



ESWATINI
COMMUNICATIONS
COMMISSION

THE WORLD
IS SMALLER
WHEN YOU'RE
CONNECTED.

ANNUAL REPORT 2023



VISION

To be a dynamic regulator of communications services in Eswatini that facilitates the delivery of affordable, sustainable and quality services.



MISSION

To derive maximum socio-economic benefits for all Emaswati from ICTs through the effective regulation of telecommunications, broadcasting and postal services in Eswatini.

VALUES



Integrity



Innovation



Transparency



Accountability



Teamwork



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CORPORATE INFORMATION



REGISTERED NAME

Eswatini Communications Commission

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Mbabane

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Telephone number

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Auditors

SNG Grant Thornton



LEGISLATIVE MANDATE

The Eswatini Communications Commission (ESCCOM) is the regulatory authority for the information and communication technology sector in Eswatini. The Commission was established in 2013 by the Eswatini Communications Act, No 10 of 2013, to licence and regulate telecommunications, radio communications, broadcasting and postal services in Eswatini. The Commission will play a critical role in the management and development of Eswatini's ICT sector. Through the Act, ESCCOM is mandated to carry out, among other things, the following:

a.

regulate and supervise the operation of electronic communications networks and the provision of electronic communications service in Eswatini, including the regulation of data protection in electronic communications;

c.

regulate and supervise the provision of postal service and electronic commerce;

d.

regulate and supervise the provision of radio and television broadcasting services and the content of those services;

e.

promote the development of innovative, secure, modern and competitive communications infrastructure and the delivery of related services;

f.

ensure freedom of provision of communications services and further ensure that those services are not limited, except when strictly necessary;

g.

ensure a wide range and variety of communications services;

h.

ensure that all communications services are provided in a manner that will best promote economic and social development;

i.

ensure non-discrimination and equality of treatment in all matters under the remit of the Commission;

j.

promote efficient management and human resource development within the communications industry;

k.

promote the interests of end-users and licensees as regards the quality of all communications services and equipment within the remit of the Commission;

l.

administer certain aspects of the Competition Act, 2007, as they relate to the sectors regulated by the Commission; and

m.

administer certain aspects of the Fair Trading Act, 2001, as they relate to the sectors regulated by the Commission.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Sibongile Ndlela-Simelane
Chairperson



Mvilawemphi Dlamini
Chief Executive



Bheki Ndzinisa
Board member



Senzo Hlatshwayo
Board member



Bongiwe Dlamini
Board member



December Mavimbela
Board member



John Mathwasa
Board member



Ozzie Thakatha
Company Secretary

EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT



Mvilawemphi Dlamini
Chief Executive



Fikile Gama
Chief Financial Officer



Tanya Butler
Director: Support Services



Thulani Fakudze
Director: Technical Services



Lindiwe Dlamini
Director: Strategy and
Economic Regulation



Ozzie Thakatha
Director: Legal and
Compliance



Mbongeni Mtshali
Director: Universal
Service Obligation Fund


CHAIRPERSON'S STATEMENT



Sibongile Ndlela Simelane
Chairperson

“

The Board remains committed to the delivery of the organisation's mandate and recognises with great appreciation the support of the Minister of ICT, Her Royal Highness Princess Sikhanyiso and her team. ”



I am delighted to present the Eswatini Communications Commission Annual Report for the financial year 2023, which is a testament of the extent of how far the Commission has advanced the execution of its mandate. As a Board, it makes us proud to yet again, receive a clean audit from the auditors. This is by no way a fluke, but a result of able leadership in steering the organisation, by providing support to management to deliver on the organisational mandate. The Board will continue to provide efficient and robust oversight over the work of the Commission in order to maintain this track record.

During the year under review, a Number of legislative frameworks were passed into law, amongst which were the Broadcasting Act, the Computer Crime and Cybercrimes Act, the Electronic Communications and Transactions Act and the Data Protection Act, all of which collectively expanded the mandate of the Commission. Following the enactment of the Data Protection Act, the Ministry of ICT appointed the Commission as the National Data Protection Agency, putting the Commission in charge of the administration of the Act in its entirety. In so far as broadcasting is concerned, there is a need to continue to work on the supporting frameworks such as policies, regulations, codes, operation procedures and manuals to operationalise the Act.

This comes with enormous responsibility on the Commission to effectively discharge the added functions and duties, which I believe, is up to the challenge. We shall continue to work towards establishing operational units to deal with the newly assigned mandates. Again, this assignment requires dedication and financial support to ensure that the necessary tools and infrastructures are put in place.

The year 2023, has seen the cost of communication beginning to rise yet again. This has not only been the case in Eswatini, but has been experienced throughout the region. This has largely been as a result of the volatility of the exchange rates in part resulting from the conflicts as well as

natural disasters. Regardless of this volatility, the Commission pledges to continue, as it did previously, in its drive to lower the cost of communication in the country regardless of geolocation and classes of life. The Commission continues to ensure that the digital divide is narrowed, through the Universal Access and Service Fund. Several projects were delivered through the Fund where interventions were made in the areas of social services, education, agriculture, health and immigration. The Commission continued to roll out projects to benefit and develop underserved areas. A number of ports of entry, schools, Tinkhundla centres and other strategic public entities now provide access to free Wi-Fi connectivity.

We have noted the challenges posed by the absence of a Universal and Access Committee to oversee the Fund's mandate. It is our hope that the Committee will be appointed expeditiously to ensure transparency while enabling efficiency in the discharge of Universal and Access obligations.

The Board remains committed to the delivery of the organisation's mandate and recognises with great appreciation the support of the Minister of ICT, Her Royal Highness Princess Sikhanyiso and her team. It would be amiss of me to neglect expressing my appreciation to the Chief Executive and his team for the dedication demonstrated through the achievement of an 80% overall performance of the Annual Operational Plan. Indeed, Eswatini has benefitted immensely from the changes observed within the sectors regulated by the Commission and we look forward to working hard in the coming year to serve the interests of the consumer, operators and country at large.



Mrs Sibongile Ndlela Simelane
Chairperson


CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT



Mvilawemphi Dlamini
Chief Executive

“

The report is a manifestation of what the Commission has achieved in the reporting period and is an indication of how, through effective regulation, ESCCOM has changed the ICT landscape of Eswatini. ”



As the mandate of the Commission continues to expand, and the ICT evolves at a rapid pace, we find ourselves confronted with the challenge of outdated legislative frameworks. While we have seen growing penetration, we have also been confronted with a bigger threat emanating from the ageing fixed infrastructure of the backbone provider. Several sectors, from health to agriculture, education to banking, have a high dependency on broadband connectivity for the provision of their services. This has necessitated the need for redundant international links.

The report is a manifestation of what the Commission has achieved in the reporting period and is an indication of how, through effective regulation, ESCCOM has changed the ICT landscape of Eswatini. This reporting period coincides with the end of our five-year strategy and looking back over the milestones covered in the last five years, it is increasingly clear that the ICT sector is no longer a nice to have, but broadband connectivity has become an enabler for economic activity not only in Eswatini but worldwide. In pursuit of a better connected Eswatini, ESCCOM working together with the Ministry of ICT, is working on the development of a Digital Eswatini Strategy complementing the

National Development Strategy 2022 – 2027. This strategy and commitment to its implementation, will catapult the nation's aspirations of bridging the ever-widening digital divide.

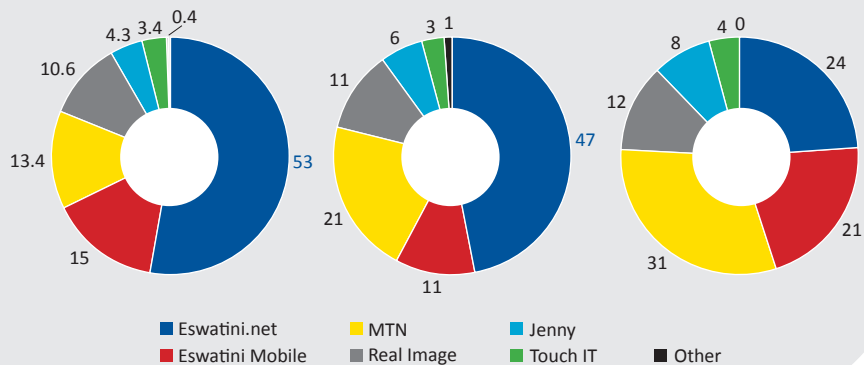
Our relentless efforts to expand connectivity and reduce the cost of communications has introduced many Emaswati to the benefits ICTs can offer for socio-economic growth. It is also interesting to note that with the advent deployment of 5G technology, technological advancement is poised to leapfrog even in the Kingdom of Eswatini, thus ensuring that the ICT industry remains an attractive sector, ushering in a period of significant changes bringing both challenges and opportunities.

Telecoms market growth slowed down in the period under review compared to the previous periods 2020/21 and 2021/22. This is mainly attributed to weakening demand for mobile and fixed connectivity in 2022/23. Mobile cellular subscriptions growth was negative at 0.8% from 1 524 629 in FY 2021/22 to 1 513 118 in FY 2022/23. Mobile broadband subscription growth was also uninspiring at 0.8%; this growth in mobile broadband connectivity was supported by growing smartphone connectivity which grew by 10% in the period under review.

The Telecoms services market growth also slowed down in value in the period under review compared to 9% and 8% growth recorded in 2020/21 and 2021/22, respectively. Total revenue generated by the market only grew by 2% in FY 2022/23 to E2 260 987 733 from E2 209 679 592 reported in FY 2021/22, as depicted in the infographic below:



Fixed broadband market share (%)



Source: ESCCOM, 2023

During this reporting period I am happy to report that the Commission continued to significantly grow the sector by advancing the universal access and service mandate of closing the connectivity gaps in underserved and unserved areas, as well as displaced communities. Other projects undertaken include the issuing of attractive bands of spectrum, granting licences to courier service providers, advancing e-commerce by undertaking an e-commerce readiness assessment study and by issuing new licences to internet service providers including Starlink, an international player with the potential to change our internet connectivity as a country. In our quest to remain an enabler and levelling the playing field to allow for fair competition in the sector, several regulatory frameworks in the form of decisions, standards, directives, and guidelines which are more fully pointed out in the report, were issued.

Regulation of the ICT sector and associated sectors is primarily focused for the benefit of the consumers of these sectors. It is for this reason that in this reporting period we conducted a nationwide household survey to ascertain what kind of ICT services are consumed by our populace and the number of Emaswati who have access to

the services which we regulate. Such initiatives assist the regulator with insight as to what interventions are needed to ensure that “no one is left behind” as we all take a ride in the ICT train, and this means making new commitments and setting out a clear path to achieve them.

The ICTAUS survey report revealed that about 67% of households across the country have internet coverage, where 70% is in urban areas and 63% in rural areas. Another notable finding is the low rate of e-commerce uptake, at 5.2 % overall. Only 19% reported to own a post box and 48% access postal services. For broadcasting services, a total of 89% have access to a radio signal albeit 46.7% own a radio countrywide. On Cybersecurity and child online safety, the level of reported incidents was very low, at 1.3%. These tended to have a dependency on the level on income of the household. Overall, the survey established that mobile telephony has become the number one means of accessing internet services in Eswatini. This says, if the mobile sector continues to grow at the current rate, it will help the government of Eswatini achieve its goal of closing the digital divide in the near to mid-term future.

During this period, we also experienced a change in the outlook of ESCCOM from being a sectoral regulator to enforcing baseline legislation. The passing of the Data Protection Act in March 2022 extended the regulatory scope of ESCCOM by designating it as a Data Protection Authority enjoined to foster compliance with the Act. To this end the Data Protection unit was established in the reporting period and the Data Protection mandate of ESCCOM formally launched to the public.

Further, the Computer crime and Cybercrime Act was also passed in March 2022 and conferred additional regulatory powers to ESCCOM. The Act designates ESCCOM as the Cybersecurity Agency with the responsibility to regulate and coordinate matters of cybersecurity in the country. We have noted that implementing the two pieces of legislation will require additional resources in terms of human personnel, skills, and financial resources. However, as a seasoned regulator with 10 years' experience in regulation, we have no doubt that we will live up to the challenges and expectations entrusted to us as the Data Protection Authority and the Cybersecurity Agency.

We also look forward to the passing of the Broadcasting Bill into law for the Commission

to fully discharge its regulatory mandate in the broadcasting sector and explore opportunities of further developments in the sector. The Commission is ready for this mandate and has already put systems in place for the monitoring of broadcasters to ensure they broadcast in accordance with the required standards.

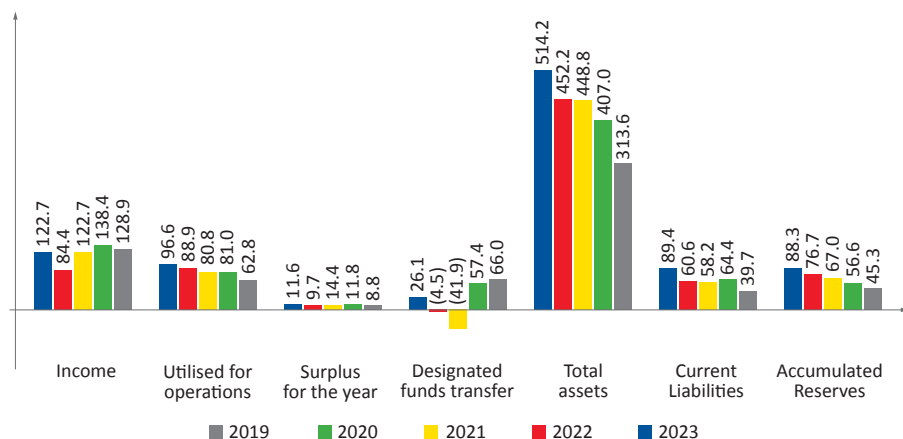
I would like to extend my sincerest appreciation to the Minister of ICT, HRH Princess Sikhanyiso and the staff of the Ministry of ICT, for the collaboration and cordial working relationship that enabled the execution of programmes in fulfilment of the mandate. I remain indebted and grateful to the continued support and guidance from the Board of Directors, through which we were able to achieve the above 80% performance of our Annual Operational Plan for the year under review.



Mvilawemphi Dlamini
Chief Executive

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE AND HIGHLIGHTS

Financial Performance Highlights



FINANCIAL KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

	2023 E million	2022	2021	2020	2019	2022/23	2022/21	2021/20	2020/19
		E million				% variance			
Income	122.7	84.4	122.7	138.4	128.9	45	(31)	(54)	(44)
Utilised for operations	96.6	88.9	80.8	81.0	62.8	9	10	8	26
Surplus for the year	11.6	9.7	10.4	11.8	8.8	19	(7)	(2)	1
Designated funds transfer	26.1	(4.5)	(41.9)	57.4	66.0	(685)	(89)	(62)	(70)
Total assets	514.2	452.2	448.8	407.0	313.6	14	1	45	139
Current liabilities	89.4	60.6	58.2	64.4	39.7	48	4	(4)	21
Accumulated reserves	88.3	76.7	67.0	56.6	45.3	15	15	20	31

SOURCES OF REVENUE

Annual licence fees

The Commission's income is comprised mainly of mobile license fees, spectrum fees, type approval and general electronic communication license. During the Financial Year 2022/2023 the Commission earned E122.7 million. The main source of revenue is based on 5% levied on the net operating income of mobile network operators (MNOs), spectrum fees, as well as the 2% levied on the net operating income of internet service providers (ISPs). These fees are used to fund the cost of regulation.

Interest income

Interest is earned from the Commission's investments. Long term investments consists of Government bonds, whereas short term investments are money markets at various institutions. Interest income is reported at E11.4 million.

Expenditure

The total accumulated expenditure for the period is reported at E102 million. Included in this amount is the Commission's contribution to the Universal Access and Service Fund amounting to E10 million.

E568 thousand was contributed to purchase equipment for Eswatini Television Authority (ESTVA) and Eswatini Broadcasting and Information Services (EBIS). E1 million was contributed to purchase terminal equipment to support Eswatini Posts and Telecommunications Corporation (EPTC) redundancy connections to undersea cable. The National ICT Access and Usage Survey was completed during the year. The total costs incurred for this survey during the year amounted to E2.6 million.

The passing of the Data Protection Act and the Cybersecurity and Computer Crime Act, 2022, has expanded the mandate of the Commission. In this regard a Directorate for Data Protection and Cybersecurity was established in 2023. The establishment of this Directorate incurred costs amounting to E211 thousand.

SURPLUS

The surplus for the year is reported at E11.6 million.

TOTAL ASSETS

During the year under review the Commission has successfully grown its total assets from E452 million to E514 million.

ASSET UNDER CONSTRUCTION

To date, the Commission has spent E160 million on the new office building project. The total cost is estimated at E221.9 million.

INVESTMENTS

E40 million investment in bonds was made in an effort to assist government in alleviating the economic fiscus at the time the investments were made. The first E20 million bond earns fixed interest at 9.85% per annum and will mature in August 2023. The second E20 million bond is a floating interest at (prime -1.5%)per annum and will mature in February 2026.

Other investments as at 31st March 2023 amount to E66.9 million. These investments are short term in nature and are held with Stanlib Swaziland (Pty) Ltd, African Alliance Eswatini Management Company Ltd, Status Capital Building Society and Old Mutual Investment Group (Eswatini) Pty Ltd.

DESIGNATED FUNDS

Designated funds represent license and spectrum fees earmarked for future projects of the Commission. Cost incurred on these projects are subsequently transferred to capital reserves. The capital reserves are amortized in line with the useful lives of the underlying assets.

LIQUIDITY

The Commission's cash resources are held to meet prudential liquidity targets and the liquidity levels enable the Commission to respond effectively to changes in cash flow requirements.

The overall financial structure of the Commission shows a healthy year-on-year improvement.



CHALLENGES

Delayed payment of outstanding licence fees

To this day the Commission is affected by delayed payment of outstanding debt from some operators.



FUTURE OUTLOOK

The Commission's forecast for future operations includes projections of Revenue to be received from the three main operators. There are no anticipated changes in Revenue in the next financial period. Operating costs are expected to match the level of activity within the organization. Financial instruments will decrease as more projects, including the office building, are completed using the designated funds.

Capital expenditure

The corporate office building which is expected to be completed in 2024.



STRATEGY AND ECONOMIC REGULATION

The Strategy and Economic Regulation Directorate is responsible for the development, implementation and monitoring of the Eswatini Communications Commission (ESCCOM)'s strategy; the economic regulation of the communications market with regard to competition and cost of communication; collection of ICT data and compilation of statistics to facilitate fact-based market research and reporting on national ICT statistics and indicators.

It is also enjoined with the facilitation of communication and engagement with stakeholders through integrated media, and further promotes the Commission's outreach activities and events, to maintain visibility as well as to promote and empower consumers on ICT products and services.

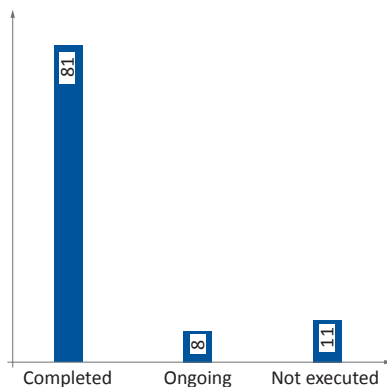
For the year under review, the performance in the areas of Strategy, Economic Regulation as well as Consumer Affairs and Communication is articulated below.

STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

The Commission's organisational strategy is implemented through the operationalisation of its annual operational plan (AOP). Simultaneously, supporting strategies are developed in various sub-sectors to support the overall implementation.

The reporting period marked the final year of the organisational strategy (2018 – 2023). A total of 128 activities were planned for execution. The outcome of the performance evaluation depicted an 81% completion rate (104 activities), while 8% (10) remained in progress of implementation. The remaining 11% (14) were deferred to the next strategy cycle. Accordingly, these will be integrated into the 2023/24 AOP. The Commission will endeavour to ensure effective implementation of all planned activities.

Figure 1: Percentage completion of activities in the 2022/23 AOP



Source: ESCCOM, 2023

In advancing its strategy, the Commission concurrently develops and implements strategies that augment execution of the organisational strategy. In the reporting period, the development of the Corporate Social Investment (CSI) Strategy was completed. Its key outcome was the identification of three developmental areas that will be supported, namely: education; health; and poverty alleviation/livelihoods/job creation.

Furthermore, a Stakeholder Engagement Plan was developed to operationalise the organisational Stakeholder Management Strategy. Several initiatives were implemented in pursuit of the five (5) strategic goals, namely: Stakeholder Engagement; Communication and Public Awareness; Stakeholder Partnerships; Digital and Social Media; and National Support.

Institutional collaboration

In pursuing its mandate, ESCCOM collaborates with relevant authorities on matters of common interest.

Matters of common interest and strategic issues in the communications sector are addressed with national institutions through Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs). Through the MoUs, the Commission continues to derive benefits and strengthen relations with various entities. Consequently, the outcome is an enhanced role in pursuing the Commission's mandate. The MoUs specify communal areas of convergence and mutual interest upon which both parties agree to cooperate in and deliver on their expected outcomes.

ESCCOM has established several MoUs with various institutions in the country as well as in the SADC region, with the intention of exploiting synergies. These institutions include: the Financial Services Regulatory Authority (FSRA), Central Bank of Eswatini (CBE), Centre for Financial Inclusion

(CFI), National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA), Eswatini Competition Commission (ESCC), Eswatini Economic Policy Analysis and Research Centre (ESEPARC), Eswatini Environment Authority (EEA), University of Eswatini (UNESWA), Eswatini Revenue Service (ERS), Royal Eswatini Police Service (REPS), and Central Statistics Office (CSO). In addition, the Commission implements MoUs with the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA), Mozambique National Communications Authority (INCM) and the Film and Publication Board of South Africa (FPBSA).

The Commission also represents the country in international and regional organisations in the communications space. These include: the African Advanced Level Telecommunications Institute (AFRALTI); African Telecommunications Union (ATU); Communications Regulators' Association of Southern Africa (CRASA); Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation (CTO); International Telecommunications Union (ITU); Pan African Postal Union (PAPU); and Universal Postal Union (UPU).

Implementation of supporting strategies

In advancing its strategy, the Commission concurrently develops and implements strategies that augment execution of its organisational strategy. During the year under review, the implementation of supporting strategies continued to be monitored across the organisation.

The development of a Corporate Social Investment (CSI) Strategy was completed during the reporting period. Its key outcome was the identification of three developmental areas to be supported, namely: education; health; and poverty alleviation/livelihoods/job creation.

Furthermore, a Stakeholder Engagement Plan was developed to operationalise the organisational Stakeholder Management Strategy. Several initiatives were implemented in pursuit of the five (5) key strategic goals, as articulated below.

- a. **Stakeholder Engagement:** Engagements undertaken intended to ascertain challenges encountered and explore opportunities that ICT industry players could profit from with guidance from the Commission. In particular, some licensees were engaged regarding retail tariffs for the 2022/23 financial year following the reduction of wholesale rates on 1 April 2022. Engagements were also conducted with stakeholders on updating the Subscriber Registration Regulations relating to concerns raised on some aspects of the regulations. Recommendations were made on amendments to be incorporated into the Subscriber Registration Regulations and these became effective on 1 May 2023.
- b. The Commission hosted the Eswatini's Editors' Forum in May 2022, to share an update on the Commission's work and the media's role in creating visibility and developing the sector. ESCCOM also met with various stakeholder groups including government departments, broadcasting operators, consumer interest groups and licensed operators to review proposed regulatory instruments before the issuance of Final Decisions.
- c. As part of regulating and developing the postal and courier service sectors the Commission engaged stakeholders on the following initiatives:
 - i) Commenced development of National Addressing Policy and Standard as part of implementing the National Addressing and Postcode System Project,
 - ii) Conducted a baseline assessment on the country's readiness to undertake e-Commerce, and

- iii) Monitoring compliance of the Postal and Courier Service Providers' terms and conditions of issued licences, as well as operationalising Postal and Courier Licensing Guidelines.


Simultaneously, to enhance the Broadcasting Guidelines of 2017, which lacked the aspects of content regulation, stakeholders in the broadcasting sector were engaged on the development of the Broadcasting (Content) Guidelines, and the development of Digital Terrestrial Television Guidelines.

In collaboration with the Ministry of ICT, the Commission completed the development of the National Digital Strategy – Digital Eswatini and derives its focus and direction from the thematic focal areas of the National Development Plan (NDP). It also supports the NDP's emphasis on infrastructure investment and digital development.

The Commission, together with relevant stakeholders, completed the development of Short Code Management Guidelines to ensure that the number allocation process is fair and transparent to provide a level playing field regarding the availability of numbers for all operators and users.

The Commission deliberated with the Consumer Forum to enhance understanding of the organisational charter and objectives. They also engaged directly during the Stakeholder Consultation process regarding the Consumer Protection Guidelines.

Communication and Public Awareness: To share information and provide an update on the Commission's activities on key regulatory matters and maintain positive media relations the Commission hosted the Eswatini's Editors' Forum and formally presented the media's role in the ESCCOM Stakeholder Management Strategy. Additionally, outreach activities were rolled out to raise awareness on the



Commission's activities. These included Girls in ICT, Graduate Trainee, and Internship programmes. A Full Scholarship was awarded to Unathi Dlamini who will be completing a Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Science at the University of Pretoria in South Africa (2022 – 2024). Regarding the promotion of public awareness of ESCCOM and its activities, information was shared with the general public on print, television, radio and social media platforms. Two radio infomercials for Broadcasting Guidelines, and Eswatini Information and Communication Technology Access and Usage Survey (ICTAUS) were produced. The development of a Corporate Social Investment (CSI) Strategy was completed and through its resultant programme the Commission will enhance attainment of its mandate and raise awareness among its stakeholders.

The Commission participated in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Careers Fair, hosted by the Royal Science and Technology Park (RSTP), as an exhibitor and shared information on the different career development opportunities within the organisation. The objective of the Careers Fair is to inspire and encourage young people to consider careers in STEM as a contribution to a knowledge-based society in the future. It is attended by students, educators, industry experts and government partners as a forum to share information and opportunities available in the various science and technology fields.

Stakeholder Partnerships: The Commission is in partnership with the Central Bank of Eswatini in the implementation of the National Payment Switch Project, which facilitates local processing of domestic card-based transactions, systems interconnectedness, instant payments, and system interoperability

among and between banking and non-banking financial service providers. During the reporting period, a benchmarking exercise was undertaken together with other stakeholders of both the Central Bank of Lesotho and Zambia Clearing House to share best practices and experiences that could be integrated into the project and enhance delivery of projected outputs and outcomes.

The Commission as an active member of the Eswatini Fintech Working Group (EFWG) comprising of CBE, FSRA, CF and UNESWA participated in capacity building activities, which promotes innovation in ICT and Fintech, build expertise, empower the youth and small and medium enterprises (SMEs). The Fintech Scoping Exercise for Eswatini, EFWG Website Challenge and IndabaX Innovation Challenge were undertaken during the reporting period. The Fintech Scoping Project was a ground-breaking achievement as it highlighted general macroeconomic information, the financial services ecosystem and financial inclusion progress as well as, and more importantly, the digital landscape for the country.

An MoU between ESCCOM and ECC was renewed in November 2022 where the scope was extended to include economic regulation issues, as well as consumer protection.

Pursuant to the establishment of the ICT Observatory Project at national level, an MoU was signed with the Central Statistics Office (CSO) to facilitate the collection of ICT-related data. The SADC ICT Observatory Project is an initiative piloted by the SADC Secretariat to establish an ICT Observatory for the region and further ensure the establishment of National data collection mechanisms to feed into the regional programme. The activities undertaken at national level included:

- a. Implementation of the 2022 Eswatini ICT Access and Use Survey (ICTAUS) where there was collaboration with tabulation; review; and finalisation of the ICTAUS Report. The expected output is a Survey Report with up-to-date Household ICT Indicators.
- b. Participation in the SADC ICT Observatory Virtual Forum.
- c. Exchange of ICT/Telecommunications Traffic Data.
- d. Local regulators (Eswatini Standards Authority and Eswatini Electricity Company) were engaged on issues of mutual interest to pursue them through established Memoranda of Understanding. Furthermore, the Commission established regulatory partnerships with the Mozambique National Communications Authority (INCM) and Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA).
- e. Digital platforms: The Commission disseminated information on events, tenders, vacancies and new developments within the communications sector using digital platforms. The platforms were also used to provide feedback on issues relating to operations and resolution of complaints.
- f. National support: The Commission is engrained in the promotion of national values through participation and contributions towards national events, such as Buganu and Umhlanga Festivals as well as the Incwala Ceremony.

fulfilment of its mandate regarding market development in the ICT sector. These include collection of ICT data and compilation of statistics used for tracking growth of the sector and facilitating evidence-based policy formulation, compilation of the country's ICT profile and reporting on national ICT statistics and indicators. Further efforts were made towards monitoring competition, regulation of markets and pricing in the communications sector, and managing the cost of communication, to ensure affordability of ICT services.

Telecommunications market performance

Telecommunications subscriptions

Mobile market

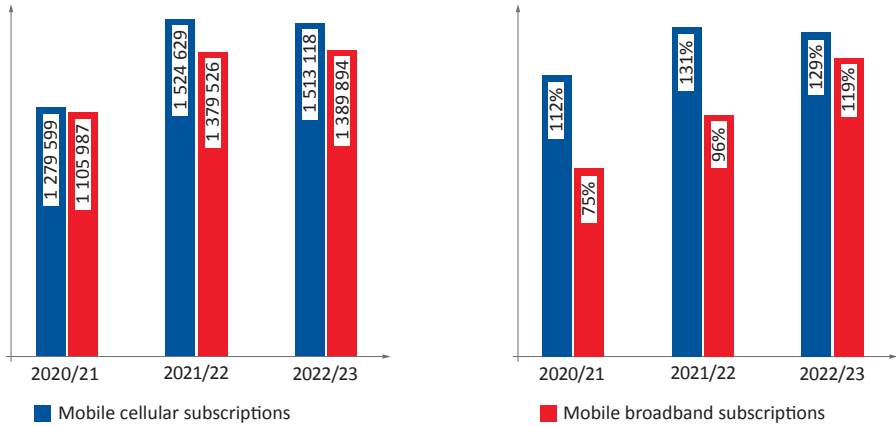
Mobile cellular phone subscriptions declined by 0.8% from 1 524 629 in 2021/22 to 1 513 118 in 2022/23. The negative growth in mobile cellular SIM subscriptions compared to the 19% growth recorded in the previous period is attributed to the deactivation of SIM subscriptions. These are SIM cards that were non-compliant with SIM Card registration regulations. Mobile broadband subscriptions recorded a slight increase of 0.8% from 1 379 526 subscriptions in 2021/22 to 1 389 894 in 2022/23.

This growth in mobile broadband subscriptions is attributed to increasing demand for mobile broadband connectivity that was supported by favourable pricing and offers for mobile data and smartphone devices. Mobile cellular SIM subscriptions per 100 inhabitants decreased by 2.5% from 131% in 2021/22 to 129% in 2022/23. Mobile broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants also decreased by 0.5% from 119% to 118% in 2022/23 as show in Figure 2.

ECONOMIC REGULATION

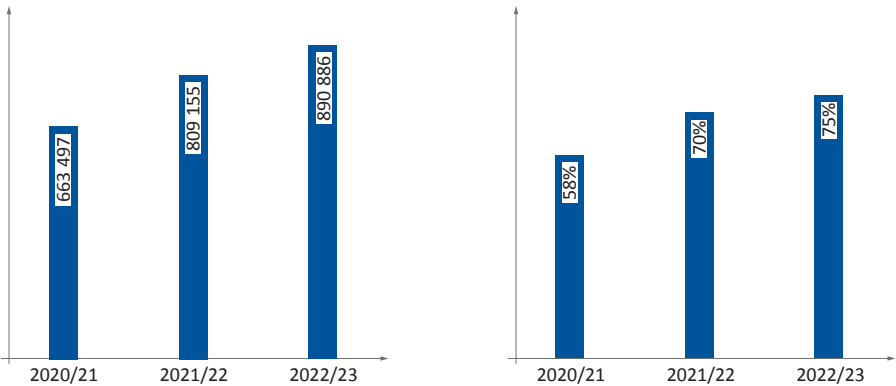
Under Economic Regulation, the Commission undertook several initiatives to ensure the

Figure 2: Mobile subscriptions and market penetration



Source: ESCCOM, 2023

Figure 3: Mobile network smartphone connectivity and penetration

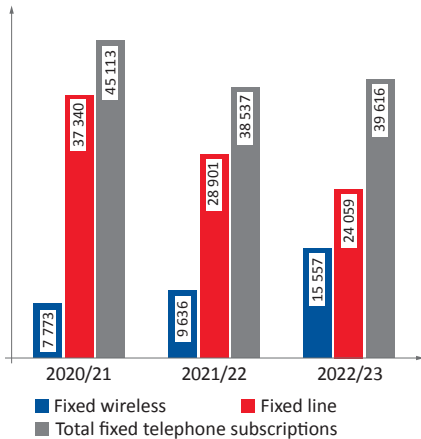


Source: ESCCOM, 2023

Fixed market

Fixed telephone subscriptions in the review period recovered slightly from a decline in 2020/21. Fixed telephone subscriptions increased by 2.8% from 38 537 subscriptions in 2020/21 to 39 616 in 2022/23. The recovery in fixed telephone connectivity was driven by an increase in fixed wireless connections which increased by 61% in the period under review. Fixed wired telephone connections, on the other hand, continued to decline in the period by 17% due to copper cable theft.

Figure 4: Fixed telephone subscriptions

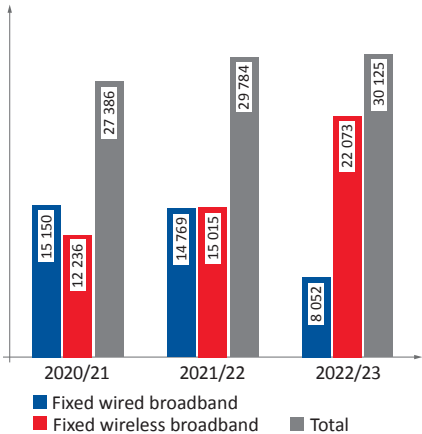


Source: ESCCOM, 2023

Fixed broadband

Fixed internet broadband subscriptions increased by 1% to 30 125 subscriptions in 2022/23 from 29 784 subscriptions in the previous period. This growth is despite the decline in fixed wired broadband subscriptions due to service disruption caused by copper theft and infrastructure vandalism. The increase in fixed-wireless broadband subscriptions by 47% offset the decline in fixed wired subscriptions, which is attributed to consumers migrating to fixed wireless connectivity in order to secure a reliable connection.

Figure 5: Fixed internet broadband subscriptions

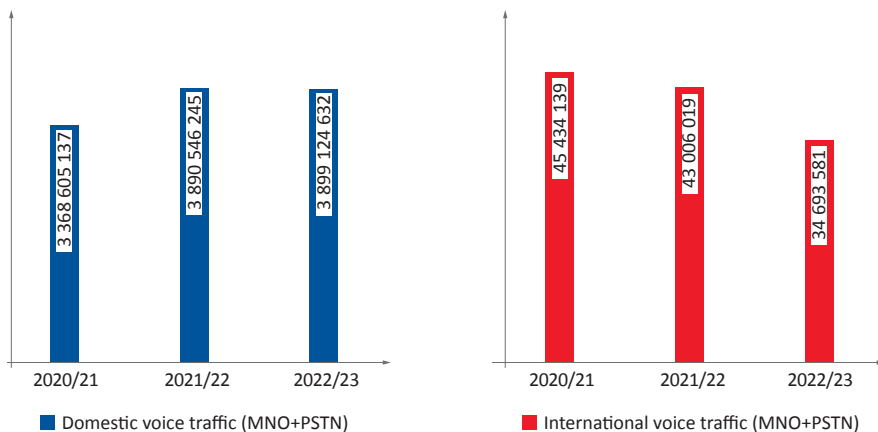


Source: ESCCOM, 2023

Traffic

Domestic voice traffic growth in FY 2022/23 decelerated compared to the 15% growth recorded in FY 2021/22, recording marginal growth of 0.2% from 3 890 546 245 minutes to 3 899 124 632 minutes in FY 2022/23. This deceleration in domestic voice growth is attributed to slow growth (0.3%) in voice traffic on mobile networks in the review period, which accounts for over 90% of total domestic voice traffic. Domestic voice traffic on fixed networks declined by 11% in the review period, attributable to a decline in fixed wired telephone connections in the period due to copper cable theft.

Figure 6: Voice traffic in minutes



Source: ESCCOM, 2022

International mobile roaming extends the coverage of the home operator's retail voice and SMS services, allowing the mobile user to continue using their home operator phone number and data services within another country. International roaming activity is influenced by both macroeconomic factors and technological developments. International roaming traffic is directly linked to international travel elements, namely tourism and business travel.

Total international travel numbers in Eswatini, as shown in Figure 7 on the right-hand side

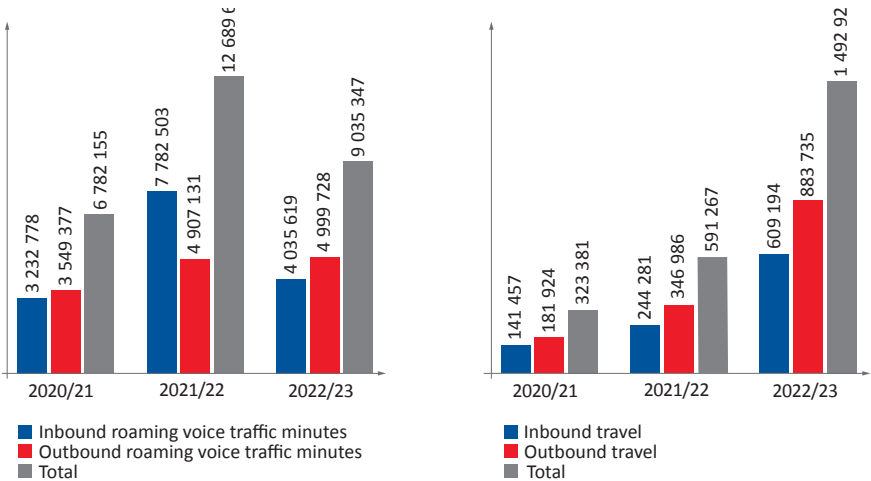
International voice traffic continued a downward trend in the period under review, where traffic on both mobile and fixed telephone networks declined by 20% and 17% respectively. Total international voice traffic recorded a 19% decline from 43 006 019 minutes in FY 2021/22 to 34 693 581 minutes in FY 2022/23. The downward trend in international voice traffic is attributed to the growing usage of voice over internet protocol (VoIP) services provided by over-the-top providers (OTT) at a very low or no cost.

(RHS), recorded a more than two-fold increase in FY 2022/23 from 591 267 travellers in FY 2021/22 to 1 492 929 in the review period. This significant increase in travel statistics signals a post-Covid-19 travel restrictions recovery in tourism and corporate travel which is increasingly gaining momentum. Outbound travel continues to dominate international travel compared to inbound travel, meaning Eswatini travel outside the country more frequently than visitors coming in.

Despite an upward trend in international travel volumes, international roaming voice traffic, as shown in Figure 8 on the left-hand side (LFS), declined by 29% from 12 689 634 minutes in FY 2021/22 to 9 035 347 minutes in FY 2022/23. This decline in roaming traffic is mainly attributed to a 48% decrease in inbound roaming traffic from 7 782 503 minutes in FY 2021/22 to 4 035 619 minutes in FY 2022/23, below the outbound roaming traffic level. Outbound roaming voice traffic on the other hand grew by 2% from 4 907 131 minutes in FY 2021/22 to 4 999 728 minutes in FY 2022/23.

Macroeconomic factors continued to drive growth in tourism and corporate travel in FY 2022/23 as reflected in international travel statistics. However, contrary to expectations, international voice roaming traffic in the same period declined by almost one third. This could be largely attributed to technological factors such as the increasing use of cheaper VoIP services or OTTs for texting as well as video calls by both visitors and Eswatini travelling out of the country. Furthermore, this trend is driven by the growing mobile smartphone ownership which enables the use of cheaper VoIP services.

Figure 7: Roaming voice traffic in minutes (LHS) and international travel statistics (RHS)



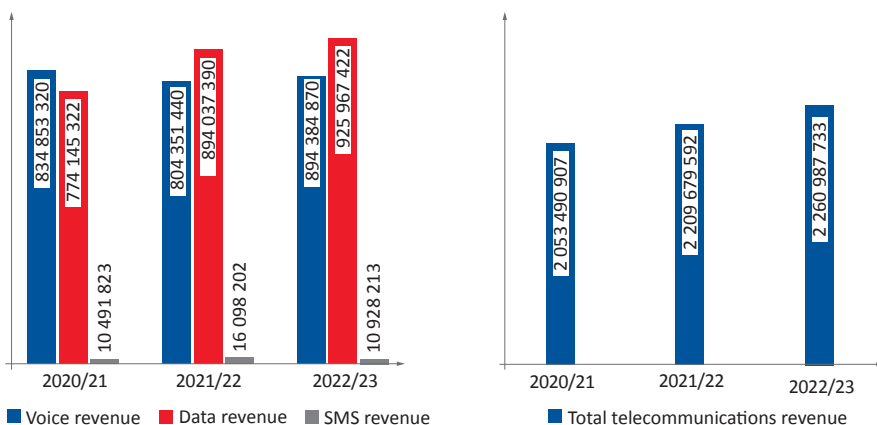
Source: ESCCOM and Eswatini Tourism Authority (ESTA), 2023

Telecommunications revenue

Total telecoms revenue generated by licensees increased by 2.3% from E2 209 679 592 in FY 2021/22 to E2 260 987 733 in FY 2022/23. This was slower growth compared to the 8% recorded in the previous FY 2021/22. Data continued to drive revenue growth in the period; however, at a slower growth rate compared to the previous period. This upward trend in revenue is driven by the growing demand for data services. Furthermore, there were price reviews of data plans by operators for consumers in the period amid rising living costs.

Revenue from data services grew by 3.6% in the period, from E894 037 390 in FY 2021/22 to E925 967 422 in FY 2022/23. Voice services revenue rebounded from a decline in FY 2021/22 to record a slight growth of 1.5%, from E804 351 440 to E816 384 870 in FY 2022/23. The growth in voice revenue is attributed to growth in domestic voice traffic on mobile networks in the review period, despite the growing use of cheaper VoIP services. SMS revenue declined by 15%, from E10 928 213 in FY 2021/22 to E9 279 451 in FY 2022/23.

Figure 8: Telecommunications revenue at current prices



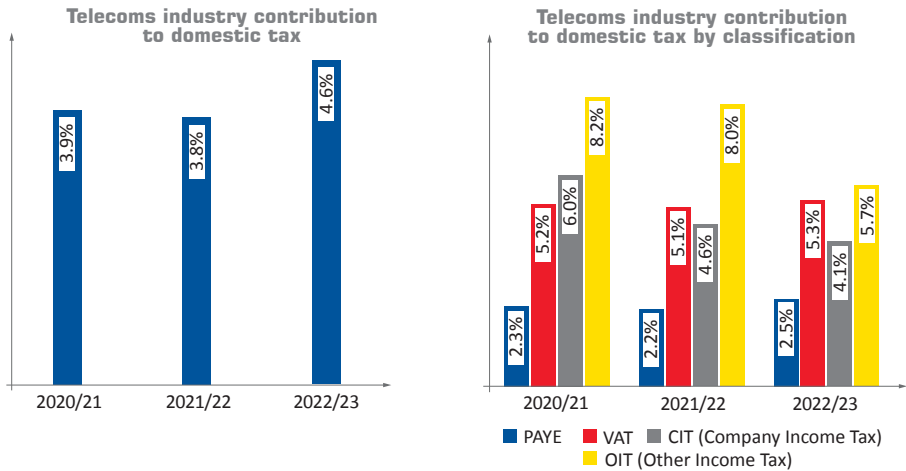
Source: ESCCOM, 2023

CONTRIBUTION TO DOMESTIC TAX REVENUE

Total tax revenue collected in the Eswatini economy by Eswatini Revenue Service (ERS) increased from E10 786 960 753 collected in FY 2021/22 to E12 037 537 465 in FY 2022/23, showing an increase of 12%. The telecommunications industry contributed 4.6% to total domestic tax revenue collected in the review period, which is a 0.8% increase from the 3.8% contribution in FY 2021/22.

The telecommunications industry’s contribution to personal income tax or Pay as You Earn (PAYE) increased by 0.3% in FY 2022/23 to 2.5%, from 2.2% in FY 2021/22. Value Added Tax (VAT) revenue contribution recorded an increase from 5.1% in FY 2021/22 to 5.3% in FY 2022/23. Contributions to Company Income Tax (CIT) and Other Income Tax (OIT) in the review period were lower than contributions in FY 2021/22 by 0.5% and 2.2% respectively.

Figure 9: Telecoms contribution to domestic tax revenue

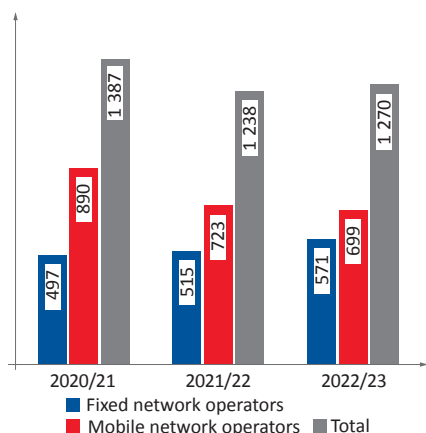


Source: Eswatini Revenue Service, 2023

EMPLOYMENT IN THE TELECOMS INDUSTRY

Employment in the period rebounded to record an increase of 3%, from 1 238 people employed in FY 2021/22 to a total of 1 270 people employed in FY 2022/23. This increase is mainly attributed to an increase in the number of persons employed by MNOs against a decline reported by the fixed network operator due to attrition.

Figure 10: Persons employed in the telecoms industry¹



¹ Estimates of Total number of Persons Employed in Telecoms Industry reported in Annual Financial Report 2021/22, have been revised in line with ITU ICT/Telecoms Administrative Data Handbook definition of Persons Employed (Full-time and equivalent). Total number of persons employed by Fixed Network Operators reported at 887 in 2021/22 Annual Report 2020/21 revised to 890 in 2022/23 and Total Persons Employed reported by Mobile Network Operator revised downward from 728 reported in 2021/22 to 515 in 2022/23.

Source: ESCCOM, 2023

POSTAL MARKET PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

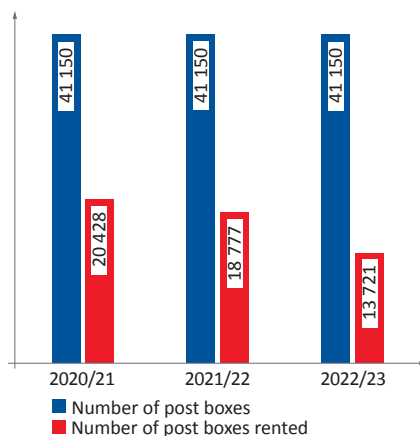
The Postal network in Eswatini covers an estimated 37% of the country's geography, consisting of a total of 37 full service permanent post offices and 53 postal service points. The Covid-19 pandemic

accelerated migration from physical mail to digital communication, which has re-shaped customers' communication needs and expectations. As a result, demand for physical mail services by both businesses and individuals remained sluggish in FY 2022/23. Parcels and packet inbound volumes have benefited from growth in online shopping for accessories through digital platforms.

Post office box rental

In FY 2022/23, a total of 41 150 post boxes were available for rental, of which 13 721 or 33% were rented, down from 18 777 or 46% in FY 2021/22. This is mainly attributed to decreasing demand for physical mail services by individual customers which account for over 60% of post box rentals, compared to business customers. Individual customers continue to use alternative services for physical mail instead of the post box, a trend that emerged during the Covid-19 pandemic. Business customers have also increasingly adopted paperless communication alternatives to communicate with clients, which is also rendering the post box irrelevant.

Figure 11: Total number of post boxes and number of post boxes rented



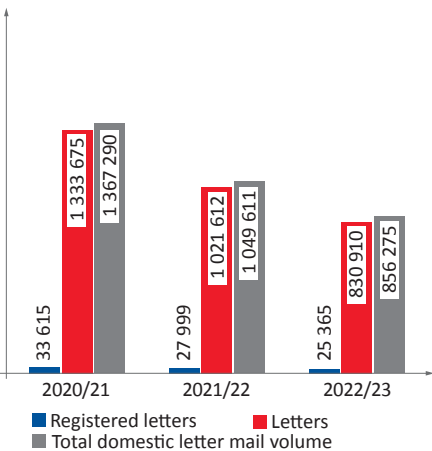
Source: ESCCOM, 2023

Domestic letter mail

Domestic letter mail which consists of mainly transactional mail, advertising and promotional catalogues continued a downward trajectory in FY 2022/23 as business customers migrate to paperless electronic communication services like e-mails and SMSs. Total domestic letter mail volumes declined by 18% from 1 049 611 in FY 2021/22 to 856 275 in FY 2022/23.

Letter mail volumes fell by 19% to 830 910 in the period under review. Registered mail volumes declined by 9% from 27 999 in FY 2021/22 to 25 365 in FY 2022/23, attributed to the fact that business customers still utilise registered physical mail services for transactional mail despite the shift to more efficient digital communication alternatives.

Figure 12: Total domestic letter mail volume

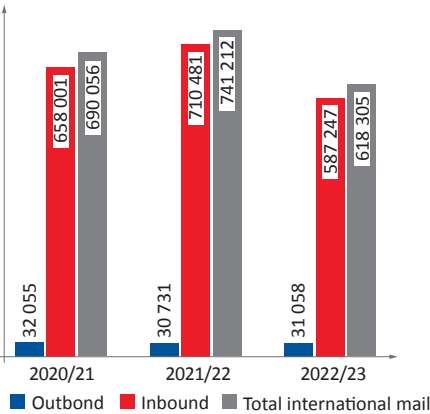


Source: ESCCOM, 2023

International mailing services

International mail volumes declined by 17% from a total of 741 212 in FY 2021/22 to 618 305 in FY 2022/23. This trend was mainly driven by a 17% decline recorded in inbound international mail volumes from 710 481 in FY 2021/22 to 587 247 in FY 2022/23. This downward trend is in line with migration from physical mail to paperless electronic communication. Outbound international mail, which consists of ordinary letter mail to the rest of the world, has been resilient despite increasing digitalisation, recording an increase of 1% from 30 731 recorded in FY 2021/22 to 31 058 in FY 2022/23.

Figure 13: Total international mail volume

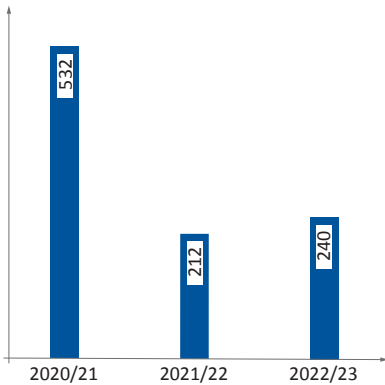


Source: ESCCOM, 2023

Express mail services

Express mail service volumes recovered slightly by 13% in FY 2022/23 to 240 from 212 in FY 2021/22, despite the increasing migration to electronic communication services. This slight recovery in demand for faster and secure physical mail services is influenced by customers' increasing requirement for more secure and faster inbound physical mail services for documents and items purchased online i.e., on international e-Commerce platforms.

Figure 14: Express mail volume

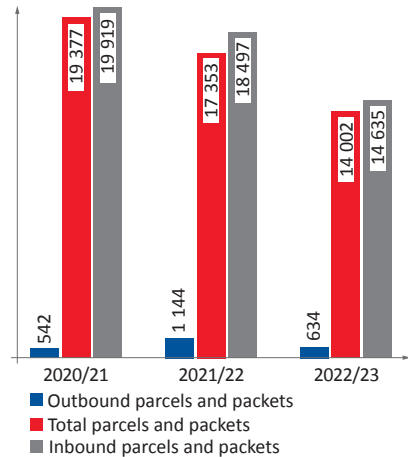


Source: ESCCOM, 2022

Parcel and packet volumes

Parcel and packet volumes continued to fall, as they declined by 21% to 14 636 in FY 2022/23 from 18 497 in FY 2021/22. The demand for parcel and packet mailing services is much more resilient against increasing digitalisation compared to other physical mailing services, due to the service being a cheaper alternative to courier services. However, in the review period, there were service disruptions emanating from the South African Post Office (SAPO) relocating the Johannesburg International Mail Centre to Germiston) through which Eswatini international parcels transit. This had a negative impact on Eswatini Post parcel services' quality of service (QoS) which led to customers seeking alternative services. Consequently, parcel volumes declined in the period.

Figure 15: Parcel and packet volumes

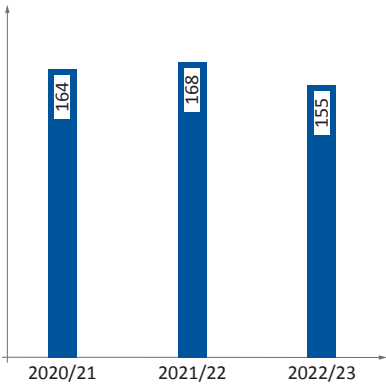


Source: ESCCOM, 2022

EMPLOYMENT IN THE POSTAL SECTOR

Postal sector employment decreased by 8% from 168 in FY 2021/22 to 155 people employed in 2022/23. This is mainly attributed to employee attrition and Eswatini Post’s cost management efforts that saw resigning employees not being replaced.

Figure 16: Persons employed in the postal sector



Source: ESCCOM, 2023

ERRATUM

Please note the following changes and revisions effected on Telecommunications Market Performance and Postal Market Indicators Figures in Annual Financial Report 2022/23:

TELECOMMUNICATIONS MARKET PERFORMANCE

- Changes effected on Figure 4, Fixed Telephone Subscriptions, are a correction of a labelling error in Figure 3, Fixed Telephone Subscriptions, in Annual Financial Report 2021/22.

POSTAL MARKET INDICATORS

- Changes in Figure 13, Parcel and Packets Volume, are a correction of an error in data labelling on Figure 12 in the Annual Financial Report 2021/22.
- Changes in Figure 11, Total International Mail Volume, are a correction of an error in data labelling on Figure 13, International Mail Volume, in Annual Financial Report 2021/22.
- Revisions in Figure 10, Total Number of Post Boxes and Number of Post Boxes Rented, are a correction of error in computation and analysis of indicator in Figure 10 in Annual Financial Report 2021/22.



ESWATINI ICT ACCESS AND USE SURVEY

The Commission continued with the Eswatini ICT Access and Usage Survey (ICTAUS) project in partnership with the Central Statistical Office. The ICTAUS being the first-of-its-kind national survey aimed at measuring the level of access and use of ICT by households and individuals in the Kingdom of Eswatini, embarked on data collection where a total of 2 389 households across the country were interviewed out of 2 520 households sampled in the 168 clusters, achieving a response rate of 95%.

Post-completion of the Data Collection exercise, the raw data collected was processed, and weights were applied on ICTAUS sample results to bring the data in line with the national population. Report writing followed, which entailed alignment of the data tables to corresponding thematic areas, being Telecommunications, Broadcasting, e-Commerce, Postal and Cybersecurity and Online Child Protection. Data analysis was performed with interpretations done, and the conclusions and recommendations from the survey were compiled.

The draft ICTAUS report was presented to stakeholders for validation and review, whose findings were deliberated. Results from the thematic areas were discussed and information gaps were duly clarified by the Technical Working Team that worked on the project. Additionally, the conclusions and recommendations from the survey were deliberated on. Subsequently, the comments received from stakeholders were incorporated into the final report, projected for launch and publication in the ensuing reporting period.

ANNUAL ICT SECTOR REPORT 2022

The Annual ICT Sector Report 2022, detailing the performance of the ICT sector over FY 2021/22 was compiled. The report analysed trends in the indicators used for tracking progress and growth in the different markets that the Commission regulates. Additionally, the report provided an account of initiatives aimed at regulating, enabling and improving the ICT sector undertaken over the review period.

Mobile cellular subscriptions grew by 19.2%, with total mobile broadband subscriptions surging by 24.7% respectively, resulting in a 25.4% advancement in mobile cellular market penetration from 104.6% to 130%, and a corresponding increase of 22.2% from 95.8% to 118% in mobile broadband penetration. Fixed telephone market penetration declined by 0.8% to 3.7%, while fixed broadband market penetration grew by 0.19% to 2.5%.

Trends in the postal sector showed an overall decline. Mail volume trends showed mixed performance in the period, where domestic mail volumes (registered and unregistered letters, sent and received) dropped by 23.2% to 1 049 611, while international mail volumes grew by 7.4% to 741 212. The postal boxes rented recorded a decline of 8.1% to 18 777, at the backdrop of a mixed performance in mail (international and domestic) volumes in the period. Packet and parcel volumes sent and received, also recorded a decline of 7.1% to 18 497.

Cost to communicate

Following the completion of the second Pricing Benchmark Study in 2021, the findings revealed that there were significant improvements in wholesale prices. However, the country's data costs were still considerably high when compared with regional peers. As a result, the Commission issued a decision where wholesale rates would be reduced by an average of 60% over a three-year period.

The first phase of the wholesale reductions came into effect on 1 April 2022, wherein leased line and bandwidth costs were reduced for Mobile Network Operators and Internet Service Providers by 20% and 25% respectively. These reductions were later passed on to consumers. Further to this, in October 2022 a new wholesale 24 months contract offering was introduced. Using the standard wholesale rates as a base, the new offering reflected an overall average reduction of 40% and 55% for internet and leased line bandwidth for unbundled and bundled services respectively.

Table 1: National leased line wholesale rates reduction

Year	Percentage reduction
Year 1	20%
Year 2	25%
Year 3	33%

Source: ESCCOM, 2023

Table 2: Wholesale internet bandwidth rates

Year	Percentage reduction
Year 1	25%
Year 2	29%
Year 3	29%

Source: ESCCOM, 2023

During the period under review, the three-year glide path for call termination rates which began in 2020 was concluded. Table 3 depicts peak and off-peak call termination rates in the market.

Table 3: Call termination rates

Period	MTN to		EPTC to		ESM to	
	EPTC	ESM	MTN	ESM	EPTC	MTN
Before April 2020	£0.30	N/A	£0.24	£0.24	£0.30	N/A
April 2020 to March 2021	£0.24	£0.25	£0.19	£0.19	£0.24	£0.20
April 2021 to March 2022	£0.18	£0.19	£0.14	£0.14	£0.18	£0.15
April 2022 to March 2023 (and current)	£0.12	£0.13	£0.10	£0.10	£0.12	£0.10

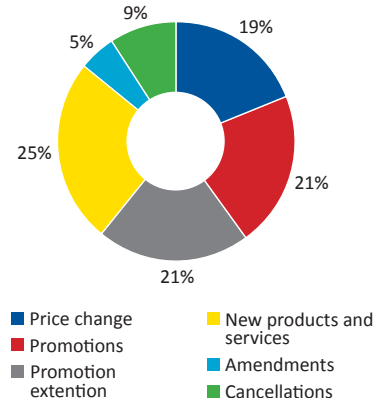
Source: ESCCOM, 2023

Approval of products and services

Prior to launching products and services, promotions, amendments and cancellations, Mobile Network Operators and Internet Service Providers are expected to seek approval from the Commission. Prior to making a determination for approval on an application, affordability and consumer interests are considered.

In the year under review, 21% of the applications for approval received were for new products and services and promotions launched into the market. These were predominantly designed for enterprises and businesses, focusing on how to help these entities reach their customers to service and sell their products. Operators also streamlined existing service offerings in response to the ever-changing consumer needs and product performance. This was done through the modification of data bundle volumes where some were increased while others were decommissioning other bundles which were no longer being purchased by consumers. The modifications were done more on consumer products and services. Figure 17 depicts a breakdown of the overall percentage of the products and services approved during FY 2022/23.

Figure 17: Products and services approved during FY 2022/23



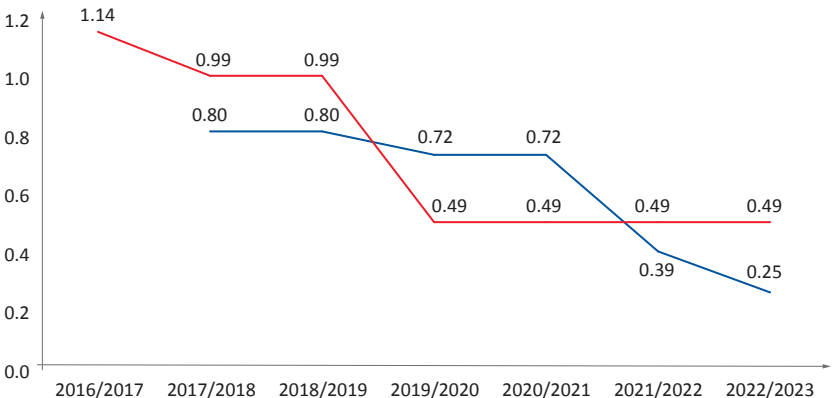
Source: ESCCOM Data, 2023

Data pricing

The price of data has been on a downward trend ever since the introduction of the Price Transformation in 2017. ESCCOM's continuous engagement with the Wholesaler (EPTC) coupled with the re-packaging of the wholesale services led to the creation of the 24 months contract service during the period under review. The Commission continued to advocate for affordable services during engagements with retailers.

Figure 18 depicts the out of bundle rate for Eswatini Mobile and MTN. At the behest of the Commission, both mobile operators started reducing out of bundle rates. During the review period, ESM further reduced its out of bundle rate from E0,39/MB to E0,25/MB thus being the lowest OOB rate in the mobile market of Eswatini.

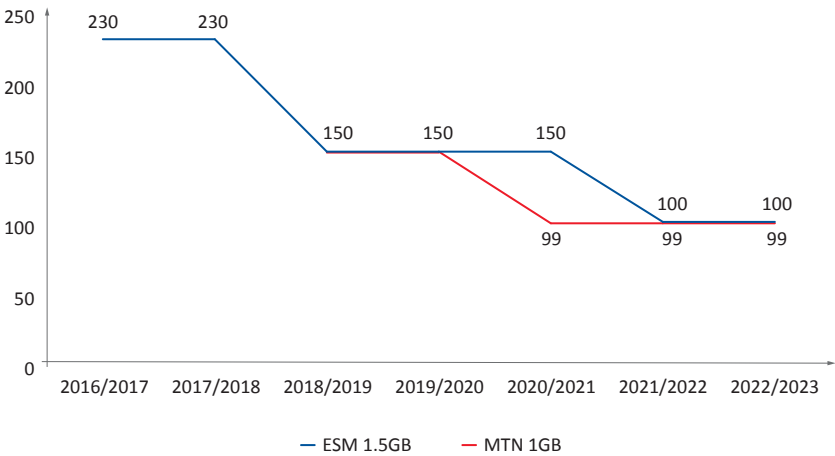
Figure 18: ESM and MTN's out of bundle rates



Source: ESCCOM, 2023

After the Covid era, data demand rose due to increased consumer requirements. The Commission continued with efforts to reduce the price of data, which saw operators introducing different payment plans for the various segments of consumers. Operators (predominantly Mobile Network Operators) adopted a pricing philosophy where data was increased, while the price remained constant. This approach enabled consumers to access more data at the same price as before and further enabled them to stay connected for longer periods. Figure 20 depicts the price of 1GB charged by both MNOs since the introduction of the price transformation in 2017.

Figure 19: Eswatini Mobile and MTN Eswatini price of 1GB



Source: ESCCOM, 2023

Broadband targets 2025

The Commission works in collaboration with other stakeholders in fulfilling SADC broadband targets. Target 2 requires developing economies to have entry level broadband services priced less than 2% of a country's monthly Gross National Income (GNI) per capita. GNI per capita is universally viewed as a strong indicator of the standard of living of an average citizen in a particular country. Thus, using GNI per capita as a measurement

of affordability to access entry level broadband services is more appropriate as it indicates the income level of the citizens.

ESCCOM conducted an exercise using the five ITU price baskets to determine the extent to which the Kingdom of Eswatini meets Target 2. The Kingdom of Eswatini has met the set target on three baskets. These were the fixed broadband 5GB, data and voice low consumption and the mobile cellular low usage basket.

Table 4: ITU price baskets

ICT price basket	Minimum monthly allowance			Broadband target	As a percentage of GNI
	Voice (minutes)	SMS (#)	Data		
Data only mobile broadband basket	–	–	2GB	2%	4%
Mobile data and voice low consumption basket	70	20	500MB	2%	1%
Mobile data and voice high consumption basket	140	70	2GB	2%	4%
Mobile cellular low usage basket	70	20	–	2%	2%
Fixed broadband basket	–	–	5GB	2%	2%

Source: ESCCOM, 2023

CONSUMER PROTECTION

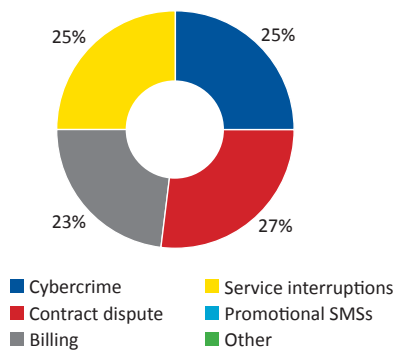
The Commission's mandate includes the protection of consumers of communication services, particularly the vulnerable, from exploitation and abuse through enforcing consumer rights and benefits, as well as service provider obligations.

Furthermore, ESCCOM is tasked with promoting consumer awareness and empowerment by effectively engaging with consumer rights groups, and through consumer outreach initiatives.

Complaints resolution

In the year under review, the Commission received and actioned 30 consumer complaints escalated after unsatisfactory service and experience at operator level. The major issues reported against telecommunications providers were related to service interruptions and billing. There were also complaints received in the areas of cybercrime and broadcasting.

Figure 20: Reported consumer complaints



Source: ESCCOM Data, 2022

Overall, there was an 87.5% increase in the number of complaints received, compared to the 16 actioned in the previous financial year.

Consumer education and outreach

During the year under review, the Commission implemented several interventions aimed at protecting consumers and enhancing their welfare using traditional and digital awareness programmes.

During the month of April, the Commission collaborated with the Royal Eswatini Police Service, Eswatini Mobile and MTN Eswatini to roll out a Mobile Wallet Fraud and Scams Awareness campaign across all media platforms. This was in response to an increase in reports that involves the use of electronic communications services in committing fraud, resulting in major financial losses for Emaswati.

A concerted campaign was rolled out, and implemented across social media, radio and TV media houses to educate consumers about the Broadcasting Code and the Broadcasting Guidelines. The main objective was to raise awareness on listener and viewer rights, as well as recourse avenues in cases where broadcasters have not complied with the regulatory instruments.

Furthermore, consumers of communications services were continuously reminded of their rights and responsibilities as well as service provider obligations. This followed the updating of the Consumer Complaints Procedure to include areas of broadcasting and postal services. The new procedure was uploaded to the ESCCOM website and distributed to service providers, consumer rights groups and included in print, electronic and digital media customer education programmes.

Amendment of subscriber registration requirements

Following the Subscriber Registration Audit conducted by the Commission on operator premises, the requirements for Subscriber

Registration were reviewed. This followed consultations with the implementation stakeholders of the regulations, including mobile operators and the Royal Eswatini Police Service (REPS).

Sponsorships

In support of organisations and programmes that aim to advance ICTs in Eswatini, ESCCOM sponsored the Eswatini STEM Foundation and the RSTP STEM Careers Fair.

Commemorations

The Commission successfully collaborated with partner organisations to commemorate key dates in the national, regional, and global ICT calendar. The objective of these commemorations is to increase awareness of developments within the sector in line with the theme and foster meaningful relationships with strategic partners.

During the year under review, ESCCOM commemorated the World Telecommunications and Information Society Day, Stop Cyberbullying Day, World Post Day, PAPU Postal Day, World Radio Day, Consumer Rights Day as well as the National Cybersecurity Awareness Month.

COMMUNICATIONS

The communications function of an organisation plays a vital role, that of creating, promoting, and maintaining visibility of its initiatives and activities to internal and external stakeholders. The Commission achieves this objective through the use of integrated media platforms, both traditional and digital. These include local print publications, electronic media, the website and three social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn).

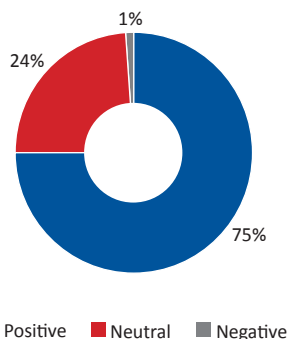
This financial year saw an increase in the number of platforms utilised with an addition of a weekly ESCCOM radio programme aired both on EBIS1 and VOC 1 FM. Programmes covered include

Cybersecurity, Data Protection, Broadcasting Code, Consumer Affairs, Spectrum Planning and Management, Quality of Service, and other activities undertaken as part of the Commission's obligations.

Media analysis

The Commission monitors public perception by scanning published content that involves ESCCOM. During this period, the media sentiment was largely neutral at 75% as this coverage was developed based on information distributed by the Commission. Negative reporting only accounted for 1% on Facebook.

Figure 21: Sentiment analysis



Source: ESCCOM, 2023



CHALLENGES

Late submission of data

The late submission of data to the Commission by licensees has been a major hindrance to the timely production of ICT indicators, which are used in tracking the performance of the sector and inform national policy and strategies. This causes delays in reporting and publication of industry statistics.



FUTURE OUTLOOK

- **Completion of ICTAUS Survey:** the Commission will be concluding the 2022 Eswatini ICT Access and Use Survey in the second quarter of the next financial year. The results from the Survey will facilitate evidence-based decision making and policy developments in the ICT sector.
- **Reduction in retail tariffs:** following the conclusion of the second price transformation three-year glide path, the Commission working together with all stakeholders will embark on a review process, to determine the level of affordable communications services in the country. A reduction in retail tariffs will enable the Kingdom of Eswatini to meet and exceed the 2025 broadband targets as set by UNESCO and ITU.
- **Corporate Social Investment:** the CSI strategy with the objective of giving back to the Eswatini community, principally in areas and themes that will be identified and prioritised on an annual basis will be operationalised.

TECHNICAL SERVICES

Technical Services is responsible for the development and implementation of technical policy and regulatory decisions and instruments in accordance with the ESCCOM Act, including telecommunications, broadcasting and postal sectors as well as the management of radio frequency spectrum and numbering resources.

During the current reporting report, the work of the Commission has been largely focused on providing an enabling environment for promoting the development of regulated sectors and entities. With the increasing role of ICTs in the country's socio-economic landscape and increasing presence of eSwatini online, safety, security and protection of citizens' participation online became one of the key focus areas for the year.

Key achievements along ESCCOM's strategic focus areas for the year are summarised as shown in the figure below:

A. CONDUCTIVE ENVIRONMENT

Elaboration and implementation of policy and regulatory frameworks: Develop Guidelines for Establishment and Maintenance of Telecommunications Towers; Development of Content and Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT) Broadcasting guidelines; National Emergency Communications Plan; Development and publication of Electronic Communications Standards; E-Commerce Readiness Assessment.

Ensuring efficient management of scarce resources: Review and Update the IMT band plan and roadmap; Restoration of Eswatini Satellite Orbital slots; Restoration of Eswatini Satellite Orbital Slots; Conducting Radio Frequency Spectrum Usage Monitoring.

Country representation in international forums: ITU, Universal Postal Union, African Telecommunications Union and Pan-African Postal Union.

B. CONSUMER PROTECTION

Quality of Service Monitoring (Telecommunications, Postal and Broadcasting); Equipment type approval; Compliance monitoring and inspections; Implementing cybersecurity awareness plan

KEY
FOCUS AREAS
AND
STRATEGIC
GOALS

C. ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY

Automation of ESCCOM processes: implementation of broadcasting management system; operationalisation of counterfeit devices checking system; implementation and supervision of ESCCOM construction project

D. INFRASTRUCTURE, SERVICE AND MARKET DEVELOPMENT

5G Spectrum Assignment; Implementation of National Cybersecurity Strategy; full implementation of the .szccTLD framework; conducted e-commerce readiness assessment; coordination of National Addressing Project



ACHIEVEMENTS FOR THE YEAR

Radio frequency spectrum management

The Commission is tasked with ensuring the efficient use of Radio Frequency Spectrum resources in the Kingdom of Eswatini. This is done by effectively engaging in spectrum management initiatives which include spectrum planning and licensing, spectrum monitoring, spectrum usage audits as well as updating the Spectrum Management Framework to align with national policy initiatives and international best practices.

In addition to this, the Commission further collaborates with regional and international stakeholders to ensure that all issues related to spectrum management are addressed on behalf of the Kingdom of Eswatini. This includes participation in regional and international fora such as the World Radiocommunications Conference where decisions about spectrum allocation are taken. The Kingdom of Eswatini is the African Telecommunications Union (ATU) lead rapporteur for an agenda item dealing with Intersatellite Links at the WRC-23, and as such the Commission is participating on behalf of the country in the discussions of this topic.

The Commission further ensures that communications service providers are supported and enabled so that they bring innovative services which promotes the advancement of ICT services in the country. This includes capacity building initiatives that the Commission undertakes to close any gaps that have been identified. One such is the capacity building for internet service providers in the country who use unlicensed spectrum for providing services on basic RF planning principles and best practices to ensure elimination of harmful interference.

Other activities carried out by the Commission towards ensuring efficient use of spectrum are as follows:

Spectrum Licensing Frameworks

Develop Guidelines for Establishment and Maintenance of Telecommunications Towers

The Commission, in an effort to promote infrastructure sharing and also in line with the Electronic Communications (Radio Frequency Spectrum) Regulations developed the Guidelines for Establishment and Maintenance of Telecommunications Towers in the country. These guidelines provide for effective collaboration with other entities in Eswatini such as the Eswatini Civil Aviation Authority (ESWACA), the Eswatini Environmental Authority (EEA) and the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development through the municipalities in the country in the monitoring of the establishment of telecommunications towers. The guidelines also seek to ensure that all service providers align with international guidelines with respect to electromagnetic field (EMF) emissions in the country among other things. It is expected that the Commission will have sight of activities on the establishment of towers in the country.

Spectrum planning

The Commission is also responsible for spectrum planning which is to ensure that there is spectrum available for assignment and also prescribing the applicable conditions for assignment as well as ensuring that satellite resources are always available for the country to utilise.

Review and update the IMT band plan and roadmap

The Commission issued the IMT band plan and roadmap which seeks to provide information on the amount of spectrum that has been made available for deployment of IMT services in the country. It also outlines the projections and roadmap on spectrum assignment for a period of five years.

Restoration of Eswatini Satellite Orbital slots

This project was initiated to ensure that the country has usable satellite orbital slots for the BSS and FSS. It emanated from the identification of the country as one of the administrations which have degraded orbital slots and the ITU issuing Resolution 559 (WRC-19) to cater for such cases. As a Commission we are required to engage in the process of ensuring the restoration of the orbital slots.

For BSS, the Resolution 559 of WRC-19 was applied where we were able to submit a proposal for a new orbital slot which was approved by the ITU. A coordination process was initiated and completed whereby we engaged with the countries which would potentially be affected by our proposed slot. This process was completed and as such we have now submitted a proposal to the WRC-23 for final approval.

For FSS we were able to engage with the administration of Luxembourg who were adversely affecting our satellite orbital slot to come to an agreement whereby, in case we need to use the orbital slot, they would have to adjust some parameters on their networks to reduce the

interference on our orbital slot. This agreement is pending approval by the WRC-23.

This work is set to be finalised in the coming World Radiocommunications Conference of 2023 in November 2023.

Effective management of spectrum

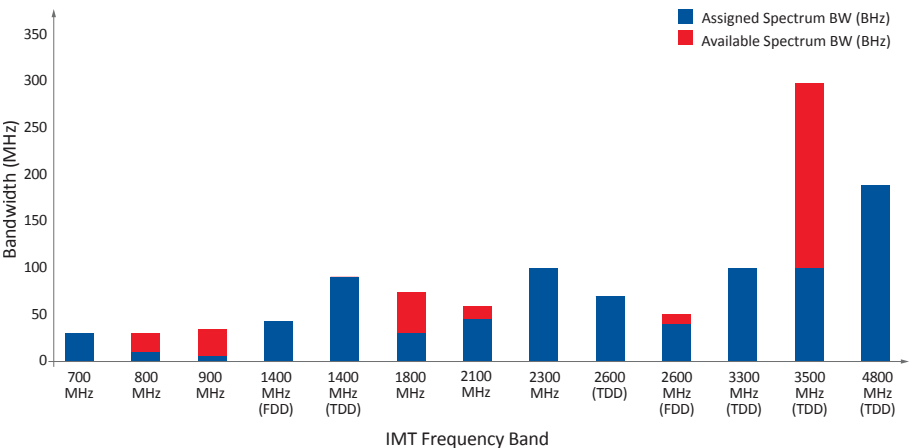
Spectrum licensing process automation

The Commission has deployed a fully automated process for spectrum licence application, which allows for applications for spectrum to be processed online. Interaction with licensees is via an online portal where licensees are able to apply and receive licences in a paperless process. This ensures effective and timely processing of new licence applications as well as renewals of licences.

Spectrum assignment

The Commission is responsible for ensuring that there is enough spectrum available for deployment in different services in the radiocommunications space, that is for land mobile applications, IMT, fixed services and satellite services. Spectrum availability and uptake by IMT services and fixed services this year are summarised as shown below:

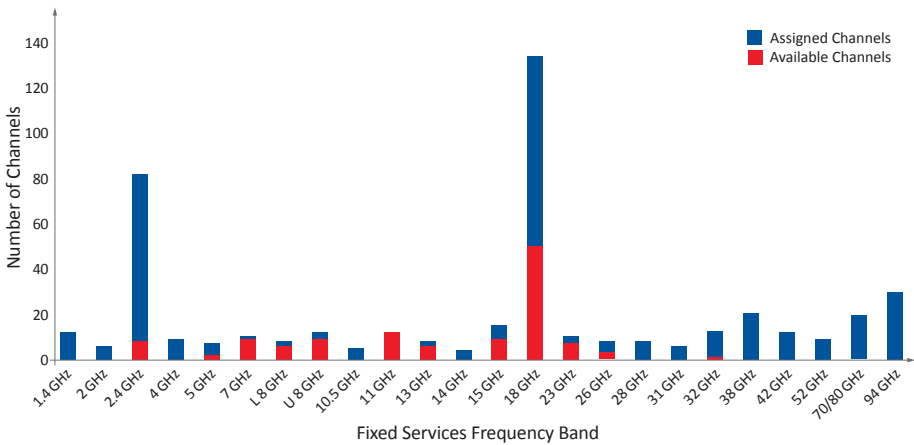
IMT Spectrum Usage



As indicated, the Commission has assigned only 35% of the available IMT spectrum in the sub-7GHz band and we have 0% assignments in the mm-Wave spectrum bands.

For fixed services, the spectrum assignment and uptake is as illustrated below:

Fixed Services Spectrum Usage



As indicated, the Commission has assigned only 36% of the available fixed services channels, with a majority of the unused channels being the mm-Wave spectrum bands.

Spectrum uptake for land mobile or private mobile radio (PMR) in terms of number of channels can be summarised as follows:

FREQUENCY BAND	TOTAL CHANNELS	ASSIGNED CHANNELS	AVAILABLE CHANNELS	% ASSIGNED CHANNELS
VHF	3 963	117	3 846	2.95%
UHF	4 710	86	4 624	1.83%

5G spectrum assignment

The Commission assigned 200MHz spectrum in the 3.5GHz band to mobile network operators in the country, that is Eswatini Mobile and MTN Eswatini, for deployment of 5G. The intention was to conduct trials to ensure technical feasibility of deploying 5G in the country. It is expected that this technology will be rolled out in the next few years.

Spectrum licensing

The process of spectrum licensing enables the Commission to have sight of who is using which frequency channel in the country and ensuring that no user interferes with others as they provide communications services in the country. The Spectrum Licensing Guidelines provide a framework for spectrum licensing in Eswatini. This year the Commission embarked on an exercise to enforce the requirements of the Spectrum Licensing Guidelines. The impact of this exercise was the increase in the number of licences issued

this financial year as a number of unlicensed spectrum users were identified and encouraged to ensure compliance.

Spectrum licences issued

Table 1 provides a summary of spectrum assignments for the IMT service providers in the country. The Commission renewed spectrum licences for MTN Eswatini, Eswatini Mobile and Eswatini Posts and Telecommunications Corporation (EPTC). Other licences issued by the Commission are summarised in Table 2.

Table 1: Current IMT assignments in Eswatini

Band	Tech.	TOTAL BW.	Frequency range		TOTAL ASS. BW.	Bandwidth assigned		
			UP-Link MHz	DN-Link MHz		MTN	EMBL	EPTC
700MHz	FDD	30MHz	703 – 733	758 – 788	0MHz	–	–	–
800MHz	FDD	30MHz	832 – 862	791 – 821	30MHz	10MHz	10MHz	–
900MHz	FDD	35MHz	880 – 915	925 – 960	30MHz	15MHz	15MHz	–
1800MHz	FDD	75MHz	1710 – 1785	1805 – 1880	60MHz	25MHz	20MHz	–
2100MHz	FDD	60MHz	1920 – 1980	2110 – 2170	25MHz	15MHz	–	–
2600MHz	TDD	50MHz	N/A	N/A	10MHz	–	–	10MHz
2600MHz	FDD	70MHz	2500 – 2570	2620 – 2690	0MHz	–	–	–
3500MHz	TDD	300MHz	N/A	N/A	200MHz	100MHz	100MHz	–

Table 2: Summary of licences issued by 2023

LICENCE TYPE	ISSUED IN 2021/2022	ISSUED IN 2022/2023
Aeronautical aircraft station	10	15
Aeronautical ground station	1	1
Amateur	2	3
PMR	4	4
VSAT	5	6
MES	1	1
IMT	3	3
Sound broadcasting	2	3
Microwave	3	4
TOTAL	31	40

Technology and standards

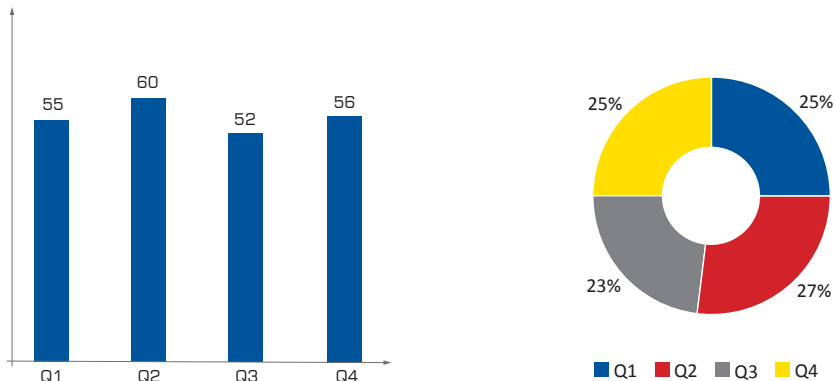
The Commission is also tasked with the responsibility of ensuring that telecommunications and related services are provided in a manner that best promotes the country's socio-economic activities. This is achieved by ensuring that the quality, integrity and security of services is maintained at all times through development and enforcement of applicable frameworks, standards and operational requirements for market participants. During the year under review the following activities were undertaken:

Enforcement of electronic communications type approval requirements

The Commission is charged with the responsibility to set standards and type approval of electronic

communications equipment in the country, and ensuring compliance to the set standards. The purpose is to ensure safety and protection as well as ensuring that the quality and integrity of communications services is maintained through the use of quality end-user communication terminal. For the reporting period, the Commission processed and issued a total of 223 type approval certificates. For processed applications, 55 were processed in the first quarter (Q1), 60 in the second quarter (Q2), 52 in the third quarter (Q3) and 56 in the fourth quarter (Q4). The figure below summarily shows the distribution of processed applications in terms of numbers across all the quarters in the period under review.

Processed type approval applications



In addition, and to ascertain the extent of regulatory compliance by importers and distributors of electronic communications equipment, the Commission has a duty to conduct market surveillance to follow up on compliance matters with respect to type approval by carrying out inspections on premises of dealers of electronic communications equipment. During the year, seventeen (17) importers and distributors

of electronic communication equipment (ECE) were inspected for compliance to the type approval process. On each of the seventeen (17) outlets, four (4) samples of ECE were randomly picked with the exception of three (3) occasions, where from two (2) outlets five (5) samples were made and from one (1) outlet, three (3) samples were made.

From an on-site inspection conducted on the various dealers of electronic communications equipment, it was discovered that only 30% of imported and distributed equipment has type approval certification from the Commission. A comprehensive enforcement approach and programme has been developed aimed at ensuring that quality and approved devices/equipment are distributed locally has been put in place.

Development and publication of Electronic Communications Standards

In an attempt to efficiently and effectively regulate the communications sector in Eswatini, the Commission in collaboration with Eswatini Standards Authority (ESWASA) developed, adopted and gazetted Electronic Communication Standards to be utilised during the type approval process. The standards include:

- **SZNS EN 301 908-1/10/13/14/15/18/23/24/25** – Standard to ensure radio communications equipment under IMT cellular networks (user equipment, repeaters and base station) have the ability to limit spurious emissions;
- **SZNS IEC 62368-1** – New safety standard for information technology equipment and audio/video equipment replacing EN 60950, EN 60905 and EN 60065.EN/IEC 60950-1 and EN/IEC 60065 both cover electrical non-household products; and
- **SZNS IEC 62209-2528** – Standard to demonstrate the compliance of wireless communication devices with the basic restrictions and exposure limit values related to human exposure to electromagnetic field in the frequency range from 30MHz to 6GHz.

Licensing

The year under review also saw the Commission issuing two (2) General Licence for Electronic Communications Services-ISP, licences as shown below:

LICENSEE	LICENCE TYPE
Rodge & Ziks Investments (PTY) Ltd	General Licence for Electronic Communications Services-ISP
t/a Digital Technologies	
Worldwide Communications Corporation (PTY) Ltd	General Licence for Electronic Communications Services-ISP

Monitoring and ensuring compliance to Telecommunications Quality of Service Regulatory Frameworks and Standards

i. Mobile communications service providers

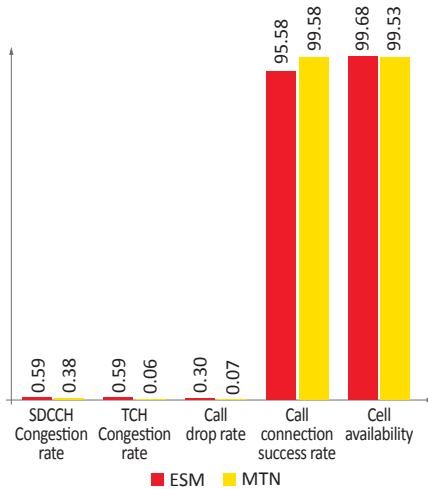
The Commission is also charged with the responsibility of ensuring that quality services are afforded to consumers of electronic communications services by service providers. In the reporting period, the Commission has in accordance with regulations benchmarked the network performance of mobile network operators. The quality of service was monitored and evaluated for MTN Eswatini and Eswatini Mobile using an NMS. The performance of the two mobile telecommunications service providers was monitored and evaluated against Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) set out in the Electronic Communications (Quality of Service) Regulations. Specifically, the Commission in line with ITU-T recommendations and the regulations focused on four network KPIs for all technologies (2G, 3G and 4G/LTE) which are network availability, service accessibility, service retainability and service integrity using the following parameters. Henceforth, the exact KPIs measured and monitored were the following:

- Network availability: Cell availability.
- Service accessibility: Call setup success rate (CSSR), data access success rate (DASR).
- Service retainability: Call drop rate (CDR), data drop rate.
- Service integrity: Average user data throughput.

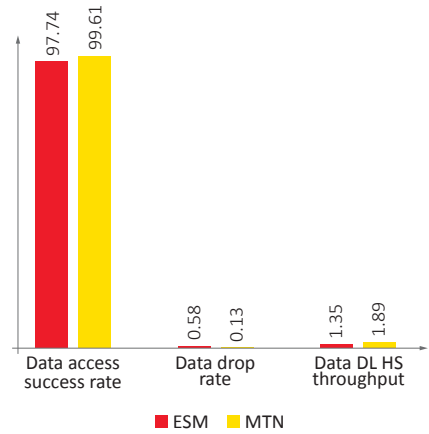
For the reporting period, in all the key performance indicators monitored and evaluated, Eswatini Mobile did not perform well on the accessibility KPIs for all technologies (CSSR, DASR, DSASR) while MTN achieved all the set targets.

The following illustrations are results obtained for the reporting period for the two mobile network operators, Eswatini Mobile and MTN Eswatini. Additionally, a comparison is drawn for their service performances for all technologies.

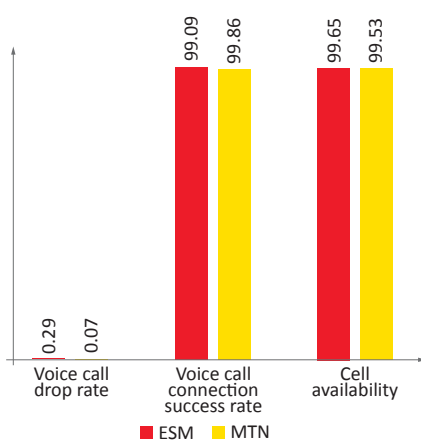
2G Voice KPIs



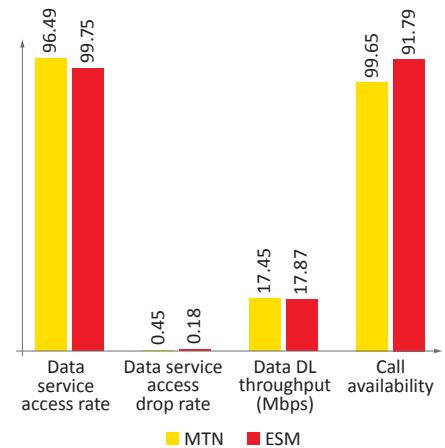
3G Data KPIs

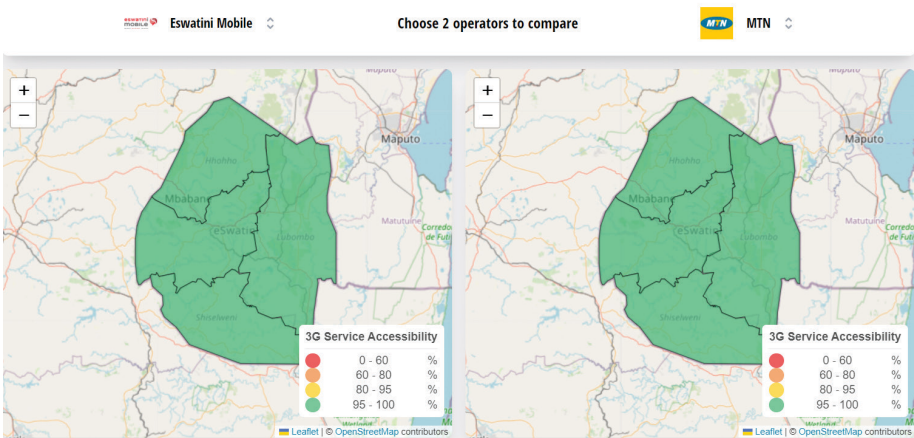


3G Voice KPIs



4G/LTE KPIs





Screenshot of the RPM portal the Commission uses to monitor QoS Key Performance Indicators of mobile operators.

Drive test exercise

The Commission also embarked on an independent drive test exercise to try and complement the Network Management System to measure the quality of service and experience provided by mobile operators to their customers to assess the quality of service for voice and data in terms of the benchmarks as specified in the Electronic Communications (Quality of Service) Regulations, 2016 to be carried around the country. The exercise was conducted to cover various locations in Eswatini for routes defined by ESCCOM on the basis of several factors. This was specifically done to carry out an assessment of network performance indicators that cannot be measured and monitored using the automated monitoring system. These include: network coverage strength, voice quality, video streaming delays and latency.

The test results obtained from these drive tests were conducted to assess the network condition more specifically in terms of:

Voice KPIs

- Coverage signal strength
- Call set up success rate
- Blocked calls
- Call drop rate
- Mean opinion score (MOS)

Data KPIs

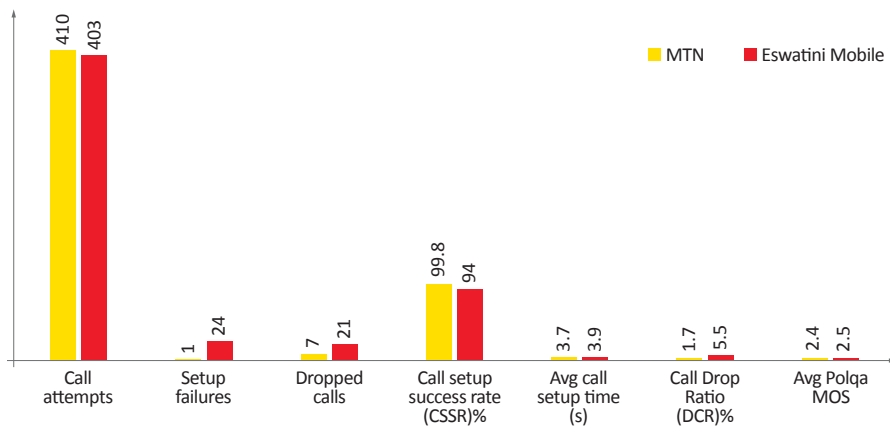
- Average throughput (downlink/uplink)
- Session success rate
- Webpage download time
- Video streaming delay
- Latency

The following are the overall performance results of the drive test exercise:

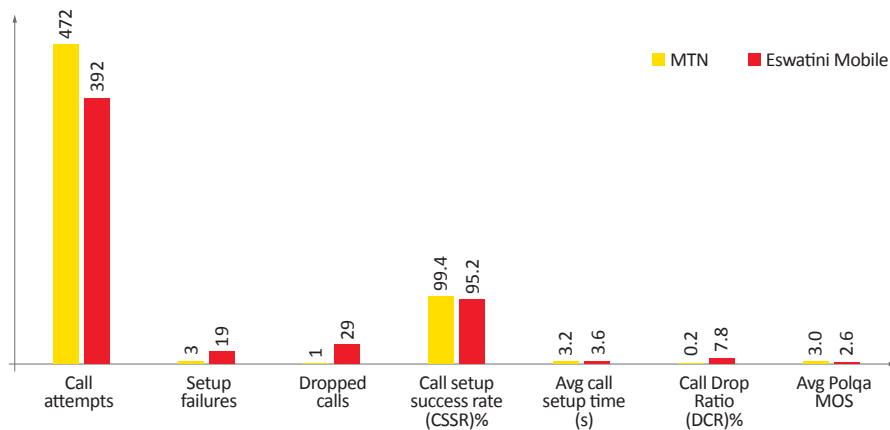


Overall voice performance

2G Voice performance

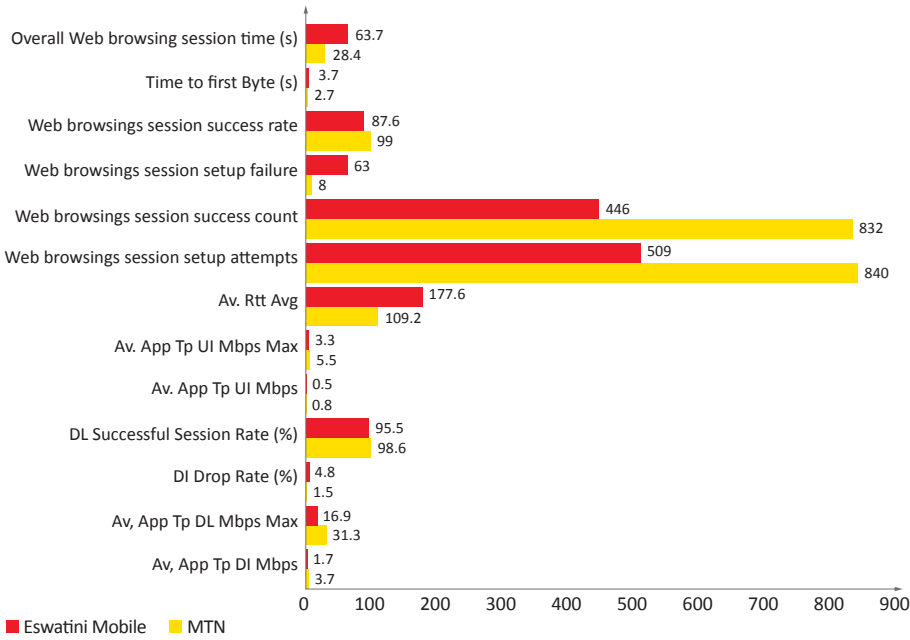


3G Voice Performance

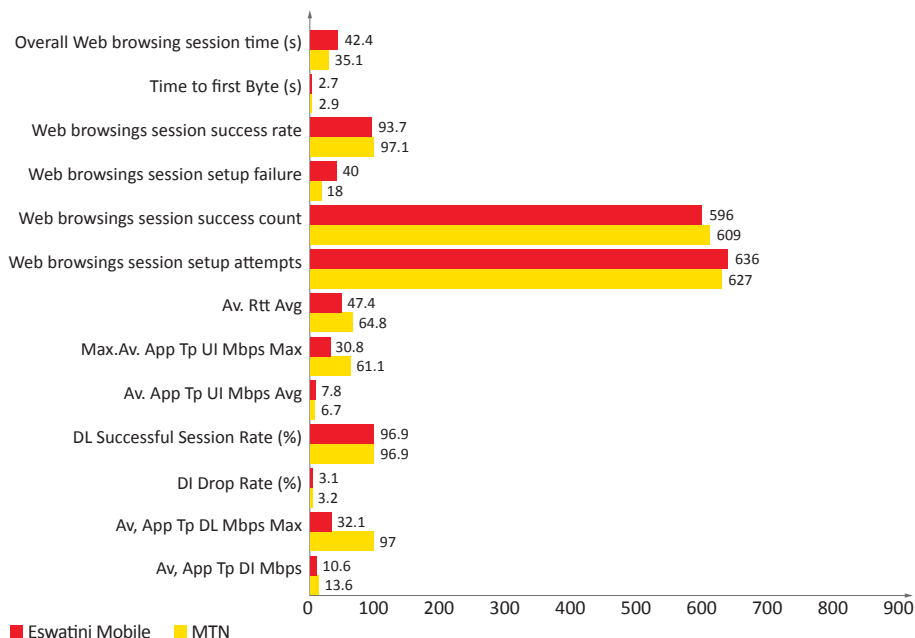


Overall data performance

3G Mobile Data



4G Mobile Data



MTN Eswatini has relatively stable nationwide 3G (WCDMA) coverage as per the tested drive route. Most of the voice call failures on Eswatini Mobile and MTN were due to poor signal coverage.

MTN was the overall best network in the Kingdom of Eswatini for both voice and mobile data, with few instances where Eswatini Mobile could be considered the better network operator.

Implementing carrier aggregation technologies on the LTE network would help improve throughput for both mobile networks.

ii. Fixed telecommunications service providers (EPTC)

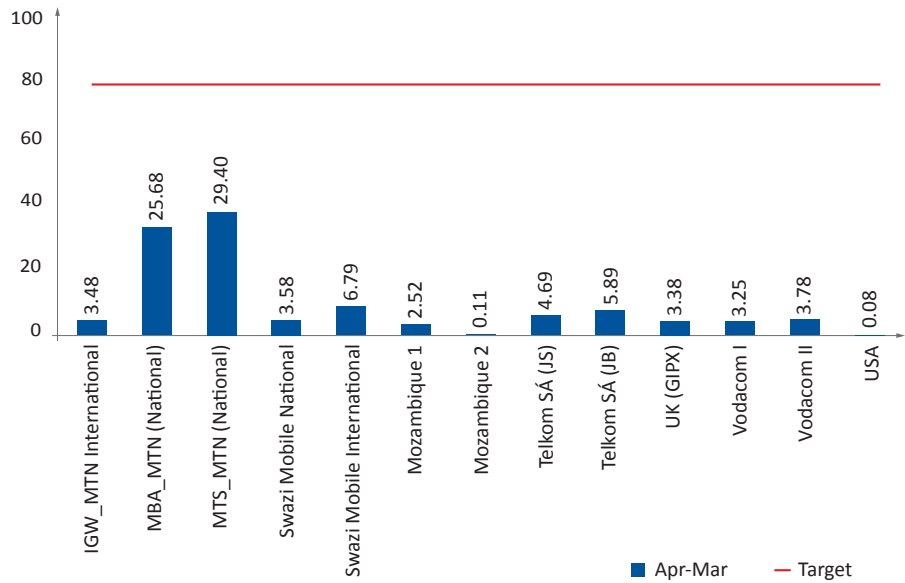
Additionally, during the reporting period the Commission monitored the quality of service

offered by the fixed line operator Eswatini Posts and Telecommunications Corporation (EPTC). In line with the Quality of Service Regulations, 2016 the following performance indicators were monitored:

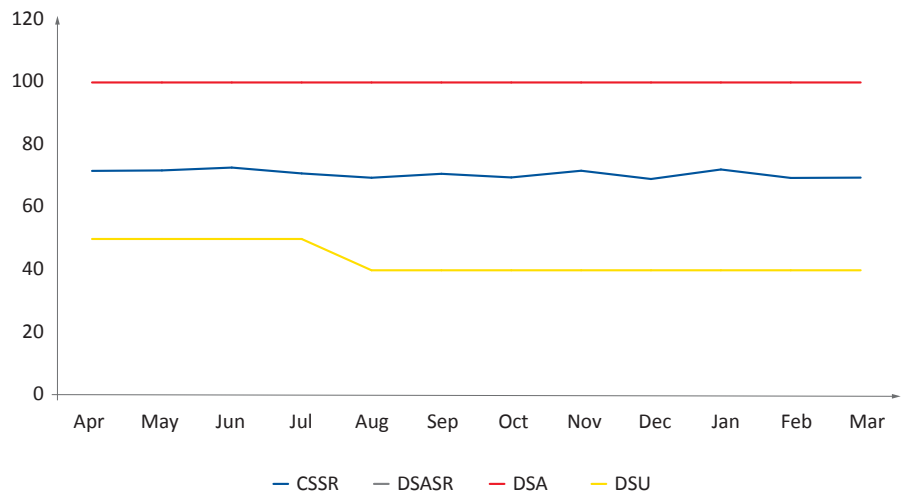
- Interconnection route utilisation
- Call connection success rate (CCSR)
- Data service availability (DSA)
- Data service utilisation (DSU)
- Data service access success rate (DSASR)


The illustrations on page 50 are results obtained for the reporting period:

Interconnection Route Utilisation



EPTC QoS KPIs





In general, EPTC complied with the set targets for data service access success rate (DSASR), data service utilisation (DSU), and data service availability (DSA). However, the operator did not achieve the set thresholds of the performance indicators on a national level for call connection success rate (CSSR) which consistently failed to meet the threshold level of >99%, for the duration of the year.

The Commission is looking at automating monitoring the QoS of the fixed line operator and other internet service providers.

iii. Internet service providers

Random quality of services measurement tests were conducted during the year for a majority of the licensed ISPs. In combination with the quarterly reports submitted by the ISPs, the findings were that:

- A majority of internet service providers (ISPs) do not comply with the minimum data speed rate of ≥ 2 Mbps
- Copper theft on EPTC is affecting the performance of most internet service providers
- In as much as customers are happy with the service they receive from ISPs some were unhappy regarding their fault management processes.

iv. Review of quality of service measurement parameters:

Taking into account the fact that the current QoS measurement parameters were developed in 2016, and the rapid technological changes within the telecommunications sector resulting in improvements in network performances, the Commission in the year under review developed and issued the Quality of Service Measuring Guidelines. The objectives of these Guidelines are to:

- a. Review the current parameters and measurements of mobile and internet service operators in Eswatini;
- b. Introduce new KPI targets for the current measurements;

- c. Introduce new measurements for the existing technologies;
- d. Introduce measurements for the fifth generation (5G) technology;
- e. Protect the interest of consumers of electronic communications services; and
- f. Monitor the quality of experience.

Development and implementation of market development

i. Numbering (short codes) management process

The Commission is also tasked with the responsibility to promote the development of innovative, secure, modern and competitive communications infrastructure and the delivery of related services. This responsibility includes ensuring that electronic communications infrastructure and services are used as a vehicle for socio-economic development, thereby creating opportunities for market growth. This requires extensive engagements and collaborations with different stakeholders drawn from key sectors of the economy, as well as service providers. In this regard, during the 2022/2023 reporting period, the Commission developed guidelines on numbering (short codes) management.

ii. Implement and fully operationalise the .szccTLD

The country code Top Level Domain is amongst the national resources that must be managed fairly in the public interest. It was in terms of Regulation 4(1) of the Electronic Communications Regulations, 2016, that the Eswatini Communications Commission (ESCCOM) established a stakeholder forum composed of all parties with vested interest in the .sz domain name space. The main objective of the regulation is to ensure that the administration and registration of .sz domain name is done in a manner that is transparent, fair, and non-discriminatory to every stakeholder with vested interest in the ccTLD within the country. Following the establishment with the stakeholder known as Alliance Eswatini Domain Name Information Centre (EDNIC), the following activities have been undertaken to operationalise the ccTLD:

TECHNICAL SERVICES continued

- a. Benchmarking activities: In ensuring our ccTLD is set up to align with international best practices, three countries were engaged and consulted on the management of ccTLD. These were Uganda, Namibia and Mauritius.
- b. Contract between EDNIC and registry: a contract between EDNIC and the registry was drafted, pending the finalisation of EDNIC registration, the contract will be finalised.
- c. To effectively manage .sz domain, policies were developed. The policies are Eligibility for registration, dispute resolution, registrar accreditation and Whols/ Privacy and Security.
- d. EDNIC website under development.
- e. EDNIC registration as a not for profit organisation in progress.

iii. National Emergency Communications Plan

In line with the Commission's mandate of ensuring the operation of communications networks and communications services during times of public emergency and ensuring that all communications services are provided in a manner that will best promote economic and social development, the Commission in collaboration with the National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA) and the Ministry of ICT, issued and finalised the National Emergency Communications Plan for the Electronic Communications Sector for implementation. The main objectives of the NECP are:

1. To outline emergency communication mechanisms and the roles and responsibilities of responder agencies.
2. To support the continuity of everyday activity and restoration of disrupted services at the earliest possible opportunity.
3. To recommend the integration of broadband to modernise emergency communications; and address the roles of all stakeholders supporting incident communications.
4. To give focus on the persons, processes, and technology that are critical to efficient emergency communications.
5. To ensure the availability and interoperability of communications to manage emergency response; establish command and control; maintain situational awareness; and function under a common operating communications infrastructure, for a broad range of incidents as defined in the National Disaster Management Act, 2006 or any legal instrument under the Act.

iv. The National Innovation initiative launch

The Eswatini Communication Commission in keeping with its strategic intent as encapsulated in the Strategic Management Plan (2018-2022) and the ESCCOM Act, 2016 is committed to promoting innovation for the sustainability and continuous development of the Eswatini Communications Industry.

Following that, ESCCOM launched an ICT Innovation challenge which was aimed at harnessing Eswatini's formidable multi-disciplinary research and development capabilities to develop practical, impactful solutions to national challenges in areas such as Agriculture, Education, ICT, Climate Change and Health including those brought by the COVID-19 pandemic as well as to foster social and economic development.

v. Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Guideline

The year under review saw the Commission issue the Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Guidelines for the Electronic Communications Industry to amongst other things:

- a. ensure continued availability of electronic communications services within the Kingdom of Eswatini;
- b. supplement the Regulatory Framework for Quality of Service for the ICT Industry in the Kingdom of Eswatini; and
- c. provide specific guidance for regulated entities: to encourage good practices with respect to establishing disaster preparedness/prevention procedures by the licensees and to enable a consistent approach towards disaster recovery planning by the licensees.

vi. National Digital Strategy Development

The Commission in collaboration with the Ministry of ICT undertook an exercise to develop a National Digital Strategy (Digital Eswatini) in the year under review. The strategy's vision is for the country to be "a connected, participatory, innovative, and inclusive digital economy". The strategy has five core goals which the actions across enablers and pillars seek to support. These are:

- To ensure that Eswatini is a kingdom of "smart Liswati";
- To have world-class broadband infrastructure underpinning a vibrant and competitive ICT sector that will stimulate economic development;
- To have a proliferation of localised, relevant, and affordable services, platforms and applications available to the country's "smart Liswati";
- To be a hub for innovation, research and development that advances the digital economy and people's participation in it; and
- To enable the efficient and effective delivery of public services through ICTs.

Pending initiatives

Pending initiatives in the reporting year

The underlisted initiatives are pending in the year under review:

INITIATIVE	STATUS
a. EDNIC registration and full implementation of ccTLD TAC recommendations	EDNIC registration process started, ccTLD administration and management policies drafted, website design underway.
b. Innovation challenge	Challenge launched for submission of entries. Entries to be evaluated for shortlisting of 15 startups to advance to the next and final selection phase.

INITIATIVE	STATUS
c. Numbering (short codes) management	Numbering management consultation paper issued for public comments. Comments consolidated for final issuance of guidelines as a regulatory instrument.
d. National Digital Strategy	Draft strategy in place and internal consultation ongoing for finalisation of the strategy.

BROADCASTING SERVICES

With the responsibility to ensure and promote a vibrant broadcasting sector that provides quality broadcasting services in all available platforms, through international quality standards, stakeholder engagement and ensuring the protection of audiences, the department managed to achieve the following activities:

Development of regulatory frameworks

Broadcasting Services developed the Broadcasting (Content) Guidelines to enhance the Broadcasting Guidelines of 2017 and the Digital Terrestrial Television Broadcasting Guidelines to provide regulatory mechanisms in the absence of the Broadcasting Act, which is still a Bill. Both guidelines were published for stakeholder consultation and later adopted as regulatory instruments for the broadcasting sector.

To guide content classification, Broadcasting Services published the Content Classifications Guidelines for consultation. The Film and Publication Board of South Africa provided input to the draft guidelines, which the Commission later amended. The guidelines are now ready for adoption by the broadcasting sector.

Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT) network assessment

The Commission carried out an assessment of the DTT network and a report with recommendations was subsequently produced. The main objectives of the assessment were to:

- gather information on the status of the DTT facility and identify the challenges that may be of concern to the facility;
- gather information on the challenges that led to the failure of the NMS; and
- to identify possible interventions that may be implemented to remedy the challenges currently experienced in the operation of the DTT facility.

The challenges that were observed included the malfunctioning of critical equipment such as network management system (NMS), electrical standby generators, uninterruptible power supplies, network switches, microwave link equipment and monitoring television screens.

To circumvent a total shutdown of the DTT network, the Commission assisted the Ministry of ICT, the custodian of the DTT network, in purchasing some of the critical equipment through the Universal Service and Access Fund.

Equipment for content development

The Commission is mandated by the Communications Commission Act, 2013 to promote the development of innovative, secure, modern and competitive communications infrastructure and the delivery of related services. In this regard the Commission assisted Eswatini TV and Eswatini Broadcasting and Information Services with the latest production equipment to a total value of 1.5 million Malanganeni to improve local content production.

Capacity building of broadcasting stakeholders

Accordingly, the Communications Commission Act, 2013 empowers the Commission to promote efficient management and human resource development within the communications industry. To this end, the Commission has capacitated broadcast engineers and technicians in frequency

modulation engineering and measurements technics, which has resulted in improved radio transmission quality from the licensed radio broadcasting stations. Radio announcers from all licensed broadcasting service providers were also trained on radio content production, presentation and interview skills.

Broadcasting Management System (BMS)

The BMS is now installed and operational. The objectives of the system are as follows:

- To monitor remotely the quality of service of FM radio, television broadcasting and online broadcasting stations;
- To determine adherence to the technical parameters of FM radio and digital television broadcasting;
- To monitor adherence to content regulations, guidelines and broadcasting codes; and
- To keep logs of deviations or errors generated by FM radio and digital television broadcasting stations and generate the required reports and alerts through SMS and email.

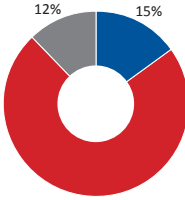
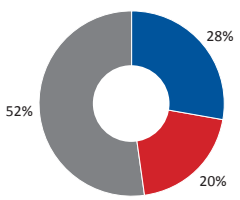
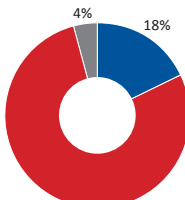
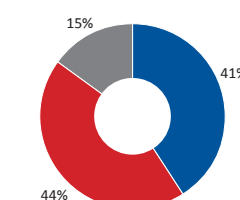
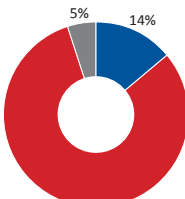
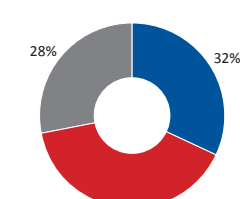
Compliance monitoring system

The Broadcasting Management System (BMS) was successfully installed and configured as stated above. Since completion of the installation the Commission is now able to do live monitoring of all licensed television channels and radio channels, and report on violations observed continuously for 24 hours a day without human intervention to ensure the efficient provision of high-quality broadcasting services to audiences. The monitoring is also accompanied by recording of the same by the system logger. There were upgrades that were carried out on the system to increase storage so that the system could store recorded data for 120 days for both radio and television channels. This is in line with the requirements of the Broadcasting Guidelines which require data to be stored for a minimum of 90 days to allow for investigations into complaints, if any, that could be received by the Commission on broadcasts from licensees. From the system, the Commission is also able to do playbacks of the recorded day and retrieve it if required.

There has also been reports on channel loudness that were retrieved from the system for Eswatini TV and Channel Yemaswati which showed that there are issues with controlling channel loudness by licensees. This is mostly dependent on the

programmes being played where it was noted that there is no consistency in the loudness as some would be below or above the set level of -23 LKFS. Sample results were as shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Sample results on loudness monitoring

DATE	ESWATINI TV	CHANNEL YEMASWATI
05/02/2023	<p>Loudness distribution</p>  <p>12% 15% 73%</p> <p>■ Comply ■ Too loud ■ Too low</p>	<p>Loudness distribution</p>  <p>52% 28% 20%</p> <p>■ Comply ■ Too loud ■ Too low</p>
28/02/2023	<p>Loudness distribution</p>  <p>4% 18% 78%</p> <p>■ Comply ■ Too loud ■ Too low</p>	<p>Loudness distribution</p>  <p>15% 41% 44%</p> <p>■ Comply ■ Too loud ■ Too low</p>
17/03/2023	<p>Loudness distribution</p>  <p>5% 14% 81%</p> <p>■ Comply ■ Too loud ■ Too low</p>	<p>Loudness distribution</p>  <p>28% 32% 40%</p> <p>■ Comply ■ Too loud ■ Too low</p>

The licensees have been engaged to encourage them to closely monitor and control the loudness on their channels. Sanctions have been imposed on Channel Yemaswati for violations that were observed using the BMS.

Drive tests

In accordance with sections 6(c) and (j); section 13(1); section 15(a), (b), (f) and (i); and section 38(1) of the Eswatini Electronic Communications Act, 2013, the Commission carried out drive tests which the purpose was to determine how FM broadcast signals of all licensed FM broadcasters were being used. The parameters that were measured were the loudness, deviation and MPX power. These parameters are supposed to be loudness = -18 LKFS, deviation = maximum $\pm 75\text{kHz}$, and MPX power = 0 dBr (ITU-R BS.412 limit) for all FM signals. Failure to adhere to the set limits is a problem as that distorts the sound quality of the signals and also renders adjacent channels unusable. The findings of these tests showed that:

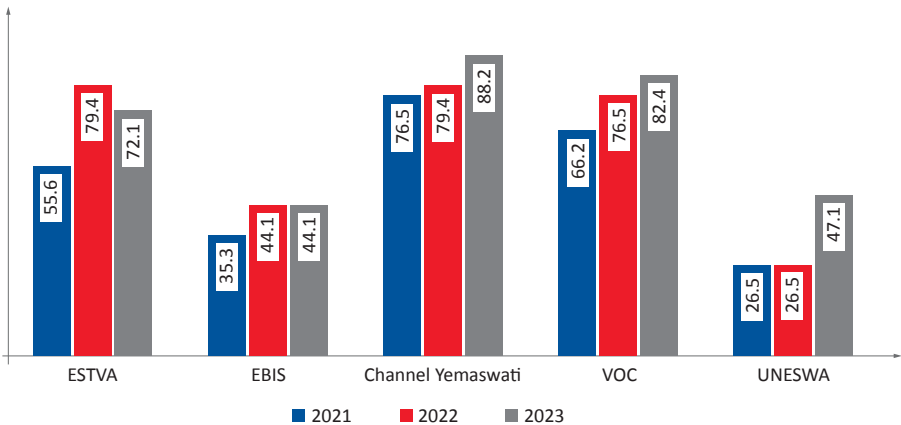
- 1. Most of the tested frequency channels were loud and exceeded the limits.
- 2. Most of the tested frequency channels exceeded the max deviation limits.
 - UNESWA FM, some EBIS and VOC channels were within deviation limits.
- 3. MPX power of most tested frequency channels were below the 0dBr.

Broadcasting service providers' facilities inspections

In a bid to uphold its mandate of ensuring that broadcasters continuously improve the quality of the services they provide to their customers, the Commission conducted regular inspections of the broadcaster's facilities to ascertain that stipulated standards and requirements are met at all times. In the year 2022/2023 the Commission managed to conduct at least three inspections on all licensed broadcasters against a set of requirements including policies, processes and operational-related requirements. From the reports produced after the inspection exercise, it was noted that there was some significant improvement from what was obtained in the previous years. The results of the inspection showed compliance scores ranging from a minimum 47.1% to a maximum of 88.2% which was an improvement from the 2021/2022 scores which ranged between a minimum of 26.5% to a maximum of 79.4%. Though these average scores reflect some improvements it was, however, worrying to note that some broadcasters' scores have dropped which was mostly credited to decline in broadcasting of local content sourced from independent producers. Figure 1 below shows the progress over the past three years.

Figure 1 – Compliance report

Station facilities compliance



Broadcast industry stakeholders engagement

In the year 2022/2023 the Commission had an engagement with EBIS where the broadcaster presented their plans on how they intend to conduct their business going forward and the challenges they face while doing their duties. This meeting also gave EBIS an opportunity to inform the Commission on their new fee structure for the services they provide.

Channel Yemaswati staff members were engaged, and the main purpose of this engagement was to present the Broadcasting (Content) Guidelines and the Broadcasting Code. This was important because the Commission had noted that there were numerous violations of these legislative tools that were being committed by Channel Yemaswati employees. Meetings with ESTVA, UNESWA FM and VOC are still pending.

Content quotas

Section 7 of the Broadcasting (Content) Guidelines, 2022 requires that a minimum of 60% of content for broadcast must be locally produced for public broadcasters and that 70% of the locally produced content must originate from independent producers. Commercial licensed broadcasters are obligated to broadcast a minimum of 30% local content and ensure that 40% of the local content is produced by independent producers.

- An analysis of the programme schedule submitted by Eswatini Television (ESTVA) between October and December 2022 indicates that ESTVA meets and exceeds the minimum local content quarter with an average of 71% local content attainment – Fig. 2. However, ESTVA still falls short of the minimum 70% of local content that should be produced by independent producers as currently about 81.2% of the local content is produced by ESTVA and only 18.8% produced by independent producers, as shown in Fig. 3. This shows an even further decline in the content from independent producers as it was

26% last year. ESTVA stated that they have terminated most of the agreements they had with local independent producers because they lack the funds to pay the independent producers for their content.

- On the other hand, Channel Yemaswati still meets and exceeds the 30% local content requirement as they currently sit at 91.5% local content and only 8.5% international content. Unfortunately, Channel Yemaswati also fails to meet the 40% requirement of content from independent producers as currently about 81% of the local content is produced by Channel Yemaswati with only about 19% from independent producers. This is a decline from 72.7% of station productions and 27.3% by independent productions from last year. Similarly, Channel Yemaswati cited financial constraints to be the reason behind the decline as they can no longer afford to buy content from local independent producers as they did before.

Figure 2 – Local content vs international content – ESTVA

Local and International content (%)

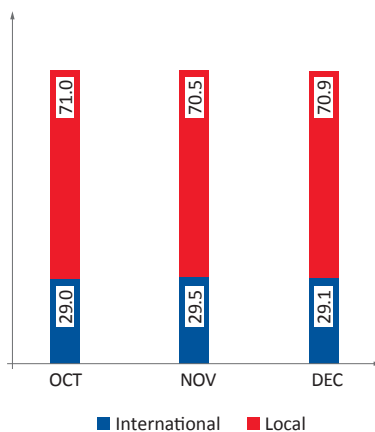


Figure 3 – Local content by independent producers vs local content by ETVA

Local production by source (%)

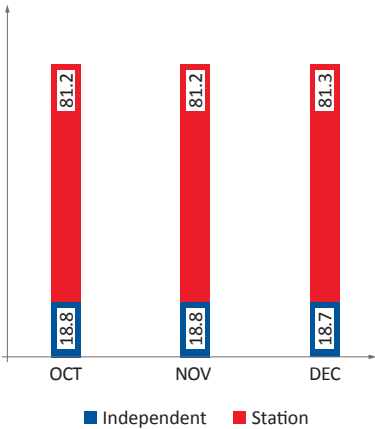


Figure 4 – Local content vs international – Channel Yemaswati

Local and International content (%)

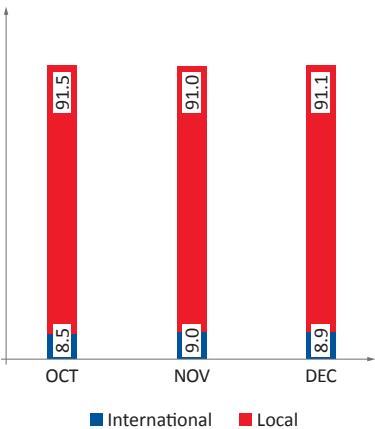
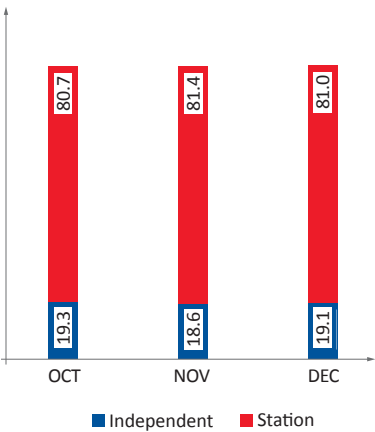


Figure 5 – Local content by independent producers vs local content by Channel Yemaswati

Local production by source (%)



Construction of Commission's offices

The main building contract is ongoing, with the contractor given possession of the site on 13 January 2022. The tender price for this phase was E188 782 910.92 (One Hundred and Eighty-Eight Million Seven Hundred and Eighty-Two Thousand Nine Hundred and Ten Emalangeni and Ninety-Two cents only). The project's practical completion date was revised to 31 May 2023 from 23 May 2023.

The project has run 423 days of the 504 days construction period, in relation to the revised contractual dates. This reflects an 84% run into the construction period. Construction works are at 62% completion, while financial progress is at 55%. The contractor is 22% behind schedule.

Training

The Broadcast Specialist and Manager of Broadcasting Services received Frequency Modulation Engineering and Measurement Technics training. The Broadcast Specialist was further capacitated in management studies for middle managers and Digital Video Broadcasting T2 standard fundamentals.

POSTAL SERVICES

Like the rest of the global economy, the postal sector is facing unprecedented change as the decades-long trends of liberalisation and digitalisation continue to transform the world. As a result, there has been a trend of decreasing letter-post flows, which has been ongoing for some time. This trend has been driven by the growing popularity of digital communication methods, such as email and messaging apps,

which have reduced the need for physical letters. Additionally, the rise of e-commerce has led to a shift in the types of packages being sent, with more parcels and fewer letters being sent through the postal system.

The Universal Postal Union developed the Integrated Index for Postal Development (2IPD) which provides the most comprehensive view on the current level of postal development for each country relative to the other peers – this is a measure focused on the Post Office in the country. Countries have been classified into 10 postal development levels and four key performance components of postal development are considered: reliability, reach, relevance, and resilience. The best post offices globally are on level 10 and score 100 points. Eswatini was ranked and found to be on level 2 and scored 17.2 /100.

Country	PDL	2IPD Score	Reliability	Reach	Relevance	Resilience
Eswatini	2	17.2	0.0	0.0	1.8	63.9

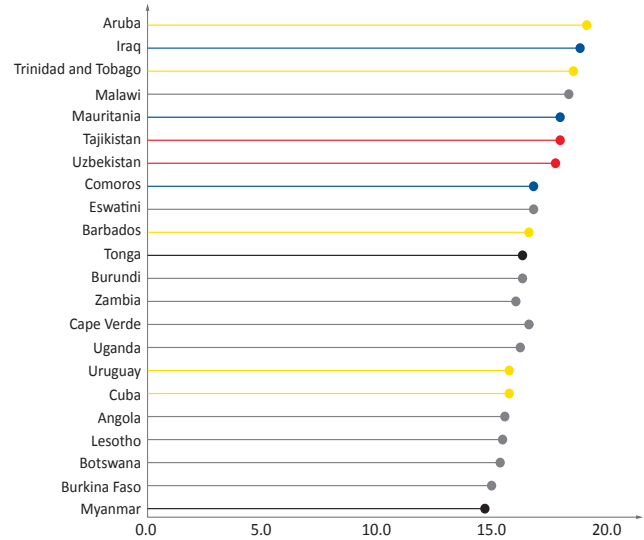
Extracted from 2022 Postal Development Report

Eswatini compared to its peer countries:

Based on the scores, it is indicating that Eswatini is a resilient post office. Resilience assesses the ability of the Post to respond to unfavourable external economic, techno-logical, societal, and environmental shocks, and by so doing, benefit the country's development.

With a score as low as 17.2, Eswatini Post is described as a Post that is more focused on operational objectives. To improve the score, there is a need to undertake substantial service and business model improvements to achieve better postal prospects in the coming decade.

TECHNICAL SERVICES continued



Extracted from 2022 Postal Development Report


This background indicates that the Commission has a significant role to play in the sector's development to make it viable. During the current reporting period, the following activities were carried out and achieved:

Regulation of the postal sector

Following the Postal and Courier Licensing Guidelines 2021 coming into effect and capacity building on this new legal framework in the

past financial year, the Commission began the licensing of postal and courier service providers. Accordingly, in the reporting year, six service providers were licenced which comprised Eswatini Post and Telecommunications Corporation, Interfreight (Pty) Ltd, DHL Eswatini, Fedex Couriers, Eliang Courier Services, and Triton Express Couriers. These service providers were then given a year to work towards meeting the required terms and conditions of their licences.

LICENSEE		TYPE OF SERVICE
1	Eswatini Post and Telecommunications Corporation	Designated National Operator – Domestic postal and courier services
2	Interfreight (PTY) Ltd	Domestic and International courier services
3	DHL Eswatini	Domestic and International courier services
4	Fedex Couriers	Domestic and International courier services
5	Eliang Courier Services	Domestic and International courier services
6	Triton Express Couriers	Domestic and International courier services



However, there is a lot of work to be done regarding the licensing of more courier service providers. In the reporting year, the Commission held several meetings with these service providers to bring them on board.

National addressing and postcode system project

Following the completion of the feasibility study in the previous year, the findings of the assessment were positive. It was concluded that this is a feasible project, promising, and a beneficial national project. The outcomes are envisaged to be valuable national assets that can contribute considerably to the future value of the economy and wellbeing of the country.

The aspects found to be somewhat wanting of improvement, in various degrees, included:

- The development of a national addressing policy and standard.
- House and building identifications are clearly significant concerns.
- Collection and consolidation of all address-related data and the development of the national address database needs to be established.
- Technically skilled resources for database and GIS development may need to be established and installed.
- Securing full cooperation and contributions of data and other information from stakeholders, for this initiative as a national development project. This is being formulated.
- Securing financial resources and contributions.
- Achieving compliance with address standards and achieving certification of the UPU S42 International Standard for Addressing and Postcodes, which can be achieved with the assistance of the UPU expert consultant.

In line with these recommendations, in the year under review, the Commission engaged stakeholders of the project and held a

workshop on the development of a national addressing policy and standard. Furthermore, the Commission started engagements with the Eswatini Standards Authority (ESWASA) to facilitate the development of the national addressing standard. The technical committee members have been proposed and the process is projected to begin in July 2023 and to last approximately six months.

The Commission is desirous to pilot the project in the next financial year once the policy and standard has developed.

Letter writing competition

The 2022 competition focused on the global challenge that has been taking place for a while, however, has become more urgent now – Climate Change. The theme for 2022 was **“write a letter to someone influential explaining why and how they should take action on the climate crisis”**. This theme follows the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of Parties (COP26) summit held in Glasgow in November 2021. This theme aimed to give children and young people a voice on issues of climate change, in which most cases, they are often excluded from such discussions, yet it impacts them negatively. Young people were able to give recommendations for changes they desperately wish to see from their leaders in Eswatini regarding issues of climate change.

A total of 957 entries were received, however, it was observed that as compared to previous years, the entries were less than the previous year. Two main reasons cited by participants, teachers, and parents: they indicated that the competition coincided with the exam schedule in schools and that the topic was found to be a bit difficult, a concept that many were not conversant with. Moreover, similarly to last year, in 2022 very few Siswati entries were received, most of the entries were in English. On a positive note, children with special needs were able to participate in the reporting period.

Competition winners

• Mainstream

	ENGLISH LANGUAGE		SISWATI LANGUAGE	
Group A: 9-12 Years (TOP 3)	1. Sthembile Gumedze	Mhlangatane Nazarene Primary School	1. Ngcebo Future Sihlabela	Gundvwini Primary School
	2. Alice Maziya	Majembeni Primary School	2. Samukelisiwe Simelane	Thembelisha Preparatory School
	3. Thandwelihle Dlamini	Black Mbuluzi Primary School	3. Julio Garcia	Ngwane Practising School
Group B: 13 -18 Years (TOP 3)	1. Khulile Dlamini	Nhlambeni High School	1. Simile Makhubu	St Marks High School
	2. Anele Dlamini	Mlambo High School	2. Nhlabatsi Ndunduzo	Bhunya Usuthu High School
	3. Melusi Dlamini	St Pauls Methodist High School	3. Lisha Lovely	Waterford Kamhlaba (UWC)

• Special needs

	NAME	SCHOOL
Position 1	Shaggo Mohammed	Ekwetsembeni Primary School
Position 2	Favoured Shongwe	St Joseph's Primary School
Position 3	Kwenziwe Nxumalo	St Joseph's Primary School

• Winning schools

NAME OF SCHOOL
Sifundzani Primary School
Sifundzani High School
Bhekinkosi Nazarene Primary School
St Joseph's Primary School

Assessment of Eswatini's e-commerce readiness

Economic patterns are shifting. Digital transformation is reshaping product and factor markets, to a large extent, altering business and work, and bringing change to the global economy. In this 'new global economy', e-commerce retail and digital services have exploded. E-commerce

has, in many countries, proven to be a powerful driver of economic growth, inclusive of trade and job creation.

Regrettably, due to a few associated economic, infrastructural, human, and financial constraints as a result of digital divides, numerous developing countries including Eswatini, are lagging behind in terms of their readiness to engage in and take advantage of the benefits of e-commerce and the digital economy. In view of this, the Ministry of Information, Communications, and Technology (MICT) together with the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Trade (MCIT), in partnership with Eswatini Communications Commission (ESCCOM) and Africa Rise, a European Union (EU) funded facility, launched an **ASSESSMENT OF ESWATINI'S E-COMMERCE READINESS**.



Objective

The objective of the assessment was to provide a comprehensive diagnostic of the country's e-commerce ecosystem, mainly highlighting strengths and weaknesses. The assessment will be centered around five key areas in e-commerce: **Physical Connectivity** (infrastructure ecosystem), **Finance and Payments** (access to finance and e-payments ecosystem), **Governance** (policies, regulations, e-gov, and statistics), **Online Markets** (platforms, trade facilitation, logistics) and **Enterprise** (entrepreneurship, incubators, and accelerators, and skills). The outcomes of the project included a detailed plan of implementation of priority actions, across a range of policy areas. Furthermore, as a baseline, the findings of the assessment are to be used in the development of the National e-commerce Strategy as the next phase of the project.

Beneficiaries

The immediate beneficiaries of the project are policymakers responsible for formulating, implementing, and supporting e-commerce for development and related trade policies and

regulations (e.g., ICT, consumer protection, cybersecurity, data protection, financial inclusion policies, etc.). The long-term beneficiaries are those to which e-commerce policies and strategies are aimed (i.e. individuals, households, MSMEs and entrepreneurs, including particular interest groups such as youth, people living with disabilities and women entrepreneurs), as well as stakeholders from business groups, the academia and civil society organisations.

Activities

At the end of the reporting year, stakeholder consultations, online surveys, and data analysis had been completed. The drafting and validation of the report for the project will take place in the next financial year. Following this, the report will be publicised and shared with stakeholders.

In the next financial year, the focus will be on the development of a national e-commerce strategy and implementing recommendations from the assessment report.



CHALLENGES

While the Commission managed to realise achievements in operational activities over the year, there were some significant challenges that resulted in limited progress in some areas. These include the following:

- **sz ccTLD implementation:** the process for the implementation of the ccTLD TAC Report Recommendations has been relatively slow due to the challenges in registration of the Non-for-profit entity to manage and administrate the ccTLD. The main challenge has been the ownership of the entity and its composition in terms of Directors.
- **Licensing of Courier Services Providers:** while the Commission managed to license a number of courier services providers during the year, a significant number remain unlicensed largely as a result of questioning the licensing requirement or for them to be licensed. Engagements with this group of stakeholders and the Courier Services Association will continue in the new year.
- **Non Compliance with regulatory requirements:** the Commission has observed increasing non-compliance by stakeholders, particularly on spectrum usage and equipment type approval processes. This challenge has been compounded by weak internal enforcement and inspection mechanisms, raising the need for this to be one of the priorities for the coming year.
- **Limited participation by industry stakeholders in consultative processes:** the development and establishment of an enabling regulatory environment can truly be realised through the active participation of industry stakeholders. The Commission has observed that over the years, only a very few stakeholders participate and contribute to consultative processes, particularly in the development of decisions, directives and guidelines, resulting in limited understanding of regulatory instruments and frameworks in place. While this can be attributed to a number of factors, the Commission has for now identified the challenge to be related to capacity with some of the stakeholders and will be addressed in the coming year.
- **Operational challenges within the broadcasting sector:** the broadcasting sector has been generally underperforming for a couple of years, including in financial terms. This has resulted in limited resources for the Commission to effectively carry out its regulatory and development responsibilities in the sector.



FUTURE OUTLOOK

Telecommunications:

The proliferation of emerging technologies like AI, IoT and eCommerce in the local market is an encouraged disruption in the ICT sector in the country. This is testament to the urgent need for the local market to fully embrace digital transformation in order to harness the full benefits of using technology to deliver efficient services to end users. Henceforth, the key focus areas for the Commission in the next financial year is to deliver on initiatives that will ensure service providers adopt and adapt these technologies to deliver quality, secure and resilient services to keep up with the demand for digital services as part of basic utilities anywhere, anytime.

The Commission will have to prepare itself to ensure that the regulatory environment is conducive for players in the sector to provide and harness the innovations brought by emerging technologies in the industry. This will include collaborating on a drive with industry to foster innovative practices as a way of service. This will ensure that there is availability of locally developed solutions in the market.

Additionally, the Commission will be looking at ensuring that compliance to laid down regulatory instruments is enforced and adhered to promote quality and effective delivery of services to consumers. This talks to ensuring the country is not a technology dumpsite for electronic equipment and devices, quality of service standards are upheld or ameliorated amongst other things.

The Commission will further prepare itself for ushering the country to best practices in technology adoption, standards uptake, etc. This will include promoting 5G trials, paving the way for sunseting of 2G/3G technologies, adoption of IPv6 amongst other things, promoting investments in infrastructure amongst other things. The Commission will further strengthen its research capabilities by using data mining and digital transformation techniques to come up with decisions and recommendations that are data supported and substantiated using systems in place.

In addition, the following activities will be carried out:

- Enforcement of applicable legislative and regulatory instruments;

- Ensuring the protection of consumers through enforcement of quality of service regulations, equipment type approval among others;
- Efficient management of scarce resources, including radio frequency spectrum and numbers; and
- Development and implementation of programmes and initiatives aimed at ensuring further development of the sector.

Broadcasting:

Similarly, the broadcasting sector is experiencing (and will continue to do so) seismic shifts as a result of technology convergence, changing consumer demands and the realities brought about by the emergence of OTTs and video on demand services. This will require that the Commission focuses on activities that will bring about appropriate responses to these developments, including:

- Development and Implementation of a plan for operationalisation of the Broadcasting Act;
- Provide support for the development of a comprehensive broadcasting policy framework;
- Carry out capacity building for broadcasting Stakeholders on Broadcasting regulatory instruments and related issues;
- Development of Universal Access regulations for Broadcasting Services;
- Carry out monitoring and enforcement activities;
- Consultation with broadcasting Stakeholders; and
- Monitoring and reporting on the Construction of ESCCOM Headquarters.

Postal Services:

In the coming year, the Commission will continue to focus and prioritise activities and programmes aimed at transforming the postal and courier sector, putting in place necessary infrastructure and frameworks as well as continuous regulation and supervision, including the following:

- Development of a comprehensive sector policy, and relevant regulatory frameworks;
- Enforcement of applicable legislative and regulatory frameworks;
- Quality of Service Monitoring;
- Coordination of the National Addressing project; and
- Development of the National E-Commerce Strategy.

LEGAL AND COMPLIANCE

ESCCOM BOARD ADMINISTRATION

The ESCCOM Board is established in terms of Section 9 of the Eswatini Communications Commission Act, 2013 ("ESCCOM Act"), as the governing body. The Board consists of seven (7) members appointed in terms of Section 6 of the Public Enterprises (Control and Monitoring) Act, 1989. The Chief Executive also forms part of the Board as an ex-officio member.

Composition of the Board

The Board consists of the following members:

Name of Board member	Date of appointment
Sibongile Ndlela-Simelane – Chairperson	17 August 2022
John Mathwasa	Re-appointed on 1 April 2023
Bongiwe Dlamini	Re-appointed on 1 April 2023
Bheki Ndzinisa	Re-appointed on 1 April 2023
December Mavimbela	17 August 2022
Senzo Hlatshwayo	15 October 2021
Mvilawemphi Dlamini – Chief Executive	Ex-officio member

In carrying out its functions, the Board derives guidance from the ESCCOM Act, and the Board Charter. These documents guide the Board's decision-making processes in ensuring good corporate governance and ensuring that the

Commission in fulfilling its mandate acts in the best interests of the Country and the end-users. The functions of the Board are provided under Section 12 of the ESCCOM Act, which include:

- monitoring the general administration of the Commission;
- examining the management reports of the Commission as presented to the Board by the Chief Executive Officer;
- approving the annual report of the activities of the Commission;
- settling the financial statements for the end of the financial year;
- adopting the budget of the following financial year; and
- deliberating on any other issues as required or as the Minister may direct.

Appointment of Board members

During the reporting year, the Minister appointed Mrs Sibongile Ndlela-Simelane and Mr December Mavimbela to the ESCCOM Board, effective 17 August 2022 replacing Khethiwe Alexander and Mlungisi Dlamini who resigned from the ESCCOM Board of Directors on 16 August 2022.

Re-appointment of Board members

The terms of three (3) Board members; Mr John Mathwasa, Mrs Bongiwe Dlamini and Mr Bheki Ndzinisa expired on 31 March 2023, and these members were subsequently re-appointed to the Board for a further period of three (3) years, effective 1 April 2023.

Board Subcommittees

In terms of Section 19 of the ESCCOM Act, the Board may, for the purpose of performing its functions under the Act, establish subcommittees as the Board considers appropriate. The Board established three (3) Subcommittees that have been assigned different responsibilities, to deliver the Board's mandate more efficiently. The composition of these subcommittees is indicated below:

ICT Subcommittee	Finance and Audit Subcommittee	Human Resources Subcommittee (REMCO)
The Subcommittee advises the Board on regulatory and policy issues and the fulfilment of ESCCOM's mandate as encapsulated in the Act.	The Subcommittee advises the Board on finance and audit issues. It ensures that management creates and maintains effective internal audit and financial controls.	The Subcommittee advises the Board on policy issues relating to the adherence to fair labour and corporate practices concerning employer-employee relationships.
Chairperson: Mr John Mathwasa Members: Mr December Mavimbela Mr Bheki Ndzinisa Mr Senzo Hlatshwayo Mr Mvilawemphi Dlamini	Chairperson: Mr Bheki Ndzinisa Members: Mrs Sibongile Ndlela-Simelane Mr John Mathwasa Mrs Bongiwe Dlamini Mr Mvilawemphi Dlamini	Chairperson: Mrs Bongiwe Dlamini Members: Mrs Sibongile Ndlela-Simelane Mr December Mavimbela Mr Senzo Hlatshwayo Mr Mvilawemphi Dlamini

Review of Board Policy and Board Charter

These two frameworks guide the operations, delegation of authority and decision-making procedure of the Board. The Board Policy and Board Charter were reviewed and approved during the reporting period. The Board was trained on the provisions of the Board Policy.

LICENSING

Grant of Postal and Courier Services Licences

In terms of Section 6(b) of the ESCCOM Act, the Commission regulates and supervises the provision of postal services and electronic

commerce. In line with this mandate, on 1 June 2022 the Commission granted a postal licence to the only post office in the country, **Eswatini Posts & Telecommunications Corporation t/a Eswatini Post** and the following courier service providers:

1. Eswatini Posts and Telecommunications Corporation t/a Phutfumani Couriers;
2. DHL Express Swaziland (Pty) Ltd;
3. Eliang Courier Services (Pty) Ltd;
4. FEDEX Express Swaziland (Pty) Ltd;
5. Interfreight (Pty) Ltd; and
6. Triton Express (Pty) Ltd.

Grant of three (3) General Licences for Electronic Communications Services which do not require the use of Numbering Resources – Internet Service Providers

The Commission is mandated by Sections 7(g) and 38(a) of the Eswatini Communications Commissions Act, 2013 to grant any authorisation for the carrying out of any operation or activity relating to any matter within the remit of the Commission. On 13 October 2022, the Commission in an effort to increase competition in the market which comes with improved quality of service provision and ultimately, lower prices for the consumer, granted three (3) general licences for the provision of internet services, to the following:

- Glimmertech Investments (Pty) Ltd;
- Rodge & Ziks Investments (Pty) Ltd t/a Digital Technologies; and
- Worldwide Communications Corporation (Pty) Ltd.

The additional internet service providers increased the number of internet service providers to 18 in Eswatini.

Renewal of No Remorse Investments (Pty) Ltd t/a Prime Technologies Licence

The Commission granted No Remorse Investments (Pty) Ltd t/a Prime Technologies a General Electronic Communications Licence for the provision of internet services for a period of five (5) years, on 20 September 2016, and the licence expired in 2021. The licence was renewed for a provisional period of one (1) year on 14 February 2023.

COMPLIANCE

Compliance with Regulatory Frameworks

In carrying out its functions, the Commission is required to comply with the following Regulatory Frameworks:

- **The Public Enterprises Unit Act, 1989 (“PEU Act”)** – The Commission complied with the provisions of the PEU Act during the year. All quarterly reports on the operations of the Commission were submitted within the required timeframe as per Section 7(4) of the PEU Act. The report on the Commission’s operations together with a copy of the Annual Audited Accounts by the auditors were submitted to the PEU within the required timeframes as per Section 7(1) of the PEU Act.
- **The Eswatini Public Procurement Act, 2011 (“ESPPRA Act”)** – The Commission complied with the provisions of the ESPPRA Act during the year. All procurement activities were conducted in line with the provisions of the ESPPRA Act, ESPPRA Regulations and processes in place and there were no negative findings against the Commission.
 - o The Commission was involved in matters before the ESPPRA in respect of tenders who were unhappy with the decisions of the Commission in the tendering process. These were successfully dealt with by the Commission’s Legal and Compliance which represented the Commission during hearings.
- The Commission complied with the provisions of the Employment Act 1980, Industrial Relations Act, 2000 (as amended), Revenue Authority Act, 2008, Retirement Funds Act, 2005 and Income Tax Order, 1975, in carrying out its activities, which include employee-employer relations, terms of employment, submission of contributions to the Provident Fund and remittance of employee tax deduction to the ERS.



MONITORING COMPLIANCE

Compliance audits

In line with the provisions of Section 7(h) of the ESCCOM Act, the Commission is mandated to monitor authorisation conditions. The Commission conducted compliance audits on licensees, to assess the level of compliance with their licence terms and conditions and all applicable legislations. The audit areas examined during the period included, but not limited to, commencement of business, provision of licensed services, performance reporting (submission of quarterly reports), submission of annual audited financial statements, the payment of fees, changes in the information in the licence and/or change in shareholding.

The results of the compliance audits were that some licensees were not complying with some of the licence terms and conditions, due to a general lack of understanding and knowledge regarding their obligations under the ESCCOM Act, Electronic Communications Act, Regulations and licence terms and conditions. The Commission continually engages licensees on their level of compliance and provides clarity on the provision of the legislations and licence terms and conditions, with enforcement action to be taken against persistent non-compliant licensees, to ensure overall compliance.

DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF CONDUCIVE POLICY, LEGAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS

- In terms of Section 7(a) of the ESCCOM Act and as part of its primary functions, the Commission is mandated to advise the Government on policy and legislative measures in respect of the provision and operation of communications network

and communications services, including radio and television broadcasts, postal services, electronic commerce and data protection in electronic communications. The Commission contributed and provided support to the Ministry in the promulgation of the Broadcasting Act, 2023. To this end, the Commission facilitated workshops and provided insight into concerns raised by both Houses of Parliament and the public at large.

- The Commission further drafted the Postal and Courier Services Guidelines.
- The Commission participated in the review of the Human Settlements Act, Competition Commission Act, National Payments and Settlements Guidelines and the Commission's Board Charter.

ESTABLISHMENT OF FRAMEWORKS TO STRENGTHEN PARTNERSHIPS AND ESTABLISH NEW PARTNERSHIPS, ESPECIALLY ON EMERGING ISSUES AND AREAS IN THE COMMUNICATIONS SECTOR

- In the period under review, the Commission concluded a Memorandum of Understanding with the Film and Publications Board of South Africa. This partnership will ensure that the Commission can draw from the expertise of the Film and Publications Board and leverage these in the broadcasting sector under the newly promulgated Act.
- The Commission further renewed the existing MoU with the Competition Commission to leverage the competition regulation expertise of the Competition Commission. This is to ensure that the Commission regulates competition matters accordingly and has visibility of the economy-wide competition issues.

- The Commission concluded an MoU with the Central Statistics Office for purposes of enabling verified statistics which the Commission is enjoined to provide. The Commission is enjoined to provide statistics to international organisations like CRASA, ITU, for example on how the country is performing. To ensure these statistics are accurate and verifiable, the Statistics Office will assist in the collection and analysis of data.
- The Commission further concluded a Memorandum of Understanding with its counterpart, INCM from Mozambique. This partnership will assist the Commission in resolving interferences in respect of frequency spectrum and to also coordinate the spillover of broadcasts from each country into the territory of the other country to acceptable levels.

PARTICIPATION AND REPRESENTATION IN INTERNATIONAL/REGIONAL FORA

The Commission, as Chair of the Legal and Policy Standing Committee of CRASA, participated meaningfully in meetings of the Committee and further delivered the Committee's report at the CRASA AGM.



DATA PROTECTION AND CYBERSECURITY



With the increasing dependency on digital solutions, the use of the internet continues to grow in Eswatini. This is great for social and economic development; however, it has seen the rise in cybercrime. Between January 2022 and March 2023, 411 cybercrime cases were reported to the Royal Eswatini Police with an estimated loss of E177,000,00. To address this rise in cybercrime and following the promulgation of the Computer Crime and Cybercrime Act in March 2022, for this reporting period the Commission set up the Cybersecurity Office and focused on stakeholder engagement, cyber risk monitoring, capacity building, and raising cybersecurity awareness.

The key focus areas that generated a lot of activities with regards to fulfilling the national cybersecurity mandate which were undertaken for this period include the following:

INSTITUTIONAL SET UP OF CYBERSECURITY OFFICE

The Commission attended a benchmarking visit on Data Protection and Cybersecurity in September 2022. The purpose of the benchmarking exercise was to gain a better understanding of how the Republic of Mauritius operationalised their Cybersecurity and Data Protection Frameworks, learn how the two functions were set up operationally, understand the key functional areas critical for dealing with the mandates, understand lessons learnt over the years, and supporting legal frameworks and how sustainability of the offices is maintained so as to set up the correct organisational structure.

The Cybersecurity Office within the Commission became operational in December 2022.

CYBERSECURITY AWARENESS RAISING

National Cybersecurity Awareness Month

In partnership with other stakeholders, the Commission hosted the annual Cybersecurity Awareness Campaign with the theme “A Secure Cyberspace for All, #BeCyberSmart” in November. The objectives of the campaign were to amongst other things:

- Increase awareness on responsibility of cybersecurity amongst different stakeholders where the campaign launched the National Cybersecurity Strategy 2022/27;
- Increase and reinforce awareness of cybersecurity, including the risks and threats affecting organisations by promoting the importance of including cybersecurity as a work culture. Various organisations were trained on the importance of adopting a cyber secure work culture.
- Increase and reinforce awareness on the effects of cyber bullying as well as responsible online behaviour amongst the youth where the campaign visited four primary schools, including St Marks, Malkerns Valley, Mpaka Railway and Our Lady of Sorrows.
- Increase and strengthen the cyber workforce through capacity building – a free online cybersecurity certified course was offered to the public and Government Communications Department was trained on Cybersecurity Awareness.

Mobile Wallet Awareness Campaign

In response to the increased fraud on mobile wallets, the Commission in partnership with the Eswatini Mobile and MTN, ran a month-long awareness campaign with the objective to increase awareness on the modus operandi of scammers and build trust in the use of mobile wallets.

Cybersecurity Awareness Campaign for the Elderly and Vulnerable Groups

In partnership with the DPM’s office, the Commission visited Tinkhundla where the elderly and vulnerable groups were trained on how to use their mobile devices safely and securely.

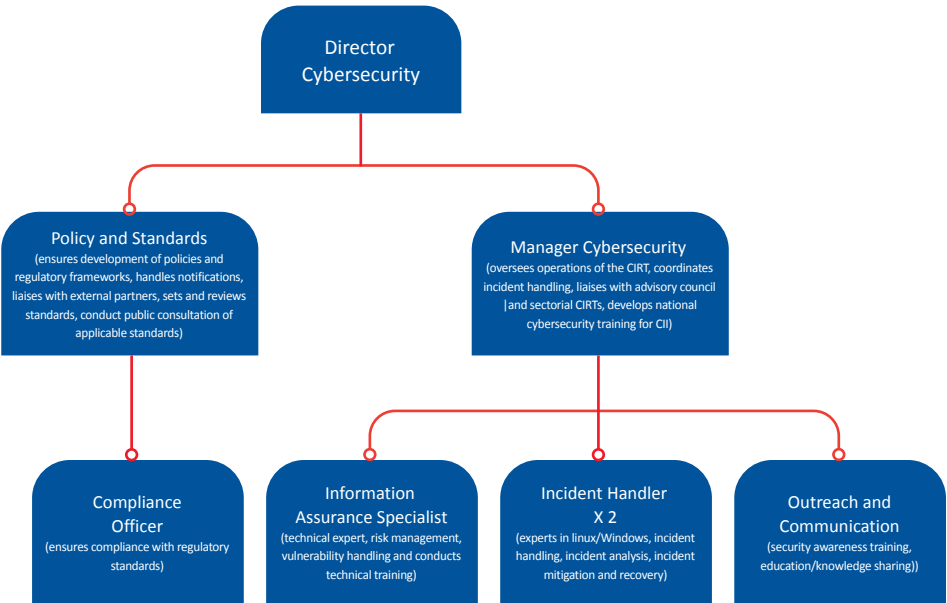
Cyber risk monitoring

The Commission extended the use of the Cyber Risk Monitoring Tool called Bitsight to 30 companies identified to be key in the economy of Eswatini. These companies were able to view and address their vulnerabilities. This in turn improved the country’s overall cybersecurity posture by 10 points on Bitsight rating.

Capacity building

The Commission hosted a number of capacity building and training sessions to private companies including ESWADE, EPTC and ERS.

In partnership with other stakeholders the Commission hosted a cybercrime prevention workshop for ISPs and also hosted a Digital Security Workshop for Senior Government Officials.



DECEMBER – MARCH 2023

Passing of Data Protection Act 2022

The passing of the Data Protection Act designated ESCCOM as the Data Protection Authority (EDPA) with the mandate to administer and enforce compliance with the Act.

Establishment of the Data Protection Unit

In the exercise of the data protection mandate, the Commission established the Data Protection Unit charged with the responsibility to administer the Act as the EDPA. In light of the establishment of the Unit, a recruitment exercise was conducted, and the Data Protection Manager was recruited to resource the Unit.

Launch of the Data Protection Mandate and Celebration of Data Protection Week 2022

The Commission was introduced to stakeholders in January wherein the Ministry of ICT introduced ESCCOM to stakeholders as the EDPA. This event was aimed to formally launch ESCCOM as the regulator of the data protection sector. During this event the Commission took the opportunity to join the world in the commemoration of International Data Protection Day, which is celebrated every 28 January worldwide to sensitise people about the importance of data protection.

Capacity building for data controllers

During this period the EDPA conducted capacity building sessions with data controllers on the salient aspects of the Act and obligations conferred on data controllers and data processors. The capacity building initiatives are aimed at assisting organisations/controllers to understand the provisions of the Act with the view of fostering compliance. During this period the following organisations were capacitated:

- 1) Eswatini Post and Telecommunications
- 2) Jenny Internet

Breach notifications in terms of Section 17 of the Act

Section 7 of the Act requires data controllers to notify the EDPA in the event they suffer a data breach. During this period the EDPA received one (1) breach notification from one data controller in the health sector. Containment measures were undertaken by the controller and a full report was submitted to the EDPA with measures to be put in place to prevent future occurrences.

Notification on the processing of personal information in terms of Section 46 of Act

In terms of Section 46(1) a data controller shall notify the Commission of the processing of personal information to which the Act applies, and the notification shall contain the following particulars:

- (a) the name and address of the data controller;
- (b) the purpose of the processing;
- (c) a description of the categories of data subjects and of the information or categories of information relating thereto;
- (d) the recipients or categories of recipients to whom the personal information may be supplied;
- (e) planned trans-border flow of personal information; and
- (f) a general description allowing a preliminary assessment of the suitability of the information security measures to be implemented by the data controller to ensure the confidentiality, integrity and availability of the information which is to be processed.

During this period the Commission received one (1) notification from Mukuru Financial Services in terms of the above provision.

SUPPORT SERVICES

HUMAN RESOURCES AND ADMINISTRATION

This year, ESCCOM's Human Resources Report highlights the collective accomplishments in two key areas: creating a climate for employee wellbeing and creating a climate for successful leadership. We are grateful for all the effort, both visible and invisible, that staff put forth every day to move the Commission forward. As a team and as individuals, we remain firm in our commitment to ensuring that all staff feel appreciated, welcomed, and supported in their careers.

Operationalisation of data protection and cybersecurity directorate

Following the promulgation of the Data Protection Act and Cybercrime and Computer Crime Act, certain responsibilities were conferred on the Commission thus extending its mandate. To this end, the Data Protection and Cybersecurity Directorate was established and operationalised in the reporting period.

Career pathways

Employees are generally more engaged when they believe that their employer is concerned about their growth and provides avenues to reach individual career goals while fulfilling the company's mission. At ESCCOM, employees gain support for growth through career development efforts. In the reporting period, the employees featured below have made movement in their career pathways:

Nokuthula Hlophe
IT Engineer



Manager Cybersecurity

Sicelo Simelane
Manager Compliance



Manager Data Protection

Tanya Butler
Manager Human Resources



Director Support Services

Salebona Shongwe
Spectrum Monitoring Officer




Engineer Spectrum Planning and Management

Senzo Mngomezulu
GIT – Spectrum Monitoring



Spectrum Monitoring Officer



Girls in ICT scholarship programme

The International Telecommunications Union (ITU), on which ESCCOM represents Eswatini, has established the Girls in ICT programme which aims to encourage more girls and women to take up careers in ICT and related fields. In response, ESCCOM has aligned with this programme by offering the Girls in ICT scholarship to young girls who have an interest in pursuing an ICT-related career. The initiative aims to close the current gender gap in the participation, decision-making and innovation by women within Eswatini's ICT sector. This programme was launched in the year 2021, where the first ever scholarship recipient was announced. ESCCOM is proud to announce the 2022 recipient of the Girls in ICT Scholarship, **Ms Nokwanele Dlodlu**, who has been accepted to study a Bachelor of Science in Computer Science at the University of Eswatini (UNESWA).

Job evaluation

The Commission undertook a job grading exercise whose main objective was to establish a logical hierarchy of jobs to which a fair and equitable pay structure is attached.

Due to the technical and professional nature of the jobs at ESCCOM, the **Points-based Methodology** was adopted. This methodology takes seven (7) factors that are critical to the effective performance of a job into consideration. The total points value leads to a grading structure. There are three main factors with various aspects included in a matrix for each factor:

- > **Know-how**
 - i. Depth of technical know-how
 - ii. Breath of management/complexity
 - iii. Interpersonal skills
- > **Problem solving**
 - iv. Thinking environment (freedom to think)
 - v. Thinking challenge (complexity)
- > **Accountability**
 - vi. Freedom to act
 - vii. Impact – internal and financial

In the reporting period, the Commission implemented the job evaluation report, which established that ESCCOM offered her employees competitive salaries in relation to the market, and industry. The Commissioning of this exercise was one of the Commission's efforts to ensure a comprehensive Employee Value Proposition.

Rewards and recognition programme

In the reporting period, the Commission launched a platform called ZOHO PEOPLE to enable the efficient management of the Rewards and Recognition Programme, which is aimed at promoting a high-performance culture within the Commission. The platform also introduced an on-the-spot recognition module that enables the Commission to give continuous feedback for good performance. The programme recognised and awarded employees that were seen to be an embodiment of the following award categories:

- > Values Ambassador
- > Team player
- > Leadership
- > Creativity and innovation
- > Positive attitude
- > Excellent customer service
- > Going the extra mile
- > The fixer
- > Sharply dressed
- > Chappie all year round

The objective of the rewards is firstly to recognise and celebrate exceptional performance, where employees feel valued for the contribution they make towards the success of the organisation. And secondly to ensure that employees remain engaged and motivated in the execution of their work. This initiative also seeks to encourage employees of average performance to endeavour for optimum performance.

Leadership development

Managers at ESCCOM take on the leadership role for their respective teams daily, and they understand that all managers ought to be effective leaders. In our efforts to create a climate for successful leadership, the Commission has adopted a Leadership Development Programme to build capacity and bridge identified leadership gaps for efficiency and improved productivity. The following programmes were undertaken in the reporting period:

PROGRAMME	INSTITUTION	ATTENDANCE
Senior Executive Leadership Programme	Harvard Business School	1. Chief Executive
Global Executive Development Programme (GEDP)	GIBS Business School	1. Director Technical Services 2. Chief Financial Officer
Management Development School (MDP)	Stellenbosch Business School	1. Manager Technology and Standards 2. Manager Legal Affairs 3. Procurement Officer 4. Broadcasting Specialist 5. Pricing & Tariff Analyst

EXCO and Management retreat

In the reporting period, ESCCOM hosted its very first EXCO and Managers Retreat, which was facilitated by X-Factored Human Capital. The main aim of setting aside time to engage in an executive retreat was to enable management to adopt a more collaborative approach in leading and directing the affairs of the Commission. Such sessions are valuable for building cohesiveness and establishing respect and appreciation amongst one another. This retreat was one way for EXCO members to explore emerging issues, address concerns, review and clarify roles and responsibilities, set goals and priorities, and to develop and maintain a unified ESCCOM team. Such retreats present opportunities for

focused discussions and strategic thinking about better ways of doing business for the enhancement of employee welfare and creating an enabling environment for operators and the ICT sector at large.

Health and wellbeing

The past few years have emphasised that mental and physical wellbeing are more important than ever. In the reporting period, the Commission facilitated a wide array of health and wellbeing offerings to ensure that employees feel supported throughout all dimensions of wellness. This is also in the Commission’s ongoing efforts to create a conducive working environment. An environment that promotes productivity and efficiency for employees. The following wellness activities were conducted:



Mental health awareness session to address issues around emotional, psychological, and social wellbeing of employees.



On-site screening through mobile clinic, COVID-19 vaccination and booster shots



Coaching and Mentoring Workshop where employees were skilled on the importance of coaching and mentoring in performance management which leads to increased productivity in the workplace.



Staff session themed **celebrating success** as one of management’s promises to ‘be committed to the growth and development of staff’.



Breast Cancer Awareness and Mental Health session.



Financial Literacy session aimed at enlightening employees on how to make informed, effective decisions on their personal finances and how to better manage them.

Capacity building

Employee development

The Commission remains committed to developing employees' knowledge, skills, and abilities for both personal growth and organisational effectiveness through a variety of capacity building initiatives. During the FY 2022/23, the following capacity building initiatives were attended:

WORKSHOPS ATTENDED	NUMBER OF OFFICERS TRAINED
Quarter 1	
Management Development Programme (MDP)	5
TCI, Spectrum Management System, and automated Management System	2
GAAP Guide Income Statement, Finance and Accounting for Liabilities	1
Compliance Management Systems Training	2
Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT) Benchmarking	1
USTTI Spectrum Management Training	1
Quarter 2	
USTTI's Managing Effectively in the Changing Telecommunications Environment Training	1
Understanding Processing Travels, Domestic and International Travelling	1
Achieving World-Class Accounts Payable Masterclass	1
Cybersecurity and Data Protection Benchmarking Exercise	1
Benchmark Exercise – Spectrum Management	1
Quarter 3	
Broadcasting Planning Using Chairplus and DVB-T2 Technology Training	2
Regulator Performance Management System Training	2
Effective Strategies for Working with Multiple Executives for PAs	1
Roles and Responsibilities for Modern Driver/Messenger Workshop	2
PECB Certified Data Protection Training	3
Masterclass in Inventory and Purchasing Management Techniques	1
Public Procurement, Supply Chain & Contracts Management	1
Quarter 4	
Data Sharing Agreement for International Postal Exchanges	2
Managing Multiple Tasks, Priorities and Deadlines	1
Benchmarking Exercise in Broadcasting Services and Signal Distribution	2
Policy and Regulation in the Era of Digitalisation with a focus on Artificial Intelligence	5
Space Economy and International Satellite Regulatory Framework	5

Meetings

The Commission participated both virtually and physically in industry events which take place at three levels:

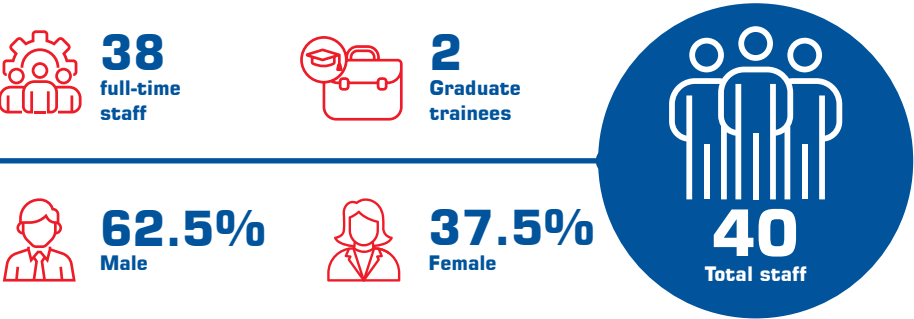
- **Regional:** The Southern African Development Community (SADC), and Communication Regulator for Southern Africa (CRASA).
- **Continental:** African Telecommunications Union (ATU), Pan African Postal Union (PAPU) and African Advanced Level Telecommunications Institute (AFRALTI).
- **International:** International Telecommunications Union (ITU), Universal Postal Union (UPU), and Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation (CTO).

Recruitment

In the reporting period, the respective directorates' recruitment needs were supported by engaging high performing employees to add value to the Commission's workforce. Below are the positions that were filled:

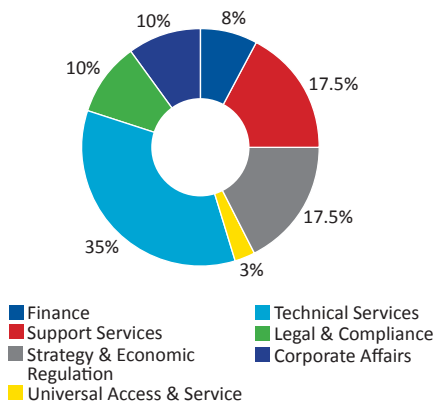
- Manager Cybersecurity
- Manager Data Protection
- Manager Information Technology
- Graduate Trainee – Information Technology
- Graduate Trainee – Spectrum Planning & Management

ESCCOM'S workforce at a glance

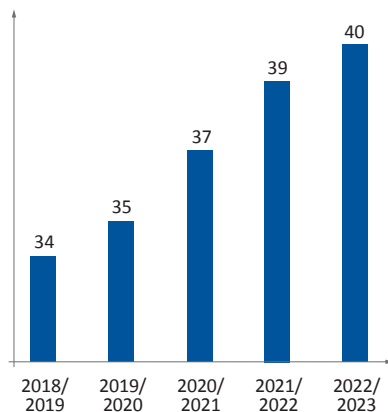


Staff demographics

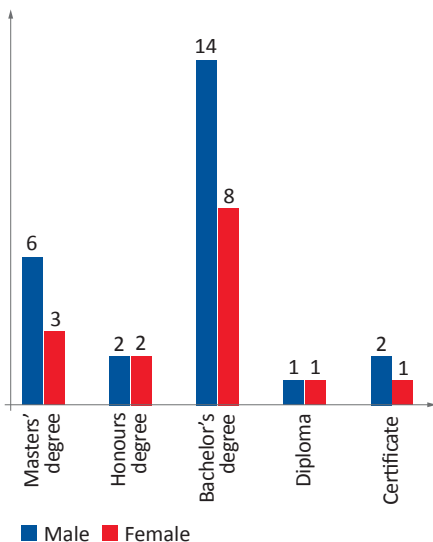
Departmental headcount



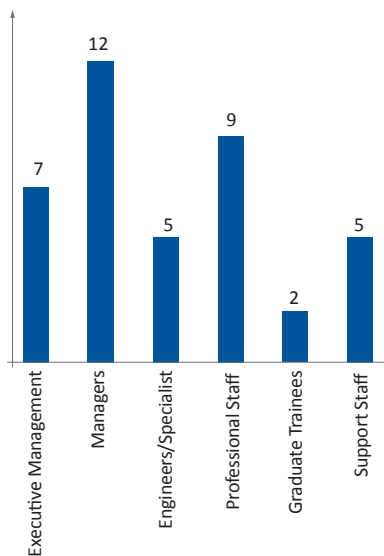
Total employees over last five years



Staff qualification by gender



Employee hierarchical level



Future plans

- Drive Change Management process to support the ESCCOM Digital Transformation journey.
- Completion of the Study on the Human Resource Requirements in the Communications sector and publish report.
- Review of Policies to ensure vibrancy and relevance.
- Adopt new technologies to improve operational efficiency.

PROCUREMENT

To ensure compliance with the Public Procurement Act of 2011, the Commission follows a structured procurement policy when purchasing goods, services or works from external suppliers and strives to achieve value for money whilst balancing cost, quality, and management of risk. The impact of the external global factors continue to affect


the Commission’s supply chain especially on IT-related and electronic goods. The Procurement office has endeavoured to monitor supply chain risk, by procuring goods and services on time allowing for any possible delays. The office has led or supported procurement that have delivered cash savings and non-cash enhancements in service delivery and efficiency.

Tenders issued, approved, or implemented in the year 2022/2023

Eleven (11) tenders were conducted in the reporting period. Out of the eleven, ten (10) tenders were awarded, and the projects are ongoing. One (1) tender was launched through selective tendering on ESPPRA approval, and the rest were issued through open tender. Table 1 shows a summary of tenders issued by the Commission during the financial year 2022/2023.

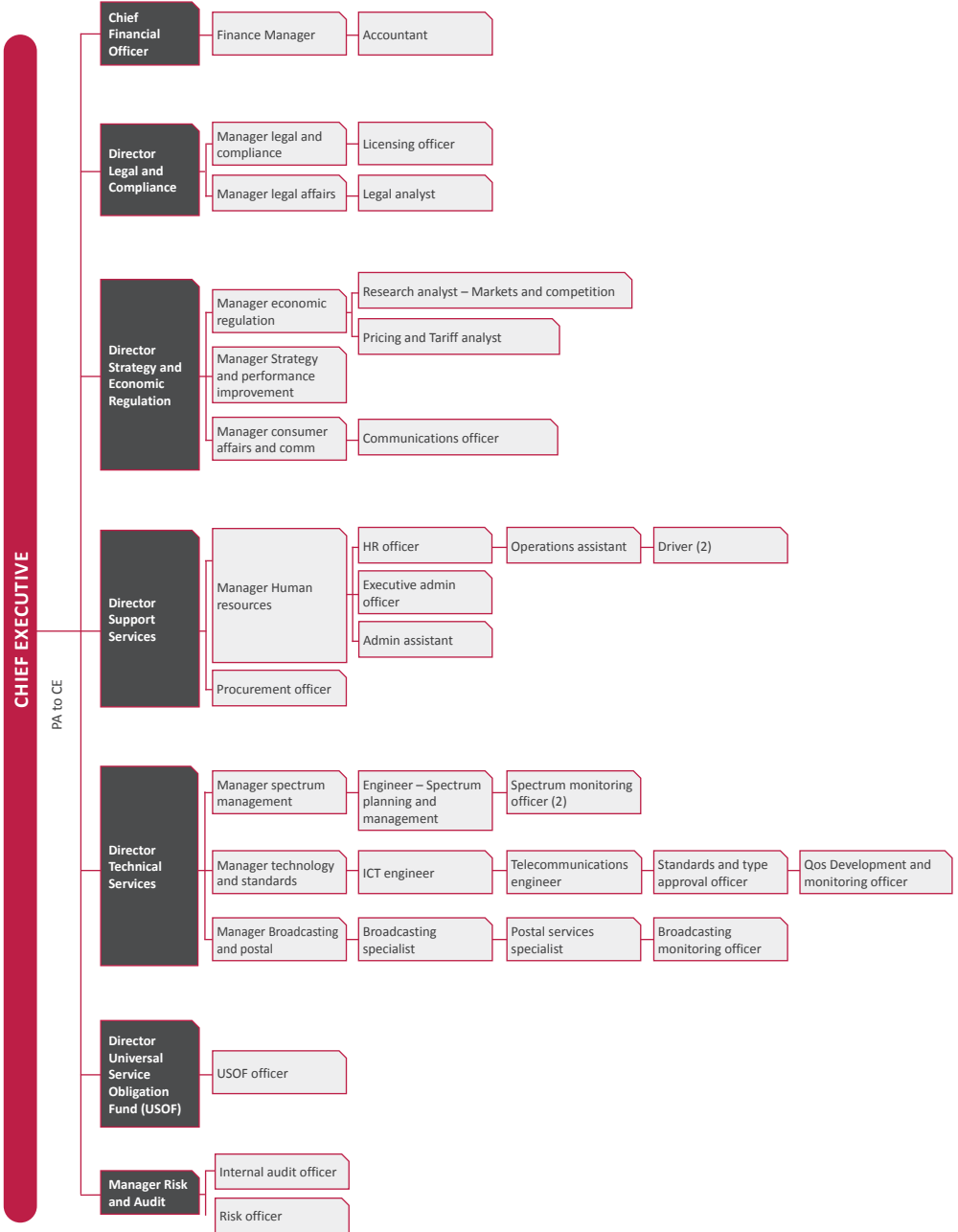
Table 1: Tenders issued in 2022/2023

TENDER NUMBER	TENDER NAME	METHOD	COMMENT
ESCCOM/ UAS/002/2022-2023	Provision of broadband Wi-Fi Hotspots in public strategic areas	Selective tendering	Awarded
ESCCOM/TS/004/2021- 2022/1902HVAC	Heating ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system installation for ESCCOM Head Office development	Open tendering	Awarded
ESCCOM/TS/004/2021- 2022/1902L	Lifts installation for ESCCOM Head Office development	Open tendering	Awarded
ESCCOM/TS/003/2021/ 2022/1902E	Electrical installation for ESCCOM Head Office development	Open tendering	Awarded
ESCCOM/TS/006/2021- 2022	Proposed structural steel work including façade, staircase, parking canopies and walkways for Eswatini Communications Commission (ESCCOM) Head Office development at Ezulwini	Open tendering	Awarded



TENDER NUMBER	TENDER NAME	METHOD	COMMENT
ESCCOM/TS/005/2021-2022	Proposed façade systems comprising: curtain walls, window walls, aluminium sunscreens, glazed canopies and glass balustrading for Eswatini Communications Commission (ESCCOM) Head Office development at Ezulwini	Open tendering	Awarded
ESCCOM/TS/002/2022-2023/1902F	Fire detection and fire suppression system installation for ESCCOM Head Office development	Open tendering	Awarded
ESCCOM/TS/002/2022-2023/1902ISS	Integrated security systems tender	Open tendering	Awarded
1902WIFI	High speed internet access (wi-fi) installation for ESCCOM Head Office development	Open tendering	Awarded
ESCCOM/TS/002/2022-2023/1902AV	Audio visual systems installation for ESCCOM Head Office development	Open tendering	Awarded
ESCCOM/TS/007/2022-2023	Proposed landscaping for ESCCOM Head Office development at Ezulwini	Open tendering	Undergoing evaluation

SUPPORT SERVICES continued





ESCCOM FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended
31 March 2023

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS' RESPONSIBILITY STATEMENT

For the year ended 31 March 2023

The Directors are required in terms of the Eswatini Communications Act 10 of 2013 to maintain adequate accounting records and are responsible for the content and integrity of the financial statements and related financial information included in this report. It is their responsibility to ensure that the annual financial statements fairly present the state of affairs of the Commission as at the end of the financial year and the results of its operations and cash flows for the period then ended, in conformity with International Financial Reporting Standards applicable for Small and Medium Enterprises. The external auditors are engaged to express an independent opinion on the financial statements.

The annual financial statements are prepared in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards applicable for Small and Medium Enterprises and are based upon appropriate accounting policies consistently applied and supported by reasonable and prudent judgments and estimates.

The Directors acknowledge that they are ultimately responsible for the system of internal financial control established by the Commission and place considerable importance on maintaining a strong control environment. To enable the Directors to meet these responsibilities, the Board of Directors sets standards for internal control aimed at reducing the risk of error or loss in a cost-effective manner. The standards include the proper delegation of responsibilities within a clearly defined framework, effective accounting procedures and adequate segregation of duties to ensure an acceptable level of risk. These controls are monitored throughout the Commission and all employees are required to maintain the highest ethical standards in ensuring the Commission's business is conducted in a manner that in all reasonable circumstances is above reproach. The focus of risk management in the Commission is on identifying, assessing, managing and monitoring all known forms of risk across the Commission. While operating risk cannot be fully eliminated, the Commission endeavours to minimise it by ensuring that appropriate infrastructure, controls, systems and ethical behaviour are applied and managed within predetermined procedures and constraints.

The Directors are of the opinion, based on the information and explanations given by management, that the system of internal control provides reasonable assurance that the financial records may be relied on for the preparation of the annual financial statements. However, any system of internal financial control can provide only reasonable, and not absolute, assurance against material misstatement or loss.

The Directors have reviewed the Commission's cash flow forecast for the year to 31 March 2023 and, in the light of this review and the current financial position, they are satisfied that the Commission has or has access to adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future.

The external auditors are responsible for independently reviewing and reporting on the Commission's annual financial statements. The financial statements have been examined by the Commission's external auditors and their report is presented on pages 86 to 87.

The financial statements set out on pages 88 to 106, which have been prepared on the going concern basis, were approved by the Board of Directors on 27 July 2023 and were signed on its behalf by:



Sibongile Ndlela-Simelane

Chairperson

28 July 2023



Mvilawemphi Dlamini

Chief Executive

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT

TO THE DIRECTORS OF ESWATINI COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Eswatini Communications Commission, which comprise the statement of financial position as of 31 March 2023, the statement of comprehensive income, statement of changes in funds and statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies as set out on pages 90 to 104.

In our opinion, the financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Eswatini Communications Commission as at 31 March 2023, and its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards applicable for SMEs, and in the manner required by the Eswatini Communications Commission Act No. 10 of 2013.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with the International Standards on Auditing (ISAs). Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditors Responsibilities for the Audit of the financial Statements* section of our report. We are independent of the Commission in accordance with the International Ethics Standards Board for Accountants' *International Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (including International Independence Standards)* (IESBA Code) together with the ethical requirements that are relevant to audits of financial statements in Eswatini. We have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements and the IESBA code. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Other information

The directors are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the statement of responsibility by the board of directors, the Director's Report, and the detailed income statement which we obtained prior to the audit report date. Other information does not include the financial statements and our auditors' report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and we do not express an audit opinion or any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the annual financial statements, or our knowledge obtained in the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information; we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.

Responsibilities of the Board of Directors for the financial statements

The Commission's directors are responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards applicable for SMEs, and in the manner required by the Eswatini Communications Commission Act No. 10 of 2013, and for such internal control as the directors determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the directors are responsible for assessing the Commission's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management and the directors either intend to liquidate the Commission or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.



AUDITOR'S RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE AUDIT OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatements whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high-level assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with ISAs, we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. We are also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the commission's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the Board of Directors.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the Board of Directors' use of the going concern basis of accounting and based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the commission's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditors' report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditors' report. However, future events or conditions may cause the commission to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements including disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with the Directors regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

SNG Grant Thornton

SNG Grant Thornton

Chartered Accountants (Eswatini)

DIRECTORS' REPORT

For the year ended 31 March 2023

The Directors have pleasure in presenting their report together with the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2023.

REVIEW OF ACTIVITIES

The Eswatini Communication Commission (ESCCOM) is an independent regulatory body established by an Act of Parliament (Eswatini Communications Commission Act 10 of 2013) as part of Government's reform strategy for communications. The Commission is engaged in the business to regulate and supervise functions of all electronic communications, postal, radio and television broadcasting services and operates principally in Eswatini. It is charged with the responsibility for policy, regulation, oversight, professional development and information management and dissemination in the field of electronic communications.

The operating results and state of affairs of the Commission are fully disclosed in the financial statements.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Directors of the Commission during the year were as follows:

Sibongile Ndlela-Simelane	(Appointed 1 August 2022)
Mr Mlungisi Dlamini	Member (Resigned 1 August 2022)
Mr Bheki Ndzinisa	Member
Mrs Bongiwe Dlamini	Member
Mr John Mathwasa	Member
Rev Senzo Hlatshwayo	Member
Ms Khethiwe Alexander	Member (Resigned 30 September 2022)
Mr December Mavimbela	Member (Appointed 1 August 2022)
Mr Mvilawemphi Dlamini	Chief Executive

SECRETARY

The Secretary of the Commission is Mr Ozzie Thakatha.

THE ADDRESS OF THE COMMISSION IS AS FOLLOWS:

Business address	Postal address
4 th floor Sibekelo Building	PO Box 7811
Mbabane Office Park	Mbabane
H100	

BANKERS

Standard Bank Eswatini Limited
Nedbank Eswatini Limited

REGISTRATION NUMBER

Eswatini Communications Act 10 of 2013



INVESTMENT MANAGERS

African Alliance Eswatini
Stanlib Eswatini
Status Capital Building Society
Aluwani Capital Partners
Old Mutual Investment Group (Eswatini) (Pty) Ltd

AUDITORS

SNG Grant Thornton Chartered Accountants (Eswatini)
PO Box 331
Mbabane
Kal Grant Street

GOING CONCERN

The Directors have not identified conditions that would impact on the Commission's ability to continue as a going concern in the foreseeable future. Adequate resources are available for the Commission to carry out its future planned projects.

SUBSEQUENT EVENTS

At the date of finalisation of the financial statements there were no material events that occurred subsequent to the reporting date that required adjustments to the amounts recognised in the financial statements.

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

For the year ended 31 March 2023

Figures in Emalangeni	2023	2022
Income	122 692 437	84 433 893
Other income	16 960 920	14 844 275
Total income	139 653 357	99 278 168
Operating expenses	(102 004 787)	(93 981 518)
Operating surplus	37 648 570	5 296 650
Transfer from designated funds	(26 054 336)	4 452 032
Surplus for the year	11 594 234	9 748 682

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

At 31 March 2023

Figures in Emalangeni	Note(s)	2023	2022
ASSETS			
Non-current assets			
Property, plant and equipment	2	212 301 707	123 091 214
Investments	3	20 000 000	20 000 000
		232 301 707	143 091 214
Current assets			
Accounts receivable	4	193 170 271	164 295 134
Investments	3	86 893 415	120 973 221
Cash and cash equivalents	5	1 823 621	23 822 867
		281 887 307	309 091 222
Total assets		514 189 014	452 182 436
Reserves and fund balances			
Accumulated reserves		88 337 091	76 742 857
Designated funds	6	127 104 455	193 097 825
Capital reserves	7	209 325 194	121 692 292
Capital grant	8	15 203	30 406
		424 781 943	391 563 380
Current liabilities			
Accounts payable	9	85 991 358	57 621 938
Employee benefits	10	3 415 713	2 997 118
Total current liabilities		89 407 071	60 619 056
Total equity and liabilities		514 189 014	452 182 436

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN ACCUMULATED FUNDS

For the year ended 31 March 2023

Figures in Emalangeni	Accumulated Funds
2023	
Balance at 1 April	76 742 857
Changes in equity:	
Surplus for the year	11 594 234
Balance at end of year	88 337 091
2022	
Balance at 1 April	66 994 175
Changes in equity:	
Surplus for the year	9 748 682
Balance at end of year	76 742 857

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

For the year ended 31 March 2023

Figures in Emalangeni	Note(s)	2023	2022
Cash flows from operating activities			
Cash used in operations	11	(60 235 871)	(53 561 047)
Interest received		11 425 167	10 233 721
Interest paid		–	(8 532)
Net cash flows from operating activities		(48 810 704)	(43 335 858)
Cash flows from investing activities			
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	2	(95 520 116)	(45 334 543)
Sale of property and equipment		634 067	603 642
Decrease in investments		34 079 806	939 577
Net cash utilised in investing activities		(60 806 243)	(43 791 324)
Cash flows from financing activities			
Increase in capital reserves		87 632 904	42 697 923
Decrease in capital grant		(15 203)	(15 203)
Net cash from financing activities		87 617 701	42 682 720
Net decrease in cash and equivalents		(21 999 246)	(44 444 462)
Cash at the beginning of the year		23 822 867	68 267 329
Total cash at end of the year	5	1 823 621	23 822 867

SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

For the year ended 31 March 2023

1. REPORTING ENTITY

Eswatini Communications Commission (ESCCOM) is a government parastatal established in terms of the Eswatini Communications Act 10 of 2013 to regulate and supervise functions of all electronic communication, postal, radio and television broadcasting services.

1.1 Basis of preparation

a) Statement of compliance

The financial statements are prepared in accordance with the International Financial Reporting Standards applicable for Small and Medium Enterprises (IFRS for SMEs) and in accordance with the Eswatini Communications Commission Act 10 of 2013.

The financial statements were authorised for issue by the Board of Directors on 27 July 2023.

The following are the principal accounting policies adopted in the preparation of these financial statements as set out below.

b) Basis of measurement

The financial statements have been prepared on the historical cost basis.

c) Functional and presentation currency

These financial statements are presented in Emalangeni, which is the Commission's functional currency. All financial information presented in Emalangeni has been rounded to the nearest Lilangeni unless otherwise indicated.

d) Estimates and judgments

In preparing the financial statements, management is required to make estimates and assumptions that affect the amounts represented in the financial statements and related disclosures. Use of available information and the application of judgment is inherent in the formation of estimates. Actual results in the future could differ from these estimates.

Information about significant areas of estimates and judgment in applying accounting policies that have significant effects on amounts recognised in the financial statements is included in the following notes:

Note 2 – Estimate of useful lives and residual values of property, plant and equipment.

Note 4 – Provision for doubtful debts.

1. REPORTING ENTITY CONTINUED

1.2 Property, plant and equipment

The cost of an item of property, plant and equipment is recognised as an asset when:

- it is probable that future economic benefits associated with the item will flow to the Commission; and
- the cost of the item can be measured reliably.

Property, plant and equipment is initially measured at cost and subsequently at cost less accumulated depreciation and impairment.

Costs include the cash outflow incurred initially to acquire or construct an item of property, plant and equipment and costs incurred subsequently to add to, replace part of, or service it. If a replacement cost is recognised in the carrying amount of an item of property, plant and equipment, the carrying amount of the replaced part is derecognised.

Property, plant and equipment are depreciated on the straight-line basis over their expected useful lives to their estimated residual value. The depreciation charge is recognised in profit and loss in the relevant period.

Property, plant and equipment is carried at cost less accumulated depreciation and any impairment losses.

The useful lives of items of property, plant and equipment have been assessed as follows:

Item	Average useful life
Leasehold improvements	10 years
Furniture and fixtures	10 years
Motor vehicles	5 years
Office equipment	10 years
IT equipment and software	3 years
Quality of service	8 years
Broadcasting management systems	8 years
Spectrum monitoring equipment	15 years

The residual value, useful life and depreciation method of each asset are reviewed at the end of each reporting period. If the expectations differ from previous estimates, the change is accounted for as a change in accounting estimate.

The gain or loss arising from the derecognition of an item of property, plant and equipment is included in profit or loss when the item is derecognised. An item of property, plant and equipment is derecognised on disposal or when no future economic benefits are expected from its use or disposal.

SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES continued

For the year ended 31 March 2023

1. REPORTING ENTITY CONTINUED

1.3 Capital reserves

Capital projects that are carried out to pursue the mandate of the commission are capitalised into a capital reserve account as costs are incurred.

Amounts are amortised in accordance with the useful lives of the capitalised in accordance with the useful lives of the capitalised items and released into the income statement annually.

1.4 Financial instruments

The Commission's financial instruments include cash deposits with financial institutions, trade and other receivables, investments, trade and other payables and government bonds.

Trade and other receivables

Trade receivables are measured at initial recognition at fair value and are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest rate method. Appropriate allowances for estimated irrecoverable amounts are recognised in profit or loss when there is objective evidence that the asset is impaired. Significant financial difficulties of the debtor, probability that the debtor will enter bankruptcy or financial reorganisation, and default or delinquency in payments (more than 90 days overdue) are considered indicators that the trade receivable is impaired. The allowance recognised is measured as the difference between the asset's carrying amount and the present value of estimated future cash flows discounted at the effective interest rate computed at initial recognition.

Trade and other payables

Trade payables are initially measured at fair value, and are subsequently measured at amortised cost, using the effective interest rate method.

Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents comprise cash on hand and demand deposits, and other short term highly liquid investments that are readily convertible to a known amount of cash and are subject to an insignificant risk of changes in value. These are initially and subsequently recorded at fair value.

Investments

Investments are measured initially at their fair values and subsequently, at amortised cost.

1.5 Tax

The Commission is exempt from income tax according to Section 12(1) (a) (iii) read together with Section 2 of the Income Tax Order 1975, as amended.



1. REPORTING ENTITY CONTINUED

1.6 Leases

The Commission rents office space where its business is conducted. This is classified as an operating lease.

Operating lease payments are recognised as an expense on a straight-line basis over the lease term.

1.7 Impairment of assets

The Commission assesses at each end of the reporting period whether there is any indication that an asset may be impaired. If any such indication exists, the Commission estimates the recoverable amount of the asset. If there is any indication that an asset may be impaired, the recoverable amount is estimated for the individual asset. If it is not possible to estimate the recoverable amount of the individual asset, the recoverable amount of the cash generating unit to which the asset belongs is determined.

The recoverable amount of an asset or a cash generating unit is the higher of its fair value less costs to sell and its value in use. If the recoverable amount of an asset is less than its carrying amount, the carrying amount of the asset is reduced to its recoverable amount. That reduction is an impairment loss.

An impairment loss of assets carried at cost less any accumulated depreciation or amortisation is recognised immediately in profit or loss. Any impairment loss of a revalued asset is treated as a revaluation decrease.

1.8 Employee benefits

Short-term employee benefits

The cost of short-term employee benefits, (those payable within 12 months after the service is rendered, such as paid sick leave, bonuses, and non-monetary benefits such as medical care), are recognised in the period in which the service is rendered and are not discounted.

Statutory obligations

The Commission contributes to a statutory fund, Eswatini National Provident Fund (ENPF) in accordance with the Eswatini National Provident Fund Order of 1974. Employer contributions are expensed in the statement of comprehensive income in the period when they are incurred.

Retirement benefits

The Commission provides retirement benefits for its employees through a defined contribution plan managed through its fund. This fund is funded by the Commission and employee contributions. The Commission's contributions are charged to the income statement when they are due and payable.

SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES continued

For the year ended 31 March 2023

1. REPORTING ENTITY CONTINUED

1.9 Revenue

Revenue is recognised when it is probable that the economic benefits associated with the transaction will flow to the Commission and the amounts of revenue can be reliably measured.

The Commission's income consists of annual mobile licence fees, spectrum fees, type approval and renewals which is recognised in the period in which it relates.

Interest income

Interest is recognised, is accrued on a time proportion basis by reference to the principal outstanding and effective interest rate at the reporting period.

1.10 Related parties

The major related parties to the Commission apart from its Directors is the Government of Eswatini through the ministry of information, communications and technology which exercises a significant influence over its financial and operating decisions and Universal Access Service which the Commission oversees and funds from revenue collections.

1.11 Changes in accounting policies and disclosures

Amendments mandatory effective for the year ended 31 March 2023

A number of new standards, amendments to standards and interpretations are effective for annual periods beginning on or after 1 January 2023.

Classification of liabilities as current or non-current – (IAS 1)

Deferred tax related to assets and liabilities arising from a single transaction – (Amendments to IAS 12)*.

** Not applicable to the Commission.*

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended 31 March 2023

2. PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT

	2023			2022		
	Cost/ Valuation	Accumulated depreciation	Carrying value	Cost/ Valuation	Accumulated depreciation	Carrying value
Land	17 187 094	–	17 187 094	17 187 094	–	17 187 094
Plant and machinery	10 067 171	4 589 688	5 477 483	9 214 456	(3 392 378)	5 822 078
Furniture and fixtures	1 157 669	720 545	437 124	1 144 100	(614 765)	529 335
Motor vehicles	4 531 085	2 378 603	2 152 482	4 252 632	(2 382 963)	1 869 669
Office equipment	557 961	250 658	307 303	533 922	(197 615)	336 307
IT equipment & software	4 150 716	3 596 640	554 076	4 011 884	(3 015 593)	996 291
Spectrum monitoring equipment	45 623 368	21 681 505	23 941 863	44 513 847	(18 545 185)	25 968 662
Leasehold improvements	1 197 544	808 183	389 361	1 135 963	(697 028)	438 935
Broadcasting management system	1 930 326	81 174	1 849 152	–	–	–
Assets under construction	160 005 769	–	160 005 769	69 942 843	–	69 942 843
Total	246 408 703	34 106 996	212 301 707	151 936 741	(28 845 527)	123 091 214

Reconciliation of property, plant and equipment – 2023

	Opening balance	Additions	Disposals	Depreciation	Total
Land	17 187 094	–	–	–	17 187 094
Plant and machinery	5 822 078	852 714	–	(1 197 310)	5 477 482
Furniture and fixtures	529 335	13 570	–	(105 780)	437 125
Motor vehicles	1 869 669	1 309 476	(465 000)	(561 663)	2 152 481
Office equipment	336 307	24 039	–	(53 043)	307 303
IT equipment & software	996 291	155 963	–	(598 178)	554 076
Spectrum monitoring equipment	25 968 662	1 109 521	–	(3 136 320)	23 941 863
Leasehold improvements	438 935	61 581	–	(111 155)	389 362
Broadcasting management system	–	1 930 326	–	(81 174)	1 849 152
Assets under construction	69 942 843	90 062 926	–	–	160 005 769
	123 091 214	95 520 116	(465 000)	(5 844 623)	212 301 707

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS continued
For the year ended 31 March 2023

2. PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT CONTINUED

Reconciliation of property, plant and equipment – 2022


	Opening balance	Additions	Disposals	Depreciation	Total
Land	17 187 094	–	–	–	17 187 094
Quality of service	7 019 388	–	–	(1 197 310)	5 822 078
Furniture and fixtures	605 225	124 389	(86 644)	(113 635)	529 335
Motor vehicles	2 885 854	566 555	(700 269)	(882 471)	1 869 669
Office equipment	733 585	–	(301 765)	(95 513)	336 307
IT equipment & software	1 170 908	387 911	–	(562 528)	996 291
Spectrum monitoring equipment	29 084 632	–	–	(3 115 970)	25 968 662
Leasehold improvements	531 890	16 100	–	(109 055)	438 935
Assets under construction	25 703 255	44 239 588	–	–	69 942 843
	84 921 831	45 334 543	(1 088 678)	(6 076 482)	123 091 214

Land is situated on Lot 10 of the office's township, District of Hhohho, Eswatini and measures 3 921 square meters.

Figures in Emalangenzi	2023	2022
3. INVESTMENTS		
Non-current assets		
Government bonds – held to maturity	20 000 000	20 000 000
Current assets		
Government treasury bond – SG06	20 000 000	20 000 000
Stanlib Eswatini – Money market	17 865 555	27 833 518
African Alliance – Lilangeni fund	7 282 295	27 473 716
Status Capital Building Society – Fixed period shares	16 213 186	15 335 988
Status Capital Building Society – Golden savings	9 314 940	–
Aluwani Capital Partners – Money market	–	15 143 829
Old mutual – Income fund	16 217 439	15 186 170
	86 893 415	120 973 221

Investments relate to two government treasury bonds purchased by the Commission as detailed below and other money market funds.

- Bonds SG026 of E20 000 000 earns interest of 9% per annum with a maturity date of August 2023, and
- Bonds SG84 of E20 000 000 earns interest of 9.85% per annum with a maturity date of February 2026.



Figures in Emalangeni	2023	2022
4. ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE		
Trade receivables	196 056 121	167 259 564
Provisional for impairment	(7 175 078)	(6 527 752)
	188 881 043	160 731 812
Prepayments	553 602	2 771 615
Rental deposit	103 685	90 563
Fuel deposit	9 354	29 189
Accrued interest – EPTC	1 052 465	671 955
Other receivables	2 169 174	–
UAS receivable	400 948	–
	193 170 271	164 295 134
5. CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS		
Nedbank Eswatini Limited – Current account	31 466	2 269 725
Nedbank Eswatini Limited – Call account	936 163	20 180 654
Nedbank Eswatini Limited – Set top box	261 727	1 109 322
Standard Bank Eswatini Limited – Current account	583 525	252 544
Standard Bank Eswatini Limited – Call account	10 740	10 622
	1 823 621	23 822 867


Figures in Emalangeni	Opening balance	Received during the year	Utilised during the year	Transferred to capital reserves	Closing balance
6. DESIGNATED FUNDS					
Reconciliation – 2023 Details					
Licensing fees	193 097 825	122 692 437	(96 638 101)	(92 047 706)	127 104 455
Reconciliation – 2022 Details					
Licensing fees	244 561 060	84 433 893	(88 885 925)	(47 011 203)	193 097 825

The designated funds represent licence fees earmarked for future projects of the Commission. Cost incurred on such projects are subsequently transferred to capital reserves as explained in note 8 below.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS continued
For the year ended 31 March 2023

Figures in Emalangeni	2023	2022
7. CAPITAL RESERVES		
Opening balance	121 692 292	78 994 368
Transfers during the year	92 047 706	47 011 203
Amortised into income statement	(4 414 804)	(4 313 279)
	209 325 194	121 692 292
8. CAPITAL GRANT		
Opening balance	30 406	45 609
Realised in the income statement	(15 203)	(15 203)
	15 203	30 406
Capital grant received represent a grant in a form of depreciable fixed assets which were bought by government to help set up the Commission. The grant is recognised in the income statement on a straight-line basis over the useful life of the assets.		
9. ACCOUNTS PAYABLE		
Trade payables	1 999 214	3 910 776
Amounts held on behalf of third parties	253 060	1 109 322
Accrued expenses	51 073 007	25 783 438
VAT payable	32 666 077	26 818 402
	85 991 358	57 621 938

Figures in Emalangeni	Opening balance	Additions	Utilised during the year	Closing balance
10. EMPLOYEE BENEFITS				
2023				
Bonus and 13th cheque Provision	2 297 954	2 484 648	(2 314 764)	2 467 838
Provision for leave pay	699 164	1 504 361	(1 255 650)	947 875
	2 997 118	3 989 009	(3 570 414)	3 415 713



Figures in Emalangeni	Opening balance	Additions	Utilised during the year	Closing balance
2022				
Bonuses and 13th cheque	2 125 347	2 260 735	(2 088 128)	2 297 954
Leave days	–	699 164	–	699 164
	2 125 347	2 959 899	(2 088 128)	2 997 118

Leave pay provision

The leave pay provision relates to the vested leave pay to which employees are entitled to. The provision arises as employees render services that increase their entitlement to future compensated leave. The provision is also utilised when employees, who are entitled to leave pay, leave the employment of the Commission.

Bonus provision

The bonus provision consists of a performance-based bonus, which is determined by reference to the overall performance with regard to a set of pre-determined key performance measures. Bonuses are payable annually after the Commission's annual results have been approved. Payment of bonus must be approved by the Board of Directors.

Figures in Emalangeni	2023	2022
11. CASH USED IN OPERATIONS		
Surplus for the period	11 594 234	9 748 682
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation	5 844 623	6 076 482
Profit/(loss) on sale of assets	(169 067)	485 036
Interest received	(11 425 167)	(10 233 721)
Interest paid	–	8 532
	5 844 623	6 085 011
Changes in working capital:		
Increase in accounts receivable	(28 875 138)	(10 628 092)
Increase in accounts payable	28 369 419	1 573 499
Decrease in designated funds	(65 993 370)	(51 423 236)
Increase in provisions	418 595	871 771
	(66 080 494)	(59 646 057)
	(60 235 871)	(53 561 047)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS continued
For the year ended 31 March 2023

Figures in Emalangeni	2023	2022
12. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS		
Board of directors' fees <i>Included in expenses</i>	1 696 864	1 330 307
Ministry of ICT – Set top box <i>Included in payables/bank balances</i>	253 060	1 109 322

13. RISK MANAGEMENT

Capital risk management

The Commission's objectives when managing capital are to safeguard the Commission's ability to continue as a going concern in order to provide returns for the Commission and benefits for other stakeholders and to maintain an optimal capital structure to reduce the cost of capital.

There are no externally imposed capital requirements.

Liquidity risk

The Commission's risk to liquidity is a result of the funds available to cover future commitments. The Commission manages liquidity risk through an ongoing review of future commitments and credit facilities.

Credit risk

Credit risk consists mainly of cash deposits, cash equivalents, derivative financial instruments, and trade debtors. The Commission only deposits cash with major banks with high quality credit standing and limits exposure to any one counterparty.

14. GOING CONCERN

The Directors have not identified conditions that would impact on the Commission's ability to continue as a going concern in the foreseeable future. Adequate resources are available for the Commission to carry out its future planned projects.

15. SUBSEQUENT EVENTS

At the date of finalisation of the financial statements there were no material events that occurred subsequent to the reporting date that required adjustments to the amounts recognised in the financial statements.

DETAILED INCOME STATEMENT

For the year ended 31 March 2023

Figures in Emalangeni	2023	2022
Income		
Licence fees	122 692 437	84 433 893
Other income		
Government grant	15 203	15 203
Capital reserves amortisation	4 414 804	4 313 279
Interest received	11 425 167	10 233 721
Gains on disposal of assets	169 067	–
Sundry income	127 596	282 072
Bad debts recovered	809 083	–
	139 653 357	99 278 168
Operating expenses		
Advertising and promotional services	2 524 079	1 862 469
Auditors' remuneration	245 961	157 205
Bank charges	132 755	122 198
Board expenses	1 696 864	1 330 307
Capacity building	1 340 432	1 128 269
Cleaning expenses	95 415	102 650
Computer expenses	123 240	41 330
CSR Strategy development	–	266 800
Corporate Social Responsibility	212 354	67 499
Cyber security	210 555	–
Depreciation	5 844 623	6 076 482
EBIS and ETVA equipment	568 085	1 200 000
Employee costs	35 516 092	33 299 014
EPTC contribution	1 000 000	–
ESPPRA tender fees	62 000	29 000
Household survey	2 627 357	3 519 787
Innovation challenge	600 000	–
Insurance	1 051 028	969 344
Interest paid	–	8 532
Legal fees	600 748	56 895
Loss in disposal of assets	–	485 036
Ministry of ICT costs	642 998	305 071
Motor vehicle expenses	743 135	499 895
National support	105 000	525 000
National Addressing System Project	32 956	94 139
Office expenses and refreshments	278 493	212 098
Organisational strategy	3 034 574	–
Printing and stationery	92 036	104 025
Consulting and professional fees	4 319 864	3 328 765

DETAILED INCOME STATEMENT continued
For the year ended 31 March 2023

Figures in Emalangeni	2023	2022
Provision for impairment	1 456 407	6 527 752
Project expenses	41 121	–
Public Enterprise loan guarantee	920 193	633 254
Rates	334 973	127 964
Rent	1 370 371	1 258 858
Repairs and maintenance	3 140 547	2 359 525
Security	46 429	40 914
Site visits	49 618	–
Staff welfare	914 660	758 801
Subscriptions and memberships	4 356 860	3 499 203
Stakeholder engagement	217 355	110 285
Communication costs	2 594 361	2 796 569
Travel, trainings, conferences, and workshops – international	12 449 422	4 329 986
Uniforms and protective clothing	79 564	489 589
Universal Access Service	10 000 000	15 000 000
Utilities	322 264	257 008
Total expenses	102 004 787	93 981 518
Transfer from reserves	(26 054 336)	(4 452 032)
Net surplus for the year	11 594 234	9 748 682

Not subject to audit opinion



UNIVERSAL ACCESS AND SERVICE FUND

INTRODUCTION

This report is an account of the Universal Access and Service Fund (“UASF”/“Fund”) activities carried out in the duration of the financial year 2022/23. The activities carried out are aligned to mandate the Fund as per the Electronic Communication Act of 2013 and the Universal Service and Access Regulations of 2015. The year in review also gives an account on how the Fund performed against the 2021-2024 strategic objectives and also in line with the Eswatini Communications Commission (“ESCCOM”/“Commission”) mandate and five-year strategy.

The Universal Service and Access Regulations 2015 articulate that a three-year strategy be formulated which will cover the areas listed below:

- (a) Voice communications services;
- (b) Data communications services;


- (c) Infrastructure for the provision of voice or data communications services;
- (d) Equipment and end user devices; and
- (e) Training and skills development.

THE UASF STRATEGY

The financial year 2022/23 was the second year of the life of the UASF Strategy which has programmes which promote innovation, and the digital ecosystem. The three (3) year strategy’s vision is to *administer the universal access and service fund and facilitate the design and implementation of sustainable projects that deliver high quality and universally accessible, affordable services*. The mission is to *increase access to broadband, broadcasting and postal services; therefore, enhancing the socio-economic prosperity of the citizens of Eswatini*.

The strategy was developed based on six pillars as indicated below:

Pillar	Description	Objective / Specification
Subsidisation	To use the Fund to create key interventions to address the market access gap	1. Funding to address market access gap, with an operating manual to support expenditure. 2. No ongoing subsidisation of end- user subscriptions or usage.
Availability	All inhabitants have services available	1. Consistency in coverage of inhabited geographic territory. 2. Region/area/Tinkhundla.
Accessibility	All inhabitants can access the services	1. Gender, religion, language. 2. Persons with disabilities are able to use the services available. 3. Relevance of content to accommodate marginalised groups.



Pillar	Description	Objective / Specification
Ability	All inhabitants have the basic ability / capacity to use ICT services	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Awareness of services and their benefits. 2. Ability to use computers and devices. 3. Ability to navigate the internet and use ICT services. 4. Gap between the ownership of data-capable mobile phones and the awareness and ability to take full advantage of internet information and services, and to do so safely and protected.
Affordability	All inhabitants can afford to use the services	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Basic services must be affordable to all citizens regardless of economic bracket. 2. No one must be disadvantaged by income; services should not cost more than 2% of average household income. 3. No cost variations due to geographic location, urban or rural factor.
Evidence-based decision making	All decisions made by the Fund are based on sound research and investigation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The strategy, its programmes and budget are evidence based. 2. Information is provided in a transparent manner. 3. Information will be sourced when the annual plan is formulated to inform the programmes.

The 2021 – 2024 strategy has five (5) programmes as per the table below:

Programme	Description
Programme 1: Connectivity and User Interface (Demand Side Measures)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To facilitate last mile broadband connectivity using the most efficient last mile technologies with broadband access of 3Mbps (downlink) for mobile broadband and 4Mbps (downlink) for fixed broadband for public institutions, with a focus on health facilities and schools. 2. To facilitate affordable services and equipment/devices for identified institutions and end-user communities. 3. To facilitate access to broadcasting and postal services through innovative mechanisms.

UNIVERSAL ACCESS AND SERVICE FUND continued

Programme	Description
Programme 2: Fund Management	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To support Fund staff and the Universal Access Committee to perform their duties in relation to managing the Fund programmes and budget and the related monitoring and evaluation activities. 2. To develop the Fund identity including through national promotional campaigns, documentation and public relation programmes aimed to make projects that promote increased access to ICTs more visible.
Programme 3: Network Infrastructure enhancement and Broadband Connectivity (Supply side measures)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To strengthen connectivity through fixed and mobile network infrastructure based on a technology-neutral approach. 2. To increase universal access and service (measured by population and geographic coverage) and to improve network reliability and redundancy.
Programme 4: Digitisation, Enabling Technology and Services (Usage and uptake)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To support accessible local content with three focus areas: (1) digitising and sharing government content, which will primarily be digitised; (2) facilitating user generated content; (3) broadcasting content that can also be streamed online. 2. To support platform and application development.
Programme 5: Digital Literacy and ICT Impact Training	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To provide capacity building and training to support the use of ICTs by all end- users across sectors and economic segments (i.e., SMEs, households, schools, etc). 2. To ensure that all programmes that are rolled out by the Fund (Programmes 1 — 4) include an appropriate element of capacity building and training to ensure sustainability and maximum impact.


UPDATE ON PROGRAMMES

In the year in review the Fund was able to complete 95% of the projects planned for the financial year. A detailed breakdown of the intervention to bridge the digital divide through universal access and service is detailed in line with the sector of influence below.

Programme 1: Connectivity and user interface (demand side measures)

Education sector

The Fund was able to partner with the Ministry of Education and Training in the development of the National Learning and Teaching Platform in partnership with UNICEF and the National Curriculum Centre (NCC). The Learning Passport (LP) was created for students to be able to access their studies online. Focus currently is to do all subjects at high school. The initiative also helps to prepare the country in the unlikely event of another pandemic or almost similar catastrophe.



Deploying the Learning Passport (LP) would ensure that learners continue to access their education beyond the confines of space and time. For Eswatini, deploying a learning management system will complement the traditional brick and mortar type of schooling thus increasing access to education and training. Teachers and learners will be able to benefit from the use of both systems to maximise teaching and learning experiences. Furthermore, the LP will provide a centralised source of learning for all school children including those with special education needs. To achieve this goal, the Ministry used practicing teachers to create content for the first six subjects offered at senior secondary. The teachers were selected through subject panels and come from the different regions in the country. These teachers create such content in addition to their normal teaching workloads. Hence, there was need to bring them together for training, creation of content and feedback provision from time to time. The first group of subjects involved in this phase of the project are the subjects taken by every learner at this level of the education system and they are called core subjects. These include English Language, Mathematics, SiSwati, Biology, Physical Science and Religious Education. Literature in English, though not a core, is also part of the first group of subjects to be offered through the LP.

As part of support for students with disabilities, the Fund continued to support young people with Cerebral Palsy and Down Syndrome. This project started in 2021/22 and in the year 2022/23 the last group was being supported. For financial year 2023/24 work will continue with the National Curriculum Centre to ensure that the online platform has all the tools required by disabled students.

In addition to the end-user devices the Fund also continued support to ensure that every learner including those with special needs and disabilities have access to quality education. The five schools, namely Ekwetsembeni Special School, St Joseph's Mission, Mbasheni Primary School (inclusive model), Equisweni High and

Boyane High (inclusive Secondary Schools) have a substantial number of children with special needs and disabilities who have also received assistive devices to enhance communication and learning. Each of these schools received 30 laptops.

In partnership with Jenny Eswatini, the Fund also set up broadband for the schools which assisted in improved access to differentiated approaches that are necessary to accommodate the different learning of the students. The internet will enable schools to download software and upload them in the learners' gadgets. It will further improve pedagogy as teachers will be able to research on topical issues that are geared towards catering for diversity.

The Fund has been supporting the education sector for the past four years, in particular the students with disabilities. Some learners who were supported by the intervention by the Fund have successfully completed their high school education and were further admitted to pursue their studies in local institutions of higher learning. This is an indication that integrating ICT into teaching and learning does have a positive impact not only to active participation during teaching and learning, but also to the achievement of the learners. The supported students with visual impairment were given personal specialised laptops and software to assist them in their academic studies.

Health sector

The Fund assisted in the rolling out of the Client Management Information Systems (CMIS) to rural areas. CMIS enables facilities to provide quality health care services since real time data transmission is happening across board which ensure seamless continuity of patient care across mobile health services. For the financial year 2022/23 the Ministry of Health was supported with 60 laptops to be used in the Electronic Medical Records (EMR) system in selected healthcare facilities. An additional 10 will be handed over to Hospice at Home for the same functionality.

Agriculture

The Ministry of Agriculture launched a livestock tracking platform which was only accessible when in the regional offices or the head office. The Fund upon engagement with the Ministry is working on upgrading the platform in order to enable the extension officers to access the platform remotely via a web server and be able to assist farmers closer to their point of presence of dipping tank. This will improve the livestock tracking and also enable the security forces to be able to do spot checks for those farmers or Emaswati moving around with livestock. The upgrade should be completed in the 2023/24 financial year.

Tinkhundla administration and development

As part of supporting Government's drive to decentralise services, the Fund supported the Ministry of Tinkhundla Administration and Development with multifunctional printers which are used in the service centres. Six (6) Tinkhundla Centres have been supported in 2022/23.

The provision of Wi-Fi Hotspots within the Tinkhundla and Service Centres has made Emaswati to have access to the internet. This internet provision has assisted Emaswati who were underprivileged and could not afford data bundles. Based on the feedback from an impact assessment, the frequency in which people come to the centres to access the internet is at an average of three to four times each week. Most users visit the centre for Wi-Fi access during the weekend as this is the time when most people are free. The Ministry of Tinkhundla Administration and Development conducted a functionality assessment exercise at benefiting Tinkhundla Service Centres to evaluate the impact of the Public Wi-Fi Hotspots on the citizens. Beneficiaries responded to a number of questions, including:

1. How did you know about the service?
2. What do you use the service for?
3. Was the service beneficial to you? If yes, how? If not, how?

4. What challenges do you encounter with the service?
5. How best can the service be improved?

Many beneficiaries of the service indicated that they learnt of the programme through word of mouth; radio programme; signage at the Inkhundla Centre; as well as presentations by Bucopho at constituency (imiphakatsi) meetings.

Beneficiaries indicated that they access internet through the Public Wi-Fi Hotspots for research projects, social media business interactions and leisure.

Whilst the service was viewed by many as highly beneficial, some encountered challenges with logging in and weak signals at times; unstable electricity supply; and some expressed that 500Mbps was not sufficient as it expired before they completed their tasks. It was also expressed by some beneficiaries that they had to travel long distances to the Tinkhundla Centres and expressed a desire to have Public Wi-Fi Hotspots at Imiphakatsi (Community Centres). In the year in review the Fund set up the Wi-Fi service in 20 additional Tinkhundla Centres.

Social services

As part of the mandate to support the elderly and disabled, the Fund supported the Government Social Disbursement Grant initiative by making available 2 925 smartphones for distribution to the recipients of the grants. This initiative started in financial year 2021/22 and the update received was that it has helped some of the beneficiaries start income generating projects, which has improved and sustained the lives of their families as well as bringing about self-sufficiency through venturing into Mobile Money vending. This has restored pride and dignity to the members of this special community as they have become entrepreneurs in their own right. This kind of support has indeed made a tremendous contribution to the betterment of the lives of persons with disabilities.



PROGRAMME 2: FUND MANAGEMENT

In the year in review the Fund was able to execute its mandate within the allocated funds received from the operators and the Commission as per Universal Service and Access Regulations of 2015. The Commission also caters for all operational cost of the Fund to enable the funds collected from the operators to fully cater to fund the strategic objectives. As part of the report, there is a detail financial report from the Chief Financial Officer and also an unqualified audit report from the Fund's auditors.

PROGRAMME 3: NETWORK INFRASTRUCTURE ENHANCEMENT AND BROADBAND CONNECTIVITY (SUPPLY SIDE MEASURES)

Network upgrade

The Fund prioritises the continuous improvement of access to broadband for all citizens of the country. In line with the global theme of leaving no one behind the Fund partners with licenced operators to improve the population coverage of 4G coverage to over 70%. In the year in review the Fund, in partnership with MTN, upgraded 23 sites from 2G to 4G. This initiative is in line with the philosophy of leaving no one behind in terms of broadband coverage. This brings the total of upgraded sites to 35 in the past two years.

Network backbone stabilisation

In an effort to strengthen the national backbone, the Fund supported EPTC with terminal equipment, which will enable the national backbone to connect to the undersea cable in Maputo. This project will bring stability to the country's internet and also offer redundancy in case the original route has technical issues.

PROGRAMME 4: DIGITISATION, ENABLING TECHNOLOGY AND SERVICES (USAGE AND UPTAKE)

The Fund supported the broadcasting sector with equipment in a drive to improve the quality and availability of local content. Eswatini Television Authority (ESTVA) received cameras and other broadcasting equipment. Eswatini Broadcasting and Information Service (EBIS) was supported with broadcasting equipment and computers to be used by the newsroom and the marketing department to efficiently deliver on their mandate.

PROGRAMME 5: DIGITAL LITERACY AND ICT IMPACT TRAINING

Complementing the provision of smartphones to the elderly and disabled persons the Fund embarked on a capacity building initiative which equipped the beneficiaries with skills to properly use their smartphones and also how they can use the technology to improve their lives. The initiative covered 14 555 Emaswati in the Shiselweni and Manzini regions. For the 2023/24 financial year, the capacity building will cover Lubombo and Hhohho regions.

UNIVERSAL ACCESS AND SERVICE FUND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended
31 March 2023

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COMMITTEE'S RESPONSIBILITY STATEMENT

For the year ended 31 March 2023

The Committee is required in terms of the Eswatini Communications Act 10 of 2013 to maintain adequate accounting records and are responsible for the content and integrity of the financial statements and related financial information included in this report. It is their responsibility to ensure that the financial statements fairly present the state of affairs of the Fund as at the end of the financial year and the results of its operations and cash flows for the period then ended, in conformity with International Financial Reporting Standards for Small and Medium Enterprises. The external auditors are engaged to express an independent opinion on the financial statements.

The financial statements are prepared in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards for Small and Medium Enterprises (IFRS for SMEs) and are based upon appropriate accounting policies consistently applied and supported by reasonable and prudent judgments and estimates.

The Committee acknowledge that they are ultimately responsible for the system of internal financial control established by the Fund and place considerable importance on maintaining a strong control environment. To enable the Directors to meet these responsibilities, the Committee sets standards for internal control aimed at reducing the risk of error or loss in a cost-effective manner. The standards include the proper delegation of responsibilities within a clearly defined framework, effective accounting procedures and adequate segregation of duties to ensure an acceptable level of risk. These controls are monitored throughout the Fund and all employees are required to maintain the highest ethical standards in ensuring the Fund's business is conducted in a manner that in all reasonable circumstances is above reproach. The focus of risk management in the Fund is on identifying, assessing, managing and monitoring all known forms of risk across the Fund. While operating risk cannot be fully eliminated, the Fund endeavours to minimise it by ensuring that appropriate infrastructure, controls, systems and ethical behaviour are applied and managed within predetermined procedures and constraints.

The Committee is of the opinion, based on the information and explanations given by management, that the system of internal control provides reasonable assurance that the financial records may be relied on for the preparation of the annual financial statements. However, any system of internal financial control can provide only reasonable, and not absolute, assurance against material misstatement or loss.

The Committee has reviewed the Fund's cash flow forecast for the year to 31 March 2023 and, in light of this review and the current financial position, they are satisfied that the Fund has or has access to adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future.

The external auditors are responsible for independently reviewing and reporting on the Fund's financial statements. The financial statements have been examined by the Fund's external auditors and their report is presented on pages 116 to 117.

The annual financial statements set out on pages 118 to 130, which have been prepared on the going concern basis, were approved by the Committee on 27 July 2023 and were signed on its behalf by:



Sibongile Ndlela-Simelane

Chairperson

28 July 2023



Mvilawemphi Dlamini

Chief Executive

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT

TO THE COMMITTEE OF UNIVERSAL ACCESS AND SERVICE FUND

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Universal Access and Service Fund, which comprise the statement of financial position as at 31 March 2023, and the statement of comprehensive income, statement of changes in funds and statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies as set out on pages 120 to 129.

In our opinion, the financial statements of Universal Access Service for the year ended 31 March 2023 present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards applicable to Small and Medium Enterprises, and in the manner required by the Eswatini Communications Commission Act No. 10 of 2013.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with the International Standards on Auditing (ISAs). Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditors Responsibilities for the Audit of the financial Statements* section of our report. We are independent of the fund in accordance with the International Ethics Standards Board for Accountants' *International Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (including International Independence Standards)* (IESBA Code) together with the ethical requirements that are relevant to audits of financial statements in Eswatini. We have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements and the IESBA code. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Other information

The committee is responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the statement of responsibility by the committee, the Director's Report, and the detailed income statement which we obtained prior to the audit report date. Other information does not include the financial statements and our auditors' report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and we do not express an audit opinion or any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements, or our knowledge obtained in the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information; we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.

Responsibilities of the committee for the financial statements

The Commission's directors are responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards Applicable Small Medium Enterprises, and in the manner required by the Eswatini Communications Commission Act No. 10 of 2013, and for such internal control as the directors determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the directors are responsible for assessing the Fund's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management and the directors either intend to liquidate the Fund or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.



AUDITOR'S RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE AUDIT OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatements whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high-level assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with ISAs, we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. We are also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the commission's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the committee.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the committees' use of the going concern basis of accounting and based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the commission's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditors' report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditors' report. However, future events or conditions may cause the commission to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements including disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with the Directors regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

SNG Grant Thornton

SNG Grant Thornton

Chartered Accountants (Eswatini)

DIRECTORS' REPORT

For the year ended 31 March 2023

The Committee submits its report for the year ended 31 March 2023.

REVIEW OF ACTIVITIES

Main business and operations

The Universal Access and Service Fund is a body established by an Act of Parliament (Eswatini Communications Commission Act 10 of 2013) as part of government's reform strategy to increase access to communication services.

The Fund is engaged in the business of monitoring and enforcing compliance with specific obligations, licence conditions and objectives; designating Universal Service providers with obligations to provide Universal Services; monitoring and enforcing compliance with and the carrying out of Universal Service plans by the Universal Service providers and operates principally in Eswatini.

It is charged with the responsibility for policy, regulation, oversight, professional development and information management and dissemination in the field of electronic communications.

The operating results and state of affairs of the entity are fully disclosed in the financial statements.

COMMITTEE

The Universal Access and Service Fund did not have a committee in office for the year ended 31 March 2023 after the elapse of the previous committee's term of office in October 2021.

The committee for Eswatini Communications Commission was responsible for overseeing the operations of the Fund for the year ended 31 March 2023.

BUSINESS ADDRESS

Business address

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Mbabane Office Park
Mbabane
Eswatini

Postal address

PO Box 7811
Mbabane

BANKERS

Nedbank Eswatini Limited
PO Box 68
Mbabane
H100



AUDITORS

SNG Grant Thornton Chartered Accountants (Eswatini)
PO Box 331
Mbabane
H100

GOING CONCERN

With the ongoing war in Ukraine and normalisation of the economy post Covid there has been a general increase in prices of goods and commodities. This has affected the Fund like all businesses. There have not been any direct effects apart from these. The Directors are not aware of any events that could result in the entity ceasing to be a going concern in the foreseeable future since it has adequate funds to sustain its planned future projects.

SUBSEQUENT EVENTS

The committee has not identified any events or conditions that could require adjustment or additional disclosures in the financial statements as at 31 March 2023.

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

For the year ended 31 March 2023

Figures in Emalangeni	2023	2022
Income	18 864 247	23 392 488
Other income	1 396 826	1 025 830
Total income	20 261 073	24 418 318
Operating expenses	(26 190 341)	(22 137 182)
(Deficit)/surplus	(5 929 268)	2 281 136
Transfer from/(to) reserves	5 929 268	(2 281 136)
	–	–

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

At 31 March 2023

Figures in Emalangeni	Note(s)	2023	2022
ASSETS			
Non-current assets			
Property, plant and equipment	2	718 579	1 086 652
Current assets			
Trade and other receivables	3	32 930 456	29 596 735
Investments	4	13 841 335	28 321 738
Cash and cash equivalents	5	145 717	296 460
		46 917 508	58 214 933
Total assets		47 636 087	59 301 585
RESERVES AND FUND BALANCES			
Reserves	6	37 009 462	42 938 730
Current liabilities			
Trade and other payables	7	10 626 625	16 362 855
Total liabilities		47 636 087	59 301 585

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

For the year ended 31 March 2023

Figures in Emalangeni	Note(s)	2023	2022
Cash flows from operating activities			
Cash generated from operations	8	(16 125 389)	6 584 258
Interest received		1 272 326	1 025 830
Transfers to reserves	6	5 929 268	(2 281 136)
Net cash (utilised)/generated from operating activities		(8 923 795)	5 328 952
Cash flows from investing activities			
Purchase of property, plant and equipment		(28 083)	(842 053)
Proceeds from disposal of assets		250 000	–
Decrease/(increase) in investments		14 480 403	(12 772 945)
Net cash from/(used) investing activities		14 702 320	(13 614 998)
Cash flows from financing activities			
(Decrease)/increase in capital reserves		(5 929 268)	2 281 136
Net cash (utilised in)/from financing activities		(5 929 268)	2 281 136
Net decrease in cash and cash equivalents		(150 743)	(6 004 910)
Cash at the beginning of the year		296 460	6 301 370
Total cash at end of the year	5	145 717	296 460



SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

For the year ended 31 March 2023

1. REPORTING ENTITY

Universal Access Service Fund (UAS) is responsible for monitoring and enforcing compliance with specific obligations, licence conditions, and objectives; designating Universal Service providers with obligations to provide Universal Service's monitoring and enforcing compliance with and carrying out of Universal Service plans by service providers.

1.1 Basis of preparation

a) Statement of compliance

The financial statements are prepared in accordance with the International Financial Reporting Standards applicable for Small and Medium Enterprises (IFRS for SMEs) and in accordance with the Eswatini Communications Commission Act.

The financial statements were authorised for issue by the Board on 27 July 2023.

The principal accounting policies adopted in the preparation of these financial statements are set out below.

b) Basis of measurement

The financial statements are prepared under the historical cost basis.

c) Functional and presentation currency

These financial statements are presented in Emalangeni, which is the entity's functional currency. All financial information presented in Emalangeni has been rounded to the nearest Lilangeni unless otherwise indicated.

d) Use of estimated adjustments

In preparing the financial statements, management is required to make estimates and assumptions that affect the amounts represented in the financial statements and related disclosures. The use of available information and the application of judgment is inherent in the formation of estimates. Actual results in the future could differ from these estimates which may be material to the annual financial statements. Significant judgments include:

Note 3 – Provision for doubtful debts.

SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES continued
For the year ended 31 March 2023

1. REPORTING ENTITY CONTINUED

1.2 Property, plant, and equipment

The cost of an item of property, plant and equipment is recognised as an asset when:

- it is probable that future economic benefits associated with the item will flow to the Commission; and
- the cost of the item can be measured reliably.

Property, plant and equipment is initially measured at cost and subsequently at cost less accumulated depreciation and impairment.

Costs include the cash outflow incurred initially to acquire or construct an item of property, plant and equipment and costs incurred subsequently to add to, replace part of, or service it. If a replacement cost is recognised in the carrying amount of an item of property, plant and equipment, the carrying amount of the replaced part is derecognised.

Property, plant and equipment are depreciated on the straight-line basis over their expected useful lives to their estimated residual value. The depreciation charge is recognised in profit and loss in the relevant period.

Property, plant and equipment is carried at cost less accumulated depreciation and any impairment losses.

The useful lives of items of property, plant and equipment have been assessed as follows:

Item	Average useful life
Furniture and fixtures	10 years
Motor vehicles	5 years
IT equipment and software	3 years

The residual value, useful life, and depreciation method of each asset are reviewed at the end of each reporting period. If the expectations differ from previous estimates, the change is accounted for as a change in accounting estimate.

The gain or loss arising from the derecognition of an item of property, plant, and equipment is included in profit or loss when the item is derecognised. An item of property, plant, and equipment is derecognised on disposal or when no future economic benefits are expected from its use or disposal.



1. REPORTING ENTITY CONTINUED

1.3 Financial instruments

The Fund's financial instruments include cash deposits with financial institutions, trade and other receivables, investments, and trade and other payables.

Trade and other receivables

Trade receivables are measured at initial recognition at fair value and are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest rate method. Appropriate allowances for estimated irrecoverable amounts are recognised in profit or loss when there is objective evidence that the asset is impaired. Significant financial difficulties of the debtor, probability that the debtor will enter bankruptcy or financial reorganisation, and default or delinquency in payments (more than 90 days overdue) are considered indicators that the trade receivable is impaired. The allowance recognised is measured as the difference between the asset's carrying amount and the present value of estimated future cash flows discounted at the effective interest rate computed at initial recognition.

Trade and other receivables are classified as loans and receivables.

Trade and other payables

Trade payables are initially measured at fair value, and are subsequently measured at amortised cost, using the effective interest rate method.

Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents comprise cash on hand and demand deposits, and other short term highly liquid investments that are readily convertible to a known amount of cash and are subject to an insignificant risk of changes in value. These are initially measured at fair value and subsequently amortised cost.

Investments

Investments are measured initially at their fair values and subsequently at amortised cost.

1.4 Tax

The Fund is exempt from income tax according to the Section 12(1) (a) (iii) read together with Section 2 of the Income Tax Order 1975, as amended.

1.5 Impairment of assets

The Fund assesses at each end of the reporting period whether there is any indication that an asset may be impaired. If any such indication exists, the Fund estimates the recoverable amount of the asset.

If there is any indication that an asset may be impaired, the recoverable amount is estimated for the individual asset. If it is not possible to estimate the recoverable amount of the individual asset, the recoverable amount of the cash generating unit to which the asset belongs is determined.

SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES continued

For the year ended 31 March 2023

1. REPORTING ENTITY CONTINUED

1.5 Impairment of assets continued

The recoverable amount of an asset or a cash generating unit is the higher of its fair value less costs to sell and its value in use.

If the recoverable amount of an asset is less than its carrying amount, the carrying amount of the asset is reduced to its recoverable amount. That reduction is an impairment loss.

An impairment loss of assets carried at cost less any accumulated depreciation or amortisation is recognised immediately in profit or loss. Any impairment loss of a revalued asset is treated as a revaluation decrease.

1.6 Revenue/income

Revenue is recognised when it is probable that the economic benefits associated with the transaction will flow to the Commission and the amounts of revenue can be reliably measured.

Interest income

Interest is recognised, is accrued on a time proportion basis by reference to the principal outstanding and effective interest rate at the reporting period.

1.7 Related parties

The major related parties to the Commission is the Government of Eswatini through the ministry of information, communications and technology which exercises a significant influence over its financial and operating decisions and the Eswatini Communications Commission and Eswatini Communications Commission.

1.8 Changes in accounting policies and disclosures

Amendments mandatory effective for the year ended 31 March 2023

A number of new standards, amendments to standards and interpretations are effective for annual periods beginning on or after 1 January 2023.

Classification of liabilities as current or non-current – (IAS 1)

Deferred tax related to assets and liabilities arising from a single transaction – (Amendments to IAS 12)*.

** Not applicable to the Commission.*

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended 31 March 2023

2. PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT

Figures in Emalangeni	2023			2022		
	Cost/ Valuation	Accumulated depreciation	Carrying value	Cost/ valuation	Accumulated depreciation	Carrying value
Furniture and fixtures	54 062	(23 818)	30 243	54 062	(18 412)	35 650
Motor vehicles	829 737	(179 308)	650 429	1 429 159	(431 698)	997 461
Office equipment	21 696	(8 479)	13 217	21 696	(6 310)	15 386
IT equipment & software	45 679	(20 989)	24 690	45 679	(7 524)	38 155
Total	951 174	(232 595)	718 579	1 550 595	463 944	1 086 652

Reconciliation – 2023


Figures in Emalangeni	Opening balance	Additions	Disposal	Depreciation	Total
Furniture and fixtures	35 650	–	–	(5 406)	30 243
Motor vehicles	997 461	28 083	(125 500)	(249 615)	650 429
Office equipment	15 386	–	–	(2 169)	13 217
IT equipment & software	38 155	–	–	(13 465)	24 690
	1 086 652	28 083	(125 500)	(270 655)	718 579

Reconciliation of property, plant and equipment – 2022

Figures in Emalangeni	Opening balance	Additions	Disposal	Depreciation	Total
Furniture and fixtures	41 056	–	–	(5 406)	35 650
Motor vehicles	334 669	801 654	–	(138 862)	997 461
Office equipment	17 556	–	–	(2 170)	15 386
IT equipment & software	6 404	40 399	–	(8 644)	38 155
	399 685	842 053	–	(155 082)	1 086 652

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS continued
For the year ended 31 March 2023

Figures in Emalangeni	2023	2022
3. ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLES		
Trade receivables	18 377 441	14 936 127
Provision for impairment	(446 985)	(339 392)
	17 930 456	14 596 735
ESCCOM contribution	15 000 000	15 000 000
	32 930 456	29 596 735
4. INVESTMENTS		
Stanlib Eswatini – Money Market Fund	13 841 335	28 321 738
5. CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS		
Nedbank Eswatini Limited – Current account	123 699	53 328
Nedbank Eswatini Limited – Call account	22 018	243 132
	145 717	296 460
6. RESERVES		
Opening balance	42 938 730	40 657 594
Transferred in current year	(5 929 268)	2 281 136
Realised in the income statement	–	–
	37 009 462	42 938 730
7. TRADE AND OTHER PAYABLES		
Trade payables	144 456	1 834 248
Accruals	8 196 992	12 599 475
VAT payable	2 285 177	1 929 132
	10 626 625	16 362 855
8. CASH GENERATED FROM OPERATIONS		
Surplus for the period	(5 929 268)	2 281 136
Adjust for:		
Depreciation	270 655	155 086
Interest income	(1 272 326)	(1 025 830)
Profit on sale of motor vehicle	(124 499)	–
	(7 055 438)	1 410 392
Changes in working capital:		
Increase in accounts receivable	(3 333 721)	(3 663 317)
(Decrease)/increase in payable	(5 736 230)	8 837 185
	(16 125 389)	6 584 258



Figures in Emalangeni		2023	2022
9. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS			
Committee expenses <i>Included in expenses</i>		–	10 700
ESCCOM receipts <i>Included in revenue and/or receivables</i>		15 000 000	15 000 000

10. RISK MANAGEMENT

Capital risk management

The Fund's objectives when managing capital are to safeguard the Fund's ability to continue as a going concern in order to provide returns for the Fund and benefits for other stakeholders and to maintain an optimal capital structure to reduce the cost of capital.

There are no externally imposed capital requirements.

Liquidity risk

The Fund's risk to liquidity is a result of the funds available to cover future commitments. The Fund manages liquidity risk through an ongoing review of future commitments and credit facilities.

Credit risk

Credit risk consists mainly of cash deposits, cash equivalents, derivative financial instruments, and trade debtors. The Fund only deposits cash with major banks with high quality credit standing and limits exposure to any one counterparty.

DETAILED INCOME STATEMENT

For the year ended 31 March 2023

Figures in Emalangeni	2023	2022
Income		
UAS levy	8 864 247	8 392 488
ESCCOM	10 000 000	15 000 000
Interest received	1 272 326	1 025 830
Other income – Sale of motor vehicle	124 499	–
	20 261 073	24 418 318
Operating expenses		
Bank charges	6 946	2 709
Brand promotion	286 148	–
Broadband WiFi hotspots	2 305 333	1 999 158
Brandcasting monitors for ETVA	9 312	–
Broadcasting support	591 374	–
Capacity building Initiatives	975 604	–
Capacity building – UNESWA	–	405 334
Committee expenses	–	10 700
Devices for Learners with Disabilities	1 877 418	–
Devices to support ICT in Education	3 575 312	–
Digitalisation of Health Sector	53 775	–
Digitalisation of the Agriculture Sector	967 615	–
Depreciation	270 655	155 086
EBIS Broadcast	–	500 000
Elderly end-user devices	1 999 072	796 000
ETVA content creation	–	80 000
EPTC support	3 588 724	–
GSM upgrade	9 000 000	7 278 987
Hearing aid devices	–	1 168 091
Last mile connectivity	–	1 959 554
Local content creation	–	988 604
Special needs teachers training	–	299 652
Public relations	–	136 400
Provision for doubtful debts	107 593	339 392
Ruggedised tablets	–	4 995 945
Tinkhundla service centres and health facilities	575 460	521 570
UAS strategic plan	–	500 000
	26 190 341	22 137 182
(Deficit)/surplus for the year	(5 929 268)	2 281 136
Transfer from/(to) reserves	5 929 268	(2 281 136)
	–	–

Not subject to audit opinion

ACRONYMS

AG	Auditor General	ERS	Eswatini Revenue Service
AOP	Annual Operational Plan	ESCCOM	Eswatini Communications Commission
AFRALTI	African Advanced Level Telecommunications Institute	ESM	Eswatini Mobile
ASMS	Automated Spectrum Management System	ESPPRA	Eswatini Public Procurement Regulatory Agency
ATU	African Telecommunication Union	ESTVA	Eswatini Television Authority
BMS	Broadcasting Management System	ESWASA	Eswatini Standards Authority
BMA	Broadcast Media Africa	FINTECH	Financial Technology
BSS	Broadcasting Satellite Services	FPB	Film and Publication Board
CBE	Central Bank of Eswatini	FSRA	Financial Services Regulatory Authority
CDR	Call Drop Rate	FSS	Fixed Satellite Services
CIRT	Eswatini Computer Incidence Response Team	FY	Financial Year
CFI	Centre for Financial Inclusion	GECS	General Electronic Communications Services
CRASA	Communications Regulators' Association of Southern Africa	GE84	Geneva 1984 Plan
CSI	Corporate Social Investment	GNI	Gross National Income
CSO	Central Statistics Office	GSM	Global System for Mobile Communications
CSSR	Call Setup Success Rate	KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
CTO	Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation	IBC	International Broadcasting Convention
DASR	Data Access Success Rate	ICASA	Independent Communications Authority of South Africa
DFS	Digital Financial Services	ICT	Information, Communications and Technology
DTT	Digital Terrestrial Television	ICTAUS	Information and Communication Technology Access and Usage Survey
EBIS	Eswatini Broadcasting and Information Services	IMT	International Mobile Telecommunication
ECC	Eswatini Competitions Commission	INCM	Moçambique National Communications Authority
EFWG	Eswatini FINTECH Working Group		
EMS	Express Mail Services		
EPTC	Eswatini Posts and Telecommunications Corporation		

ACRONYMS continued

ISPs	Internet Service Providers	REPS	Royal Eswatini Police Service
ISAs	International Standards on Auditing	RPM	Regulatory Performance Management
ITU	International Telecommunication Union	RSTP	Royal Science and Technology Park
MES	Manufacturing Execution System	SABA	Southern African Broadcasting Association
MICT	Ministry of Information, Communication and Technology	SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
MHz	Megahertz	SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
MNOs	Mobile Network Operators	SMS	Short Message Service
MoF	Ministry of Finance	STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding	UASF	Universal Access and Service Fund
MTN	Mobile Telephone Network	UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
MUX	Multiplexer	UNESWA	University of Eswatini
NDP	National Development Plan	UPU	Universal Postal Union
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations	VOC	Voice of the Church
OOB	Out of Bundle	VoIP	Voice over Internet Protocol
OTT	Over-The-Top Technologies	VSAT	Very Small Aperture Terminal
PAPU	Pan African Postal Union	WRC	World Radiocommunications Conference
PEU	Public Enterprise Unit		
PMR	Private Mobile Radio		
PMS	Performance Management System		
QoS	Quality of Service		

GENERAL INFORMATION

ESWATINI COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

(Registration number Act 10 of 2013)

Annual Financial Statements

for the year ended 31 March 2023

Nature of business and principal activities	To Regulate and Supervise Functions of all Electronic Communications, Postal, Radio and Television Broadcasting Services
Board of Directors	Ms Sibongile Ndelela-Simelane (<i>Chairperson</i>) Mr Mvilawemphi Dlamini (<i>Chief Executive</i>) Mr Bheki Ndzinisa Mrs Bongiwe Dlamini Mr John Mathwasa Mr December Mavimbela Rev Senzo Hlatshwayo Secretary Mr Ozzie Thakatha
Business address	4th Floor, Sibekelo Building, Mbabane Office Park, Mbabane, Eswatini
Postal address	PO Box 7811, Mbabane, H100
Bankers	Standard Bank (Swaziland) Limited Nedbank (Swaziland) Limited
Auditors	SNG Grant Thornton Chartered Accountants (Eswatini) Mbabane
Registration number	Eswatini Communications Act 10 of 2013



ESWATINI
COMMUNICATIONS
COMMISSION

