

5 broadcasters move to broadcasting band 470 - 694 MHz

The Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (Icasa) has approved applications from five broadcasters to move their analogue television channels to the broadcasting band 470 - 694 MHz.



Source: © 123rf [123rf](#) Icasa has approved applications from five broadcasters to move their

analogue television channels to the broadcasting band 470 - 694

The Icasa Council has approved the applications submitted by e.tv, the SABC, Soweto TV, 1KZN and Trinity Broadcasting Network to amend their analogue broadcasting spectrum licences so as to move their transmissions into the radio frequency band below 694 MHz (470 – 694 MHz).

The completion of this important move opens for the unfettered use for mobile services the full range of IMT spectrum auctioned in March 2022.

This is part of the process, of the Department of Communications and Digital Technologies move towards the country's ultimate analogue TV switch-off.

This was the first of two final key steps towards this, and took place at Sentech's Stellenbosch transmitter site, marking 31 July 2023 as the switch-off date of analogue broadcasters in the 700 and 800 MHz frequency bands.



Radio Frequency Spectrum Regulations of 2015

The five applications were lodged in terms of section 31 (4) of the Electronic Communications Act, No 36 of 2005 ("ECA"), read with the procedures set out in Regulation 9 of the Radio Frequency Spectrum Regulations of 2015.

The applications followed the announcement by the minister of communications and digital technologies on adopting a two-phase approach to finally completing the switch-off of analogue television services.

The minister had set 31 July 2023 as the date for switching off all analogue television broadcasting services above 694 MHz, while at the same time accommodating the remaining analogue TV channels below 694 MHz on a temporary basis, in the radio frequency band 470 to 694 MHz, which is allocated to broadcasting services on a primary basis.

Licences amended

The five applicants applied to have their radio frequency spectrum licences amended to continue providing commercial free-to-air analogue television broadcasting services, pending the full and final analogue switch-off.

Approval by the Authority was granted before 31 July 2023, to ensure that there will be no disruption to the services provided by the broadcasting licensees and enjoyed by the television-viewing public.

"Icasa approved the applications to ensure that the process of switching off analogue transmissions is done in a coordinated and responsible manner that does not leave citizens without access to free-to-air television and does not prejudice business", says Yolisa Kedama, Icasa's acting chairperson.

The applicants' amendments were compiled through extensive consultation with various stakeholders, including the Department of Communications and Digital Technologies, the Broadcasting Digital Migration Steering and Technical Committees, and Sentech, as well as the ICASA-led Joint Spectrum Advisory Group (JSAG).

The Authority further advises that, from 1 August 2023, any cases of intentional or harmful interference, experienced by IMT Spectrum Licence holders and stakeholders in the 700 MHz and 800 MHz bands, should be reported without delay, through the responsible structures.

"This marks the beginning of the end of the "Dual Illumination Period", with a seamless transition for the last analogue television services to below 694 MHz ahead of the final analogue switch-off in December 2024", adds Kedama.