
GENERAL NOTICE

NOTICE 1200 OF 2007

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS

NOTICE OF INTRODUCTION OF BILL INTO PARLIAMENT

DRAFT ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS AMENDMENT BILL

The Minister of Communications intends introducing the Electronic Communications Amendment Bill into Parliament before end of 2007. Written comments on the proposed Bill must be received within 30 days of the date of publication of this notice at any of the following addresses:

For attention: Project Manager
Telecommunications Policy
Department of Communications;

Post to: Private Bag X860
Pretoria
0001

or deliver to: First Floor, Block A3
iParioli Office Park
399 Duncan Street
Hatfield

or fax to: (012) 427 8059

fax e-mail (012) 421 8110

or e-mail to: ecaamendment@doc.gov.za

Please note that comments received after the closing date may be disregarded

Ms Matlala can be reached at tel. (012) 427 8081 for any enquiries

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS AMENDMENT BILL

*(As introduced in the National Assembly (proposed section 76); explanatory summary of
Bill published in Government Gazette No. 30307 of 00 September 2007)
(The English text is the official text of the Bill)*

(MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS)

BILL

To amend the Electronic Communications Act, 2005, so as to empower the Minister to issue policy direction; and to provide for matters connected therewith.

PREAMBLE

WHEREAS the current provisions of the Electronic Communications Act, 2005, does not explicitly provide for the facilitation of strategic interventions by Government in the telecommunications sector;

AND WHEREAS the state intends to expand the availability of access to information, communications and technology infrastructure and services in the Republic;

AND WHEREAS it is necessary to amend the Electronic Communications Act, 2005, in order to facilitate the efficient licensing of state owned entities,

BE IT ENACTED by the Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, as follows:—

Amendment of section 1 of Act 36 of 2005

1. Section 1 of the Electronic Communications Act, 2005 (hereinafter referred to as the principal Act), is hereby amended by the insertion after the definition of “**public broadcasting service**” of the following definition: 5

“‘public entity’ has the meaning assigned to it in section 1 of the Public Finance Management Act, 1999 (Act No.1 of 1999).”.

Amendment of section 5 of Act 36 of 2005

2. Section 5 of the principal Act is hereby amended by the addition of the following subsection: 10

“(13) The Minister may, after having obtained Cabinet approval, issue a policy direction in order to—

(a) initiate and facilitate intervention by Government to ensure strategic ICT infrastructure investment; and 15

(b) provide for a framework for the licensing of a public entity by the Authority.”.

Short title and commencement

3. This Act is called the Electronic Communications Amendment Act, 2007, and comes into operation on a date determined by the President by proclamation in the *Gazette*. 20

MEMORANDUM ON THE OBJECTS OF THE ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS AMENDMENT BILL, 2007

1. OBJECT OF BILL

The object of the Electronic Communications Amendment Bill, 2007 is to amend the Electronic Communications Act, 2005 (the Act), so as to empower the Minister to issue a policy direction; and to provide for matters connected therewith.

The Bill seeks to provide an opportunity for Government to make strategic interventions on infrastructure investments whenever it deems necessary. In amending the Act Government will be able to address some of the significant challenges such as—

- reducing the cost to communicate by providing infrastructure at wholesale rate to other operators;
- improving on Government service delivery and support ASGISA;
- link Nepad Broadband with Africa/ Latin America and Europe;
- provide the much needed bandwidth for strategic projects and consumers in general.

The Bill will provide a forward looking legislative framework which facilitates Government's intervention in the ICT sector in line with a developmental State.

2. AMENDMENT OF SECTION 1 OF THE ACT

Section 1 of the Act, is amended to provide for the insertion of a new definition after the definition of "public broadcasting service" of the following definition:

" 'public entity' has the meaning assigned to it in section 1 of the Public Finance Management Act, 1999 (Act No.1 of 1999)."

3. AMENDMENT OF SECTION 5 OF THE ACT

Section 5 of the Act is amended by the addition of a subsection to give the Minister the authority to enable licensing of public entities including municipalities, initiate and facilitate intervention by Government to ensure strategic ICT infrastructure investment; and provide for a framework for the licensing of a public entity by the Authority.

4. INSTITUTIONS CONSULTED

- Department of Public Enterprises;
- Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA);
- Universal Service and Access Agency of South Africa (USAASA)
- National Electronic Media Institute of South Africa (NEMISA)
- Telkom;
- Neotel;
- Vodacom

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS FOR STATE

None.

6. PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

6.1 The State Law Advisers and the Department of Communications are of the opinion that this Bill must be dealt with in accordance with the procedure established by section 75 of the Constitution since it contains no provision to which the procedure set out in section 74 or 76 of the Constitution applies.

6.2 The State Law Advisers are of the opinion that it is not necessary to refer this Bill to the National House of Traditional Leaders in terms of section 18(1)(a) of the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act, 2003 (Act No. 41 of 2003), since it does not contain provisions pertaining to customary law or customs of traditional communities.