

Spectrum: Telcos erecting next generation 5G networks

Communications and digital technologies minister Khumbudzo Ntshavheni says the release of high demand spectrum has paved the way for telcos, or telecommunications companies, to start building next-generation 5G networks.



Source: [Rxabay](#)

“The release of the high demand spectrum will improve the ability of mobile telecommunications operators to build robust telecommunications with better penetration and reach as we chase our goal of ensuring that all South Africans have access to the internet by 2024.

“To this end, the mobile telecommunications operators are starting to upgrade the telecommunications network and to build robust 5G telecommunication networks,” she said.

Ntshavheni said in the immediate, Icasa has installed social obligations that will see the telecommunications operators connecting 18,520 schools, 5,731 clinics and hospitals, 8,241 traditional authority offices, 949 libraries and Thusong Service Centres over the next 36 months.

“The department, working with Icasa, will monitor the progress with regards to the connection of these sites.”

This comes after Icasa concluded the high-frequency communication spectrum auction in March 2022 as per the target set by President Cyril Ramaphosa in his 2022 State of the Nation Address.

“I congratulate Icasa on reaching this significant milestone in our country.

“The 1 July 2022 date for the availability of the high demand spectrum to the licensee is also important for the National Treasury to have access to the much-needed R14.4 billion that was raised during the spectrum auction.”

Reducing the cost to communicate

The minister said the availability of spectrum must also result in the reduction of the cost of communication.

“We will progressively work on policy instruments to drive the reduction of cost to communicate in South Africa, including the classification of data as a new basic utility at the same level as water and electricity.

“The importance of data is because it has become the enabler of innovation and wealth creation for any country. In this regard, we will publish for public comment a revised Spectrum Policy, no later than July 2022,” she said.

Ntshavheni said the draft policy will include proposals of spectrum for SMMEs and network and data services in a manner that drives meaningful SMME participation in the telecommunications sector, amongst others.

“In the meantime, Icasa is undertaking a market study on the call termination review. The outcome of this market study will have a determining factor in the reduction of the average data price.”

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