

CRAN HOSTS UAS AND SPECTRUM CONSULTATIVE MEETINGS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Communications Regulatory Authority of Namibia (CRAN) recently hosted two public consultative meetings with the **intention to make Universal Service Obligations Guidelines and Regulations prescribing procedures regarding application for, and amendment, renewal or transfer of Spectrum Licenses.**

a. Consultative Meeting on the intention to make Universal Service Obligations Guidelines:

The consultative public meeting **on the intention to make Universal Service Obligations Guidelines** is to clarify the position of CRAN with regard to the obligations of telecommunications service licensees in setting and complying with their universal service obligations as per the Communications Act (No. 9 of 2009). CRAN thus intends to implement the active imposition of Universal Service Obligations on Telecommunications Service Licensees in terms of the Communication Act.

“The guidelines provide direction and stipulates the minimum set of services to be provided, the manner in which Universal Service obligations will be prescribed, managed and administered to ensure excellent provision of telecommunication services to locations and populations in Namibia that are not covered with satisfactory network infrastructure and services options” said Festus K. Mbandeka, Chief Executive Officer, CRAN.

Mbandeka added that the main objectives of the implementation of these Regulations is to ensure all citizens have access to a set of basic yet essential telecommunication services country-wide at affordable costs to assist population groups and areas which are beyond the reach of the market and to empower communities to make use of telecommunication services and take advantage of the numerous opportunities and benefits on offer.

The Authority revealed the methods of imposing Universal Service Obligations which includes the modification of licenses, renewal, tendering and submission of bids, subsidies from the Universal Service Fund and by new applications of Universal Service Licenses.

Telecommunications Service Licensees shall be required to avail the minimum universal services to the general public or to school, higher education institutions, libraries, hospital, clinics, health facilities, or any similar public institutions, which serve the needs of the general public or that are available for use by the public.

b. Consultative Meeting on the Regulations prescribing procedures regarding application for, and amendment, renewal or transfer of Spectrum Licenses.

The consultative meeting on the Regulations prescribing procedures regarding application for, and amendment, renewal or transfer of Spectrum Licenses focused on the regulatory framework with regard to applications and amendment, renewal or transfer of Spectrum Licenses to establish the framework through which CRAN allocates radio frequency spectrum under the Frequency Band Plan.

“The revision of the spectrum regulatory framework is necessitated in order to facilitate the implementation of the Authority’s Spectrum Assignment Strategy and to establish a framework through which CRAN will allocate radio frequency spectrum under the Frequency Band Plan, the revision shall provide the long-term approach for conferring rights for Licensees, determine fair, efficient and Transparent Licensing procedures” said Festus K. Mbandeka, Chief Executive Officer, CRAN.

The objectives of spectrum management strategy further aims to facilitate the availability of spectrum to be used as a tool to develop communications services and access to ICT infrastructure as a basis for social and economic development in urban and rural areas”. He added that the Regulations further promote competition through minimisation of constraints on spectrum use within a service and technology neutral license regime allowing similar services to be offered on different technology platforms. The Regulations further promote the effective and efficient use of spectrum within the digital dividend to address gaps in communications services and access to ICT infrastructure.

The Regulations further sets conditions for spectrum use to ensure efficient use of a scarce resources and prevent anti-competitive practices such as hoarding of spectrum, promotes and if necessary enforces the freeing-up of spectrum space for assignment to emerging technologies and service by phasing out ageing technologies, ensures fair distribution of spectrum between market players to provide services in conjunction with the category of service licence awarded.

Mbandeka added that the Regulations will ensure efficient use of spectrum and monitor, investigate and enforce adherence to the regulatory framework as pertaining to spectrum management as set out by the Authority.

The spectrum assignment strategy as published will be implemented through the review of the Authority’s current spectrum management regulatory framework.

To this end the Authority has commenced with its review of:

- (i) Spectrum licensing procedures, and
- (ii) Spectrum licence conditions.

For any queries in this regard contact **Mrs. Emilia Nghikembua, Head: Legal Advice**, at Tel: (061) 222 666 or via electronic mail to ENghikembua@cran.na.

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