

MALAWI

MACRA's PROGRESS REPORT

The 7th **TRASA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)**
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1. INTRODUCTION

This brief progress report outlines some of the activities that MACRA has been involved with since the last AGM. There has been a minor reorganisation within the Authority. Spectrum Management and Telecommunications directorates have now been combined to make one Directorate of Engineering. The issue of interconnection has now been resolved by the telecommunications operators themselves.

2. OVERVIEW OF THE REGULATORS ACTIVITIES

Rollout for mobile services.

Eighty per cent of the country is now covered by the two mobile operators and the stiff competition that is between the two mobile operators is now affecting the fixed network operator which has now embarked on a major marketing campaign.

Interconnection.

In February 2004 the three telecommunications operators (Celtel, Telekom Networks Malawi and Malawi Telecommunications Limited) finally agreed among themselves that the interconnection rate should be 4/4 US cents (mobile/fixed and fixed / mobile), this was after three years of discussions with the Authority. This has resulted in mobile/mobile and mobile /fixed termination charges to go down but the opposite has happened on calls from fixed to mobile.

Major Constraints/Failures

There has been a slow growth in the fixed network subscriber base. The teledensity of 2 which was supposed to have been achieved in 2003 is now around 0.8

The privatisation of MTL is has not yet been finalised.

The third cellular network which was licensed in April 2002 has not yet started operating and discussions are underway with Malawi Mobile Limited to find out how this issue can be resolved.

Personnel and Trainings

Currently, the staff complement of MACRA stands at 31 and is growing. The Authority's views are that if the industry is to be served well, the Authority should have well trained and qualified personnel. To achieve this the Authority is now implementing a World Bank funded training programme and all most 75% of the staff have undergone through this short term programme. This training programme will go up to the end of this year.

3. TECHNICAL ASPECTS

Technologies – New or Advancements

Due to the rapid expansion of the cellular networks, the Authority has now agreed to release the 1800MHz band.

Sector Indicators

The following is the current sector indicators:

Services	July 2004
Fixed telephone subscribers	68,737
Mobile cellular subscribers	172,088
Internet/ email subscribers *	11,980
National Telecommunications Operators MTL	1
Mobile Cellular Operators Celtel, TNML Malawi Mobile (licensed but not yet operational)	2
VSAT Licences issued	30
International Gateway Licences issued	3
ISP Active Licensed	9 22

Public Radio broadcasting services MBC1, MBC 2	2
Private Radio broadcasting services (Commercial) Power 101 Capital Radio	2
Community broadcasting services (local) Dzimwe, MIJ	2
Community broadcasting services (Religious) Africa Bible College, Radio Islam, Cavalry, Tran world, Radio Maria, Catholic Radio	7
Applied 1 Mzuzu Radio	1
Licensed (not operational) Channel for All Africa Joy Radio Jesus 4 U Family Media	4
Public Television Stations TVM	1
Private Television Stations (re-broadcast) Multi-choice	1
Applied Mont fort Missionaries Cavalry	2
Licensed (not operational) Joy TV Family Media	2
National Postal Operator MPC	1

Future Plan

The Authority is in the process of drafting broadcasting licences for TV Malawi, MBC1 and MBC 2.

4. SADC GUIDELINES/MODELS

Legislation

Malawi will shortly be reviewing its legal and regulatory framework for the communications sector. Both the communications sector policy statement and the act came into force in 1998 and a lot has happened since.

Guidelines

Draft interconnection guidelines which were circulated to the telecommunications operators for further input and comments have now been received. Final copies will be made available to all the telecommunications operators by November 2004.