



Independent Communications Authority of South Africa

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MEDIA RELEASE

28 November 2013

Johannesburg – The Independent Communications Authority Of South Africa has published the Draft Amendment of the Universal Service and Access Obligations (USAO) of the main network operators for the purposes of ensuring compliance within a specified time period. In terms of the proposed amendment, licensees will be required to provide internet access as well as computers, servers, printers and other local area network related equipment as stated in the ICT Solution provided by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) for school connectivity purposes.

The amendment further proposes the removal of the sim-card and handset distribution obligations as well as the reduction in the number of schools to be connected by each licensee.

The Authority commenced with the review of Universal Service Access Obligations in 2008/2009 where an external consultant was appointed and tasked with international benchmarking exercise, and to also take into account adopted approaches in implementing USAO.

In 2010, the Authority published a draft findings document in which it was found that the Community Service Telephones (CSTs) were the only obligation that was fully completed, whereas the sim card and handset obligations were not fully completed. The Authority conducted public hearings in 2011 based on the draft findings document. Subsequently, the Authority undertook a review process of all imposed obligations based on the findings of 2010 and found that sim-card and handset distribution obligations were no longer relevant. In September last year, the Authority published Final Findings Document where it was

recommended that licensees implement Internet Access “schools Connectivity” obligations and to review sim-card, handset and public payphones obligations.

All interested stakeholders are requested to make written submissions on the draft amendment within 21 (twenty one) days from the date of publication i.e. 27 November 2013.

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