.

(4) Upon request by an end-user, the Licensee must provide an itemised bill, which contains a sufficient level of detail to allow verification of charges incurred in using the services provided by the licensee.

(a) Each detailed itemised bill shall contain at least the following information in relation to each individual transaction (voice or data call) charge incurred by the subscriber during the relevant billing period:

- (1) Destination,
 - (2) dialled number,
 - (3) Date,
 - (4) Time,
 - (5) Duration, and
 - (6) Charge for each individual transaction.
- (b) The detailed itemised bill must be provided:
- (i) via post or in an electronic format;
 - (ii) At such a price that takes into account the difference in the mode of delivery.

11. Specific terms and conditions

The Authority may impose additional terms and conditions upon the Licensee in terms of section 9(7) of the Act and the ICASA Act. These specific terms and conditions will be contained in the Schedule.

12. Contravention and fines

- (1) Upon a determination of non-compliance by the Complaint and Compliance Committee in terms of the ICASA Act, the Authority may impose a fine not exceeding:
- (a) One Million Rand (R1 000 000) for contravention of regulations 2, 4, 5, 7, 8(2), 9 and 10;
 - (b) One Hundred Thousand Rand (R100 000) for contravention of any regulation not specified in regulation 12(1) (a), and
 - (c) One Hundred Thousand Rand (R100 000) for repeated contravention of the regulations.

13. Notices and addresses

(1) Any notice or certification given by the Authority or the Licensee shall be in writing and:

(a) If delivered by hand to the recipient's address, it shall be deemed, until the contrary is proven, that it has been received at the time of delivery;

(b) if posted by pre-paid registered post from an address within the Republic of South Africa, it shall be deemed, until the contrary is proven, to have been received on the 14th day after the date of posting; or

(c) If sent by facsimile transmission during normal business hours, proof of successful transmission shall be deemed to be proof of receipt, unless the contrary is proven.

(2) A Licensee shall provide the Authority with an address where it will accept formal service of letters, documents and legal process in this regard as well as a fax and telephone number on which it can be contacted as set out in the Licence.

14. Short title and commencement

These regulations are called the Standard Terms and Conditions for Individual Electronic Communication Services 2010, and will come into operation by notice in the gazette.

15. Repeal of regulations

These regulations repeal Government Gazette No. 30530 containing the Standard Terms and Conditions for Individual licences published in Notice 1138 of 30 November 2007 in its entirety.

INDIVIDUAL ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS *NETWORK* SERVICES LICENCES 2011 (Commencement: 12 September 2011)

1. Definition

In these regulations terms used have the same meaning as in the Electronic Communications Act. (No. 36 of 2005) unless otherwise defined in these regulations:

“Act” means the Electronic Communications Act, 2005 (Act No. 36 of 2005) as amended;

“ECN” means an Electronic Communications Network;

“ECNS” means an Electronic Communications Network Service;

“Effective date” means the date on which the Licence is issued;

“Licence” means the individual ECNS Licence issued to the Licensee in the form contained in Annexure B of these regulations;

“Licensee” means the person named in Licence and issued with a licence to provide services in terms of Chapter 3 of the Act;

“Schedule” means the schedule to the Licence containing the specific terms and conditions which the Authority has imposed upon the Licensee in terms of section 9(7) of the Act and the related legislation.

2. Notification of licensee details and information

- (1) A Licensee must submit written notice to the Authority within seven (7) days of the occurrence of the following changes in its licence:
 - (a) The name of the Licensee;
 - (b) Contact details;
 - (c) Shareholding; and
 - (d) Notices and addresses.

- (2) Any change or transfers of shares undertaken in terms of 2(1) (c) above must comply with all licence terms and conditions and the Act.

3. Licence area

The licence area is as defined in the Licence issued to a Licensee.

4. Duration of the licence

The Licence is valid for twenty (20) years from the effective date.

5. Commencement and operation of service

- (1) A Licensee must commence operation of the ECNS specified in the Licence within twelve (12) months from the effective date, unless the Authority grants, on good cause shown, an extended commencement period on written application, prior to the expiry of the twelve (12) months.
- (2) Where a Licensee cannot provide the licensed service due to circumstances beyond its control, for a continuous period of twelve (12) hours or longer, a Licensee must notify the Authority in writing of such circumstances within twenty four (24) hours of the occurrence thereof.

6. Services to be provided by the licensee

A Licensee must construct, operate and maintain an ECN as well as provide ECNS in the licence area.

7. Safety measures

A Licensee must, in respect of all apparatus, equipment and installations that it owns, leases or uses, take such safety measures as may be prescribed and in any event such reasonable and necessary safety measures to safeguard life or property, and to limit exposure to electromagnetic emission, radiation and related risks.

8. Provision of information

- (1) The Authority may, in the course of carrying out its obligations under the Act, require a Licensee to provide information, so as to enable it to:
 - (a) Monitor and enforce consumer protection, quality of service, competition, compliance with licence conditions and other requirements of the Act and related legislation;
 - (b) Allow for the assessment and allocation of applicable fees and related requirements;
 - (c) Facilitate the efficient use of scarce resources; and

- (d) Collect and compile information to be used for the purposes of sectoral analysis, planning, reporting and conducting inquiries
- (2) In respect of each information request referred to in sub-clause (1), except where otherwise addressed in applicable regulations, the Authority will provide, among other things, detailed specifications of its information request, applicable response times and identify a contact person to whom queries may be addressed.
- (3) The licensee must provide the information in accordance with such format as may be prescribed by the Authority.

9. Publication of tariffs and fees

A Licensee must submit to the Authority, on a bi-annual basis, a record of the actual services provided and the actual tariffs charged thereof during the previous six months.

10. Metering and billing arrangements

- (1) A Licensee shall install and operate metering and billing systems which accurately record the extent of the service(s) provided to any end-user.
- (2) A Licensee must provide an accurate invoice with a detailed statement of services rendered to any end-user at no charge.
- (3) The invoice must include information for the entire period covered by such invoice as follows:
 - (a) Details of services rendered to the end-user;
 - (b) Breakdown of charges associated with services, and
 - (c) Such other relevant information associated with the end-user's account.
- (4) Upon request by an end-user, the Licensee must provide an itemised bill, which contains a sufficient level of detail to allow verification of charges incurred in using the services provided by the licensee.
 - (a) Each detailed itemised bill shall contain at least the following information in relation to each individual transaction (voice or data call) charge incurred by the subscriber during the relevant billing period:
 - (1) Destination,

- (2) dialled number,
- (3) Date,
- (4) Time,
- (5) Duration, and
- (6) Charge for each individual transaction.

- (b) The detailed itemised bill must be provided:
 - (i) via post or in an electronic format; and
 - (ii) At such a price that takes into account the difference in the mode of delivery

11. Specific terms and conditions

The Authority may impose additional terms and conditions upon the Licensee in terms of section 9(7) of the Act and the ICASA Act. These specific terms and conditions will be contained in the Schedule and may include but are not limited to:

- (a) Licence area;
- (b) Ownership and control structures of the Licensee;
- (c) Requirements for ownership and control by persons from historically disadvantaged groups in respect of the Licensee, in addition to any prescribed by the Authority;
- (d) Human resources training and skills development undertaken by the licensee;
- (e) Service requirements and quality standards; and
- (f) universal service and access obligations, including without limitation, detailed roll-out obligations and incentives for the provision of ECNS in rural and under-served areas, imposed by the Authority in addition to the payment of the prescribed contribution to the Universal Service and Access Fund.

12. Contravention and fines

Upon a determination of non-compliance by the Complaint and Compliance Committee in terms of the ICASA Act, the Authority may impose a fine not exceeding:

- (a) One Million Rand (R1 000 000) for contravention of regulations 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8(2), 8(3), 9 and 10.

- (b) One Hundred Thousand Rand (R100 000) for contravention of any regulations not specified in regulation 12(1) (a); and
- (c) Additional One Hundred Thousand Rand (R100 000) for repeated contraventions of these regulations.

13. Notices and addresses

- (1) Any notice or certification given by the Authority or the Licensee shall be in writing and:
 - (a) If delivered by hand to the recipient's address, it shall be deemed, until the contrary is proven, that it has been received at the time of delivery;
 - (b) if posted by pre-paid registered post from an address within the Republic of South Africa, it shall be deemed, until the contrary is proven, to have been received on the 14th day after the date of posting; or
 - (c) If sent by facsimile transmission during normal business hours, proof of successful transmission shall be deemed to be proof of receipt, unless the contrary is proven.
- (2) A Licensee shall provide the Authority with an address where it will accept formal service of letters, documents and legal process in this regard as well as fax and telephone numbers on which it can be contacted as set out in the Licence.

14. Short title and commencement

These regulations are called the Standard Terms and Conditions for Individual Electronic Communications Network Service 2010, and will come into operation by notice in the gazette.

15. Repeal of regulations

These regulations repeal Government Gazette No. 30530 containing the Standard Terms and Conditions for Individual licences published in Notice 1138 of 30 November 2007 in its entirety.

USAF REGULATIONS 2011

Applicable from 10 February 2011 (Regulations published in Government Notice 1270 of Government Gazette No. 31499 dated 10 October 2008 repealed)

1. Definitions

In these regulations, unless the context otherwise indicates, a word or expression to which a meaning has been assigned in the Act has the meaning so assigned.

“Act” means the Electronic Communications Act, 2005 (Act No. 36 of 2005, as amended)

“Agency fees” means the percentage of fixed fees due to the agent;

“Annual Turnover” means total revenue generated from Licensed Activity per annum less service provider discounts, agency fees, interconnection and facilities leasing charges, government grants and subsidies;

“Applicable Interest Rate” means the uniform interest rate set by the Minister of Finance in terms of section 80(1) (b) of the Public Finance Management Act 1 of 1999;

“BS Licensee” means broadcasting service licensee;

“ECNS Licensee” means Electronic Communications Network Service Licensee;

“ECS Licensee” means Electronic Communications Service Licensee;

“Fund” means the Universal Service and Access Fund established in terms of section 87(1) of the Act;

“Licensed Services” means ECS, ECNS and BS provided pursuant to a licence issued to a Licensee in terms of Chapters 3, 4 and 9 of the Act.

“The MDDA” means the Agency established in terms of the Media Development and Diversity Agency Act No. 14 of 2002;

“Service provider discounts” means financial incentives offered to service providers by licensees for the purpose of subscriber base improvement;

“USAF Contribution” means the payment due to the Fund in terms of these regulations.

2. Object of the regulations

- (1) These regulations seek to:
 - (a) Prescribe the annual contributions to be paid to the Universal Service and Access Fund (“the Fund”) by persons issued with licences in terms of chapters 3 and 9 of the Act;
 - (b) Specify the date when such contributions to the Fund become payable and the manner in which they must be paid.

3. Contributions to the universal service and access fund

- (1) Every holder of a licence granted in terms of Chapters 3, 4 and/or 9 or converted in terms of Chapter 15 of the Act, must pay an annual contribution of 0.2% of its Annual Turnover to the Fund.
- (2) A BS licensee who has paid an annual contribution to the MDDA must set off that contribution against its USAF Contribution, provided that the MDDA contribution and the USAF contribution against which it is set off are for the same financial year.

4. Payment of contributions

- (1) Where a legal entity holds any combination of a BS Licence, ECS Licence and/or ECNS Licence, such entity may calculate the USAF contribution based on the Annual Turnover from aggregated revenue generated from the combined licences.

- (2) Payments in respect of contributions to the Fund:
 - (a) Are due annually based on the licensee's financial year;
 - (b) Are payable within 6 months from the end of the licensee's financial year; and
 - (c) May only be paid by way of an electronic transfer or via a direct deposit into the Authority's bank account, and
 - d) Must be based on the:
 - (i) Audited annual financial statement of the licensee; or
 - (ii) Financial statements signed and sworn to by the accounting officer of the licensee where the licensee is not legally obliged to provide audited financial statements.

5. Interest

Interest on all late payments in respect of contributions to the Fund is payable at the Applicable Interest Rate and in accordance with the manner prescribed in regulation 4 where payment is overdue.

6. Amendment or repeal

Government Notice 1270 of Government Gazette No. 31499 dated 10 October 2008 is hereby repealed.

7. Contraventions and penalties

- (1) Upon a determination of non-compliance by the Complaints and Compliance Committee in terms of the ICASA Act, the Authority may impose a fine not exceeding:
 - (a) One Hundred Thousand Rand (R100, 000. 00) for contravention of regulations 3, 4(2) and 5.
 - (b) Fifty Thousand Rand (R50, 000. 00) for contravention of all the regulations not specified in regulation 7(1) (a), and
 - (c) Additional One Hundred Thousand Rand (R100, 000. 00) for repeated contravention of the regulations.

8. Short title and commencement

- (1) These regulations will be effective from the date of publication in the Government Gazette.
- (2) These regulations will be called the USAF Regulations, 2011.

ICASA GENERAL LICENCE FEES REGULATIONS 2012

Section 7(1): Contraventions and penalties

(1) Failure to pay the annual licence fees will result in the suspension of the licence issued by the Authority in terms of Chapter 3 of the Act until such time that the annual licence fees, plus interest, are paid in full.

(2) Failure to comply with any other provision in these regulations will result in a fine not exceeding one million rand (R1 000 000.00).