



Independent Communications Authority of South Africa
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MEDIA RELEASE

ICASA SURVEY RESULTS INDICATE MOBILE OPERATORS' FAILURE TO MEET QUALITY OF SERVICE STANDARDS

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Johannesburg – The Independent Communications Authority of South Africa conducted a quality of service survey and has found that the three mobile operators have failed to meet the minimum requirements for Call Set Up Success Rate (CSSR) and Dropped Call Rate (DCR).

Call Set Up Success Rate refers to the fraction of the attempts to make a call which results in a connection to the dialled number, where for various reasons some call attempts are not successful.

Dropped Call Rate, on the other hand, refers to the fraction of the calls which, due to technical reasons, were cut off before the speaking parties had finished their conversation and before one of them had hung up.

Call Set Up Success Rate and Dropped Call Rate are some of the criteria used to measure operators' quality of service and standards. Quality of service is, however, the collective effect of service performance which determines the degree of satisfaction of a user of the service. In this context it refers to the capability of a network to provide a quality service to selected network traffic over various technologies such as GSM.

ICASA conducted the sampled quality of service survey on MTN, Vodacom and Cell C's networks from the 10th to 15th November 2010 in parts of the Gauteng Province.

The Gauteng region monitoring tests focused on network performance in terms of accessibility and retention of voice calls.

The results of the survey found that MTN did not meet the target in terms of Call Set Up Success Rate, whereas Vodacom and Cell C have complied with this requirement. However, all three operators failed to meet the target in terms of Dropped Call Rate.

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The publication of the Authority's findings on quality of service coincides with reports of network failure on the eve of the cut-off date for the implementation of the SIM card registration process.

On Thursday, there were reports of network failure by some operators, and the Authority is going to instruct all network operators to provide a report and an explanation of network problems experienced on 30 June 2011.

Enabling legislation, the Electronic Communications Act (ECA) mandates the Authority to promote the interests of consumers with regard to price, quality and the variety of electronic communications services. To that end, the ECA requires the Authority to prescribe regulations setting out minimum standards for an end user and subscriber service charters setting out various standards for quality of service measurements.

The Authority fulfilled this legislative requirement when it published the End-user and Subscriber Service Charter Regulations in 2009.

The regulations require electronic communications service (ECS) and electronic communications network service (ECNS) licensees to submit to the Authority six-monthly reports on quality of service and standards as prescribed in the Regulations.

The Authority also conducts tests to ascertain the quality of service provided by various ECS and ECNS licensees. The objective of these tests is to obtain a snapshot of an operator's network performance from a user's point of view. The quality of service monitoring was conducted through drive-testing, using the TEMS investigation tool. The draft results report was circulated to the operators for their comment.

Subsequently, a technical working group meeting was held with the operators on the 25th of February 2011 to discuss the results and methodology used. The Authority received comments from operators and incorporated some of them in the final report. Consequently, that led to delays in the publication of this report. The Authority continues to conduct drive-tests not only in the Gauteng region but in other provinces as well. These reports will also be published, to enable consumers to make informed choices when selecting a service provider.

The metric used to measure the above were CSSR and DCR. It should be noted that drive-test results represent only a snapshot of the mobile service provider's network performance, based on the specified routes during a particular time of day when the measurements were carried out and using a particular type of handset. The reported level of quality of service may therefore not be exactly comparable with the consumer's own experiences at a different time and different location.

However the report gives the Authority a sense of the level of quality of service being provided by operators. The Authority is publishing this first of a series of reports to point operators to gaps in their service offerings. In future, non-compliance with the standards set out in the regulations will be referred to the Complaints and Compliance Committee for adjudication and sanctioning.

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