

ICASA invites submissions for broadcasting self-provisioning

By [Tshepiso Seopa](#)

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The Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA) is inviting interested parties to make submissions for applications for Individual Electronic Communications Network Services by Broadcasting Service Licensees for the purpose of self-provision.



“The Authority invites any interested parties to submit written responses on or before 31 July, members of the public are also invited to make their own submissions,” says spokesperson Sekgoela Sekgoela.

Thus far the regulator has received applications from the five licensees that were awarded pay-TV licenses in 2007. Walking on Water (WoW), e.tv, On Digital Media (ODM), WorldSpace and Telkom Media have made submissions to ICASA to facilitate and carry their own signal.

“The five applicants are already in possession of pay-TV licenses to provide content, what now arises are how they will get their content out to subscribers. They have been given an option for applying for I-ECNS licenses which would allow them to distribute their own signal instead of leasing services from distributors such as Sentech,” adds Sekgoela.

“It is essential that we get the license to carry our own content because of the competitive landscape in the pay-TV industry, says Dimitri Martinis, head of regulatory affairs for ODM.

ODM is aiming at targeting LSM 6-9, and targeting 340 000 subscribers to be profitable. ODM subscribers will pay only for the channels they watch, and will be able to create their own bouquets. It promises to offer news, sports programming, music, movies and children's and family programmes.

Martini says that without the license new entrants who were awarded the licenses and have been faced with a lot of insurmountable odds would have to rely on distributors such as the state owned enterprise, Sentech which is not commercially viable.

“Dependency on other people to carry signal would mean more costs, and that would have put us a disadvantage. We approached ICASA in December 2008 to issue us a license for test transmission. It was issued last month; we are hoping to be sorted out by the end of August as we still need to buy the needed equipment,” says Martini.

“All written responses submitted to the regulator pursuant to the applications shall be made available for inspection by interested persons at the ICASA library during weekdays from 8:30 am to 16:30 pm and copies of such responses can be obtained upon payment of the prescribed fee. The Authority intends holding public hearings on the applications on 20 August 2009. Persons or organisations who wish to make any written responses must also indicate whether they would like an opportunity to make oral representations at the hearings,” says Sekgoela.

ABOUT TSHEPISO SEOPA

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