Malawi

Malawi, officially the Republic of Malawi, is a landlocked country in southeast Africa that was formerly known as Nyasaland. It is bordered by Zambia to the northwest, Tanzania to the northeast, and Mozambique on the east, south and west. Malawi spans over 118,484 km2 (45,747 sq mi) and has an estimated population of 18,091,575 (as of July 2016). Lake Malawi takes up about a third of Malawi's area. Its capital is Lilongwe, which is also Malawi's largest city; the second largest is Blantyre, the third largest is Mzuzu and the fourth largest is its old capital Zomba. The name Malawi comes from the Maravi, an old name of the Nyanja people that inhabit the area. The country is nicknamed "The Warm Heart of Africa" because of the friendliness of the people. Read more

National Policy

The Malawi Communications Act 1998 later revised to Communications Act 2016 and the E-Transactions Act 2016, provide the framework for regulating the communications sector in Malawi. The Act was enacted to strengthen the Postal and Telecommunications and to provide for the regulation of the provision of services in the electronic communications sector, posts, information society; for the establishment of the Malawi Communications Regulatory Authority, the Malawi Broadcasting Corporation and the Malawi Posts Corporation; and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

The Malawi Communications Regulatory Authority (MACRA) was established pursuant to Section 3 of the Communications Act, 1998 of the Laws of Malawi to regulate the country's communications sector. MACRA now draws its mandate from the Communications Act of 2016 to regulate and monitor the provision of communications services and ensure that, as far as it is practicable, reliable and affordable communications services are provided throughout Malawi.

Malawi Communications Regulatory Authority Strategic Plan is envisaged for implementation between 2015-2020 in fulfillment of MACRA's mandate to facilitate the development of the ICT sector through efficient and effective regulation and research.

The legal frameworks are supported by the following Policy; Malawi ICT Policy 2013 National Access to Information Policy The Malawi Digital Broadcasting Policy Doha 2012-13 Postal Strategy

Operator Licensing

Introduction

Section 18, Section 36, Section 47 and Section 61 of the Communications Act confers upon MACRA the mandate to issue Licences, therefore any person may person apply to MACRA for licence under the Act:

Telecommunication Service Licences

The telecommunication market is segmented into various sub-categories such as Fixed, Cellular, Internet Service Providers (ISP), Satellite and Data etc. Other segments of the market are competitive

while the others are still non-competitive. In non-competitive market the number of players is restricted. In the competitive market there is no limit on the number of players. The competitive markets are Internet Service Providers, Data service providers and paging services. The Fixed telephone services and cellular service are currently non-competitive, the Authority will determine the licensing procedure on a case by case in future.

Spectrum Licences

Spectrum Management is essential for maintaining access to radio spectrum to all users. The office of SM is responsible for the frequency planning; coordinating allocations assignments, regulating and administering of the use of radio frequencies; and the monitoring and enforcement procedures.

It is further responsible for establishing regulations, frequency fees structure, technical parameters and standards governing the use of each band ensuring that current international regulations are met.

Spectrum Licence Categories

The following categories of licences are issued in terms of spectrum usage and service provision.

GSM 900 / 1800 MHz.

CDMA 450 / 850 MHz.

Fixed Links (2/6/7/12/13/14/18/23/28 GHz e.t.c.)

HF Services (3 – 30 MHz)

Private Mobile Radio – PMR

Aeronautical – AERO

Industrial, Scientific & Medical – ISM

Sound broadcasting – FM

Television Broadcasting – VHF/UHF

Amateur Services – AMR

Centralized Alarm Services – CRA

VSAT Services – VSAT / SOHO

Broadband Services – ISP Spectrum

Paging Services – PG

3G/ UMTS Services

Postal Licences

Postal services are part and parcel of communications services in Malawi just like elsewhere in the world. They are therefore included in the Authority's mandate to license, monitor, inspect, regulate

and ensure general improvement and equitable distribution of communications services in the country; in accordance with the provisions of the Communications Act of 1998. Hence this Act requires all operators in the Malawian postal sector to obtain an Operator's Licence issued by the Authority.

License Application Forms

Our application forms are currently being reviewed and will be uploaded soon. For other licensing categories please download them here or follow the link below:

Converged Licensing Framework

Technical and Administrative Requirements

Licensing Fees

MACRA Licence Fees

The Malawi Communications Regulatory Authority (MACRA) charges the following licence fees for telecommunications and radio spectrum.

This categorisation and accompanying licence fees are reviewed from time to time.

Click on the link to view the license fee structure and download:

CLF Licence Application Fees

Spectrum Fee Schedule April 2017

Access to Spectrum

The regulated spectrum in Malawi effectively ranges between 9 KHz – 100 GHz. It should be noted that the management of spectrum should be effective as its use is also essential to government functions ranging from defence and public safety to air traffic control and weather forecasting. Spectrum Management is essential for maintaining access to radio spectrum for all users. Under the Communications Act (1998), MACRA is charged with the responsibility of spectrum planning; creating new allocations, fulfilling frequency planning coordination and assignments, issuing licences, regulating and administering the use of radio frequencies; and the monitoring and enforcement procedures. It is further responsible for establishing regulations, frequency fees structure, technical parameters and standards governing the use of each band ensuring that current international regulations are met.

Spectrum Management also takes into account economic, political, cultural, health and social considerations so as to deal with the ever increasing demand for the supply of available radio spectrum.

Generally Spectrum Management aims at;

1. Providing access to basic communication services to all Malawians through the use of available

technologies i.e. wireless.

2. Ensuring effective utilization with equitable access.
3. Accommodating future needs and requirements by careful planning
4. Harmonizing national and regional best practices with international trends
5. Enhancing socio-economic growth of Malawi through better spectrum pricing

MACRA is putting in place spectrum management policies that must are flexible and responsive to the needs of the market, recognizing that each class of spectrum user has different requirements. For example, promoting the use spectrum -efficient technologies, such as narrow band transmission, trunking between cells with high mutual traffic loads and digital signaling, can sometimes relieve crowding in the mobile radio frequencies thereby addressing the challenges in the way the radio frequency spectrum is managed.

Principles of Assignment

Depending on the type of service to be licensed, frequencies shall be assigned based on "first-come, first-served" basis so long as frequencies are available and that the licensing requirements are satisfied. When spectrum shortage is anticipated or when specific government goals are being pursued to foster competition in a particular business sub-sector or for other specific reasons, this approach may be dropped and selection procedures adopted to ensure that spectrum is efficiently and effectively utilized. In situations of spectrum shortages, preference will also be given to those providing greater public benefits, the spectrum utilization and overall efficiency irrespective of date of receipt of the applications concerned. Other assignment types that can be followed include Spectrum Auction, Beauty Contest, Spectrum Trading e.t.c.

Spectrum Pricing

A full table of prices applicable to terrestrial spectrum services is made available. All users of frequencies shall be required to pay a fee, including Government Agencies or departments except those that are exempt from paying the applicable fees. The fees paid upon registration shall be renewable annually at a rate to be specified under the licence conditions. The price charged for the spectrum assigned will among other factors be dependent on such factors as size, level of competition and classification of spectrum (prime / non-prime) as well as the administrative overhead costs associated with monitoring and management, The price that is charged for the spectrum will as much as practically possible be proportional to the derivable benefits and level of usage within the band.

Exempt / Waiver categories

Any waiver in part or in full of spectrum fees will only apply under the appropriate legislation and any regulations made there under. Exempt categories, i.e. ISM band (2.4 GHz, 5.8 GHz) shall nevertheless be required to pay a registration fee determined by the Authority.

Spectrum Planning

MACRA on a regular basis will review utilization of the spectrum in response to present, emerging and future needs. The plans will be based on the technological and other needs of the country especially in the area of universality. Particular attention will be drawn to promoting and making available the spectrum for use in wireless technologies to be used in rural and under-served communities. This process shall facilitate opening of new bands and re-allocation of frequency spectrum to operators if found necessary to ensure effective and efficient use of the frequency spectrum. MACRA shall take into consideration all relevant key stakeholders in the sector during any review process as well as

international radiocommunication conferences i.e. The World Radio Conference (WRC) where major spectrum decisions are taken. In terms of planning, critical issues that are considered include;

1. ITU Table of Allocation (especially for Region 1).
2. Regional Frequency Allocation Plan (SADC region).
3. National Frequency Band Plan.
4. Technology Neutrality.
5. Universal Access / Service requirements.
6. Frequency re-farming options.
7. Government / Security operations.
8. Public Safety and Disaster Preparedness.
9. Coordination needs with neighbouring countries (Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia).

Spectrum Monitoring

MACRA continually monitors the usage of the spectrum through the Frequency Management & Monitoring (FMM) equipment that has remote monitoring stations distributed within the country. This is done to ensure;

1. Compliance to specified technical operating standards.
2. Resolving cases of harmful interference.
3. Eliminating illegal / unlicensed operations in the sector.
4. Protecting licensees within the framework of legal operation.

Technical and Administrative Requirements

Licensed

Access Networks

Operator	800MHz	900MHz	1800MHz	2100MHz	2600MHz	3500MHz
XYZcom	None	2×10	2×15	2×10	None	None

PtP Networks

License-Exempt

Access Networks

Frequency	Power Limit	Transmit Power
2.4GHz		
2400 – 2483.5 MHz	2.4EIRP	
5GHz		
5150-5250 MHz	5.1EIRP	
5250-5350 MHz	5.2EIRP	
5470-5725 MHz	5.4EIRP	
5725-5800 MHz	5.8EIRP	

PtP Networks

Frequency	Power Limit	Transmit Power
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5725-5800 MHz	5.8EIRP	

Secondary Use

Access Networks

PtP Networks

Spectrum Fees / Costs

Application

Annual

Auction

Backhaul

The following are the backbone network operators;

1. SimbaNet 2. MTL 3.

Gender

Universal Service

Cooperatives

Resources / References

Coding examples

This could be used to frame specific questions that should be asked

<callout type="tip" icon="true">This could be for hints / tips / tricks on finding information, what to look for etc.</callout> <callout type="question" icon="true">A question</callout> <callout type="success" icon="true">A good practice example might look like this</callout> <callout type="danger" icon="true">A bad practice to be aware of might look like this</callout>

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