



**NOTICE 08/2026: PROPOSED DECISION
IN TERMS OF SECTION 38 OF THE
ESWATINI COMMUNICATIONS
COMMISSION ACT, 2013: Proposed
Decision to Review The Minimum Data
(Internet) Speed.**

Date: 16 July 2026



ESWATINI
DATA PROTECTION
AUTHORITY



CIRT
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Eswatini Communications Commission
UNIVERSAL
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1. INTRODUCTION

The Eswatini Communications Commission is the regulatory body established in terms of the Eswatini Communications Commission (ESCCOM) Act, 2013 to regulate and supervise the electronic communications sector including electronic communications networks and services. Part of the mandate of the Commission is to ensure availability of a wide range and variety of communications services and that all communications services are provided in a manner that will best promote economic and social development. Therefore, in accordance with section 7(a) read with section 38 of the Eswatini Communications Commission Act, 2013, the Commission proposes an amendment of the minimum data speed in Eswatini from 2 Mbps to 10 Mbps.

2. CONTEXT AND RATIONALE

The second schedule of the Electronic Communications (Quality of Services) Regulations, 2016, under the Quality of service (QoS) parameters for cellular mobile service and the fourth schedule under the QoS Parameters for Internet Service specifies that the target for the Minimum Data Speed should be 2 Mbps. The current minimum data speed obligation of 2 Mbps for download and upload speeds was established to ensure basic connectivity and support essential services such as basic internet browsing, and simple data applications. This threshold was appropriate at the time, given the prevailing network capabilities and user needs. However, it has become increasingly inadequate due to factors like contention ratios where multiple users share the same bandwidth resources, often resulting in effective speeds dropping well below 2Mbps during peak usage times. This leads to widespread customer complaints about poor performance, including buffering, slow loading times, and unreliable connections, as evidenced by recent consumer feedback and regulatory monitoring reports.

Moreover, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) emphasizes "*meaningful connectivity*," which requires minimum download speeds of at least 10 Mbps (with 5 Mbps as an interim target in developing contexts), to enable productive activities such as online education, remote work, and digital financial services. Users nowadays expect seamless experiences for bandwidth-intensive activities like high-definition video streaming, cloud computing, and real-time collaboration tools.

Additionally, regional bodies such as the Communications Regulators' Association of Southern Africa (CRASA) have issued guidelines recommending elevated speed thresholds to harmonize standards across member states, promoting cross-border connectivity and economic integration. Locally, the need for higher speeds is underscored by social media activities such as content creation and government applications such as "Government in Your Hand" that consumers increasingly rely on. These applications demand reliable, sustained speeds to function effectively, preventing service disruptions that could hinder public access and national efficiency.

The Commission proposes to address these evolving demands by reviewing the minimum data speed which will enhance service quality, reduce digital inequalities between urban and rural areas, and align with national goals for economic development and digital inclusion. The change is based on comprehensive performance data analysis of all licensed Internet Service Providers (ISPs), and benchmarking against international standards. The analysis show that the average download speed for ISPs is 8 Mbps while mobile network operators average at 19 Mbps for LTE connection.

The objective of the review is to create conditions for customer satisfaction by making known the quality of service that the service provider is required to provide and that the user has a right to expect, in order to protect the interest of consumers of electronic communications services, and ensure that all citizens benefit from reliable, high-speed connectivity in an increasingly connected world.

3. EVOLUTION OF TECHNOLOGIES

Mobile telecommunications technologies have experienced rapid progression over the past decade. Initially, 2G and 3G networks provided speeds of 100 Kbps to 2 Mbps which were sufficient for early mobile internet and basic data services. The advent of 4G/LTE marked a significant leap, enabling average speeds of 10 to 100 Mbps and supporting widespread adoption of smartphones, mobile apps, and video content. This evolution necessitates updates of regulatory standards to align with user expectations.

Today, the rollout of 5G networks introduces even greater capabilities, with theoretical speeds exceeding 1 Gbps, ultra-low latency, as well as support for emerging technologies like the Internet of Things (IoT), augmented reality (AR), and autonomous systems. As 5G deployment accelerates globally, maintaining lower speeds would hinder innovation and leave networks unprepared for future demands such as 6G research, focusing on terabit-per-second speeds and AI-integrated connectivity.

The evolution is further informed by advancements in fixed technologies, which provide a complementary foundation for overall connectivity standards. Fixed broadband has progressed from Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line (ADSL) speeds of 1 to 8 Mbps in the early 2000s to fiber-optic and Fiber-to-the-Home (FTTH) networks delivering 100 Mbps to 1 Gbps today, with hybrid fiber-coaxial (HFC) and fixed wireless access (FWA) bridging gaps in underserved areas. At 2 Mbps, the internet is accessible but limited while at speeds greater than 2 Mbps it becomes practically usable for modern digital services.

Increasing the minimum data speeds ensures that licensees invest in upgrades that leverage spectrum efficiency, advanced modulation techniques, and edge computing to deliver sustainable performance improvements. The review further reflects evolving consumer usage patterns and increasing demand for high-bandwidth, low-latency applications.

4. POSSIBLE IMPACT TO CONSUMERS

The increase in minimum data speeds from 2 Mbps to 10 Mbps is expected to significantly enhance quality of experience for consumers by enabling reliable access to high-definition streaming, improved performance of real-time applications, and simultaneous multi-device usage. These improvements support digital inclusion by making online services such as e-learning, government services, and remote work more accessible. However, they may also lead to increased data consumption and heightened consumer expectations, necessitating continued investment in network capacity and appropriate pricing strategies. Overall, the long-term benefits such as greater value from reliable connectivity and enhanced economic opportunities are

anticipated to outweigh short-term cost impacts, with competitive pressures and regulatory oversight keeping prices accessible and fair.

5. PROPOSED DECISION

In accordance with section 38 of the Eswatini Communications Commission Act, 2013, the Commission proposes an amendment of the minimum data speed in Eswatini from **2 Mbps to 10 Mbps**. This transition is in line with global technological advancements and the progressive deployment of next-generation mobile networks, necessary to support digital transformation and Eswatini economic competitiveness. This directive modernizes previous, more basic baseline targets and promotes the introduction of higher-capacity technologies

6. CONSULTATION

In accordance with section 32 of the ESCCOM Act, the Commission hereby invites stakeholders and interested persons to submit comments on the proposed decision. Written comments may be submitted via email to info@esccom.org.sz on or before **18 August 2026**.

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