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MEDIA RELEASE

ICASA to issue invitations for the licensing of the radio frequency spectrum and the Wireless Open Access Network

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Pretoria – The Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA/the Authority) is preparing to publish the Invitation To Apply (ITA) for both the Wireless Open Access Network (WOAN) and the International Mobile Telecommunications (IMT) spectrum, also known as high demand spectrum in line with its strategic objectives, and as confirmed recently during its appearance in Parliament.

The two ITAs are being developed following the Ministerial Policy/Policy Directions whereby the Authority was directed to, among others, issue an ITA, accept and consider applications for an individual electronic communications network service (I-ECNS) license, and to direct the Authority in terms of section 3(2) to urgently consider the licensing of a radio frequency spectrum license, for a WOAN. The Authority was further directed to urgently consider the licensing of radio frequency spectrum licences for unassigned high demand spectrum not reserved for assignment to the WOAN.

The ITA relating to the licensing of high demand spectrum will be published in accordance with the Radio Frequency Spectrum Regulations (RFSR), 2015, as amended, read with Section 31(3) of the Electronic Communications Act 36 of 2005, as amended ("ECA") and the ITA for the WOAN will be published in accordance Regulation 7 of the RFSR read with Section 9(2) of the ECA.

It is important to note that the Authority has made extensive progress in developing both ITAs following the analysis of the submissions on the Information Memorandum. However, given the complexity of the process, there are additional considerations the Authority must apply itself to. "This has resulted in the Authority having slightly delayed the publication of the ITAs", says ICASA Acting Chairperson Adv. Dimakatso Qocha.

ICASA believes that the licensing of high demand spectrum remains critical in facilitating the deployment of digital infrastructure for consumers and the business sector in their realisation of the digital economy, and participation towards the fourth industrial revolution. The Authority further recognizes the need for effective deployment, uptake and use of information and communications technology, and

global interconnectedness to speed up human interaction; and to bridge the digital divide among South Africans.

"The Authority remains committed to its plans of releasing spectrum, that will see different sectors of the society benefitting, and participating meaningfully in the digital economy. This, we are doing, in order to ensure business development, promote investment, stimulate economic growth, and indeed promote good quality broadband services, as well as enable licensees to lower cost of communications in South Africa" says Adv. Qocha.

The Authority would therefore like to assure all stakeholders that it is working earnestly to ensure that the processes are completed without undue delay. However, adherence to due administrative process, both substantively and procedurally, is more fundamental to these licensing processes.

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