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GOVERNMENT NOTICES • GOEWERMENTSKENNISGEWINGS

INDEPENDENT COMMUNICATIONS AUTHORITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

NO. 8177 **11 November 2026**

QUESTIONNAIRE TO INFORM THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE DRAFT INNOVATION SPECTRUM AUTHORISATION FRAMEWORK

1. The Independent Communications Authority of South Africa ("the Authority") hereby publishes a questionnaire for the development of the Innovation Spectrum Authorisation Framework.

2. Interested persons are hereby invited to submit written responses to the Questionnaire, including an electronic version in Microsoft Word, which must be received by the Authority **no later than 16h00 on Monday 04 December 2026.**

3. Written responses must be for the attention of Ms Pumla Ntshalintshali, by email to DSA2023@icasa.org.za and copy pntshalintshali@icasa.org.za.

4. Where persons submitting responses require that their response or part thereof be treated as confidential, then an application in terms of section 4D of the ICASA Act, 2000 (Act No 13 of 2000) must be lodged with the Authority. Such an application must be submitted simultaneously with the response to the Questionnaire. All confidential material must be placed in a separate annexure which is clearly marked as "Confidential". A non-confidential version must also be submitted. If, however, the request for confidentiality is not granted, the person making the request will be allowed to withdraw the response or document in question.

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5. The guidelines for confidentiality requests are contained in Government Gazette No 41839 (Notice 849 of 2018).
6. All written responses submitted to the Authority pursuant to this notice will be made available on the Authority's website, and thus the Authority requests that stakeholders submit a non-confidential version that complies with point 8 above and with the Protection of Personal Information Act, 2013 (Act No 4 of 2013).
7. The Questionnaire and all non-confidential responses received will be uploaded on the ICASA website.
8. All queries or clarity-seeking questions relating to this notice must be directed to Ms Pumla Ntshalintshali on 012 568 4005.



Mothibi G Ramusi

Chairperson

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. On 22 May 2026 the Authority published the Regulations on the Use of Innovation Spectrum, 2026 (“Innovation Spectrum Regulations”).

1.2. Consequently, the Authority is initiating the process to develop Innovation Spectrum Authorisation Framework to facilitate the implementation the Innovation Spectrum Regulations.

2. THE PURPOSE OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

3.1 The radio frequency (RF) spectrum is a critical resource that needs to be managed efficiently. Equally as important, access to the RF spectrum plays a key role in broadband connectivity where small network operators play a pivotal role in connecting often-marginalised areas. The Dynamic Spectrum Access project aims to promote the expansion of broadband access in rural, underserved, and remote communities by implementing a framework that allows broadband wireless networks to coexist with incumbent RF licensees in the Innovation Spectrum (3.8 to 4.2 GHz).

3.2 The purpose of the questionnaire is to solicit information to assist the Authority in developing the draft innovation spectrum authorisation framework.

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Questionnaire on Non-Competitive Spectrum Licensing Models for Innovation Spectrum Frequency Range 1 ("ISFR1"): 3800-4200 MHz

Background

The Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA) ("the Authority") published on the Government Gazette No. 54718 under Notice No. 7501 of 2026 the Regulations on Dynamic Spectrum Access and Opportunistic Spectrum Management within Innovation Spectrum Frequency Range 1: 3800-4200 MHz ("ISFR1") and Innovation Spectrum Frequency Range 2: 5925-6425 MHz ("ISFR2") ("the Regulations"). Under the Regulations, it is envisaged that ISFR2 as licence-exempt, while it is envisaged that ISFR1 be assigned through a non-competitive and non-market-based licensing framework to support a range of commercial, non-commercial, research, innovation, and sandboxing communication network deployment use cases.

The Authority invites stakeholders to complete this questionnaire to assist in assessing industry requirements and developing appropriate recommendations regarding spectrum access, licensing mechanisms, and pricing models for ISFR1.

Objectives of the Questionnaire

This questionnaire aims to:

- Assess stakeholder demand for spectrum within ISFR1 (3800-4200 MHz);
- Understand current and future spectrum requirements;
- Identify preferred spectrum licensing model for spectrum within ISFR1;
- Assess affordability considerations relating to spectrum licence fees; and
- Develop policy and regulatory recommendations regarding a non-competitive spectrum licensing framework.

Thank you for participating in this process. Your input will assist the Authority in developing an appropriate regulatory framework for ISFR1.

SECTION 1: ORGANISATION PROFILE

1. Organisation Details

1.1. Name of your organisation:

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_____

1.2. Please indicate whether your response should be treated as confidential.

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Partially Confidential (Please specify)

_____

1.3. In which provinces, municipalities, or geographic areas does your organisation currently operate, or intend to provide services?

_____

1.4 Respondent Information

1.4.1. What is your role within the organisation?

☐ Executive Management

☐ Senior Management

☐ Middle Management

☐ Technical/Engineering

☐ Regulatory Affairs

☐ Business Development

☐ Administrative Function

☐ Other (Please specify)

_____

1.5. How many years has your organisation been operating as a provider of electronic communications networks or services?

☐ Less than 1 year

☐ 1-3 years

☐ 4-7 years

☐ 8-15 years

☐ More than 15 years

1.6. Which category best describes your organisation?

☐ Mobile Network Operator (MNO)

☐ Internet Service Provider (ISP)

☐ Mobile Virtual Network Operator (MVNO)

☐ Community Network Operator (CNO)

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☐ Local Network Operator (LNO)

☐ Private Network Operator (PNO)

☐ Research Organisation (RO)

☐ Higher Education Institution (HEI)

☐ Prospective Market Entrant

☐ Other (Please specify)

_____

1.7. How many employees does your organisation currently employ?

☐ 1-10

☐ 11-50

☐ 51-250

☐ 251-500

☐ More than 500

1.8. If your organisation holds an ECNS, ECS, PECNS or PECS licence, please indicate:

- Number of customers served:
- Market segments served:
- Areas of operation:

_____

1.9. Services and Markets

1.9.1. Which market segments does your organisation currently serve or intend to serve? (Select all applicable)

☐ Residential Households

☐ Businesses

☐ Government Institutions

☐ Educational Institutions

☐ Research Facilities

☐ Healthcare Facilities

☐ Public Wi-Fi Users

☐ Industrial and Enterprise Users

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☐ Community Organisations

☐ Other (Please specify)

_____

1.9.2. Which wireless services does your organisation currently provide or intend to provide?

☐ Fixed Wireless Access (FWA)

☐ Mobile Broadband Services

☐ Private Networks

☐ Internet of Things (IoT) Services

☐ Public Wi-Fi Services

☐ Backhaul Connectivity

☐ Wholesale Connectivity Services

☐ MVNO Services

☐ Other (Please specify)

_____

_____

SECTION 2: SPECTRUM REQUIREMENTS AND USAGE

Current Spectrum Usage

2.1. Which radio frequency spectrum bands does your organisation currently utilise?

_____

2.2. How much total spectrum bandwidth does your organisation currently utilise across all deployments?

_____

2.3. What spectrum-related challenges does your organisation currently experience or anticipate?

☐ Spectrum scarcity

☐ High spectrum costs

☐ Limited spectrum availability

☐ Licensing complexity

☐ Interference concerns

☐ Infrastructure deployment challenges

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☐ Equipment ecosystem limitations

☐ Other (Please specify)

_____

Future Spectrum Requirements

2.4. Does your organisation require additional spectrum to support current or future deployments?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Unsure

2.5. If yes, how much additional spectrum bandwidth would your organisation require?

☐ 10 MHz

☐ 20 MHz

☐ 30 MHz

☐ 40 MHz

☐ More than 40 MHz (Please specify)

_____

2.6. How does your organisation define or understand mid-band spectrum, and what role does it play in supporting network deployment objectives?

_____

ISFR1 Spectrum Demand

2.7. Is your organisation interested in accessing spectrum within ISFR1 (3800-4200 MHz)?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Unsure

2.8. For which applications or services would your organisation utilise spectrum within ISFR1? (Select all applicable)

☐ Fixed Wireless Access

☐ Mobile Broadband Services

☐ Private Networks

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☐ Community Connectivity

☐ Public Wi-Fi Services

☐ Backhaul Connectivity

☐ Industrial Connectivity

☐ Enterprise Connectivity

☐ Internet of Things Applications

☐ Research and Testing Activities

☐ Other (Please specify)

_____

2.9. What socio-economic or public interest benefits do you anticipate from access to ISFR1 spectrum?

☐ Expanded broadband access

☐ Improved rural connectivity

☐ Lower deployment costs

☐ Digital inclusion

☐ Innovation and research

☐ Industrial transformation

☐ Community network development

☐ Other (Please specify)

_____

_____

SECTION 3: LICENSING FRAMEWORK PREFERENCES

3.1. What type(s) of spectrum licence does your organisation currently hold?

_____

3.2. If ISFR1 spectrum were made available, which licensing approach would your organisation prefer?

☐ Shared Light Licensing

☐ Local Area Licensing

☐ Community Licensing

☐ Sandbox Licensing

☐ Licence-Exempt Access

☐ Other (Please specify)

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_____

☐ Unsure

3.3. Please explain the reasons for your preferred licensing approach.

_____

3.4. Which factors should be prioritised when developing the ISFR1 licensing framework? (Select all applicable)

☐ Affordable Licence Fees

☐ Simplicity of Application Processes

☐ Rapid Approval Processes

☐ Certainty of Spectrum Access

☐ Fair Access Across Operator Categories

☐ Flexible Licensing Conditions

☐ Localised Licensing

☐ Longer Licence Duration

☐ Support for Innovation and Research

☐ Efficient Spectrum Sharing

☐ Other (Please specify)

_____

3.5. What licence duration would your organisation consider most appropriate?

☐ 1 Year

☐ 3 Years

☐ 5 Years

☐ 10 Years

☐ Other (Please specify)

_____

_____

SECTION 4: SPECTRUM LICENCE FEES

4.1. Does your organisation currently pay spectrum licence fees?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, how would you describe your current spectrum licence fee obligations?

☐ Very Affordable

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☐ Affordable

☐ Reasonable

☐ Expensive

☐ Very Expensive

☐ Prefer Not to Disclose

Preferred Fee Structure

4.2. Which fee model would your organisation prefer for accessing ISFR1 spectrum? (Select all applicable)

☐ Fixed Annual Fee

☐ Once-Off Licence Fee

☐ Fee Based on Assigned Bandwidth

☐ Fee Based on Geographic Coverage Area

☐ Fee Based on Number of Base Stations

☐ Fee Based on Number of Access Points

☐ Fee Based on Revenue

☐ Fee Based on Number of Customers Served

☐ Usage-Based Fee

☐ No Fees for Licence-Exempt Access

☐ Other (Please specify)

_____

Affordable Fee Levels

4.3. Please indicate the maximum annual spectrum licence fee your organisation would consider affordable for the following bandwidth assignments.

Bandwidth Assignment	Annual Fee (Rands)
10 MHz	
20 MHz	
30 MHz	
40 MHz	
Other (Specify)	

4.4. Should licence fees vary according to operator size, service type, coverage area, or other factors?

☐ Yes

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☐ No

Please explain:

_____

4.5. If yes, which factors should be considered when determining the applicable licence fee? (Select all applicable)

☐ Operator Revenue

☐ Organisation Size

☐ Assigned Bandwidth

☐ Geographic Coverage Area

☐ Urban/Rural Deployment

☐ Number of Customers Served

☐ Type of Service Provided

☐ Commercial or Non-Commercial Use

☐ Licence Duration

☐ Spectrum Sharing Conditions

☐ Other (Please specify)

_____

_____

SECTION 5: ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

5.1. Please provide any additional comments, recommendations, or proposals regarding the licensing and management of ISFR1 spectrum.

_____

_____

_____

Declaration

I confirm that the information provided in this questionnaire is accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge.

Name: _____

Position: _____

Organisation: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____