



NEW LICENSING FRAMEWORK FOR THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS SECTOR

Operators in the telecommunications sector have been notified by the regulator, the Uganda Communications Commission (“UCC”), that effective 1st July 2020, the new licensing framework will come into force.

The new licensing framework introduces the following key licenses:

- NTO – National Telecom Operator license, covering telecom infrastructure and services operations across Uganda;
- NPSP – National Public Service Provider license, covering voice, data and capacity resale services across Uganda;
- RPSP – Regional Public Service Provider license, covering voice, data and capacity resale in specific regions in Uganda;
- NPIP – National Public Infrastructure Provider license, covering telecom infrastructure services across Uganda;
- RPSP – Regional Public Infrastructure Provider license, covering telecom infrastructure in specific regions in Uganda;
- Communal Access License (which authorizes telecom connections to defined communities).

This announcement was made via a letter dated 15th May 2020, and is off the back of a letter dated 10th December 2019, from the UCC requesting existing operators to submit their expressions of interest for the licenses they wish to be considered for under the new licensing framework by 30th January 2020

Whilst all operators that submitted their expressions of interest are authorized to continue operations on the basis of existing licenses until 30th June 2020, the UCC is cognizant of the fact that it has not been able to engage the respective operators within 30 days of receiving their expressions of interest as earlier undertaken. This is attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic and the lock down directive from the Government of Uganda, at the end of March 2020 until end of May 2020.

Effective 25th May 2020, the UCC has resumed reviewing applications under the new framework and requested all existing operators to urgently submit confirmations of their expressions of interest by 30th June 2020, together with all supporting documents and application fees for the relevant license requested. Application fees of USD 2,500 apply and an annual license fee ranging from USD 3,000 to USD 21,000,000 depending on the license in question. It is anticipated that there will be no extensions to cater for operators that do not submit their expressions of interest and no existing licenses will be renewed under the current regime.

Other authorizations being issued by the UCC under the new licensing regime include authorization for equipment distribution, equipment vending and installation, manufacture, disposal of communications equipment, provision of digital financial services, provision of digital audio visual content and operation of an internet exchange point.

*Should you have any questions regarding the information in this alert or any other matter please do not hesitate to contact **Fiona Magona** or **Flavia Suubo**.*



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