

# THE INDEPENDENT BROADCASTING AUTHORITY ACT 2000

Act 29/2000

Proclaimed by [\[Proclamation No. 44 of 2000\]](#) w.e.f 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2001

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ENACTED by the Parliament of Mauritius, as follows-

## **PART I – PRELIMINARY**

### **1. Short title**

This Act may be cited as the Independent Broadcasting Authority Act 2000.

### **2. Interpretation**

In this Act -

“access agreement” means an agreement made under section 18 between the Company and a licensee which sets out the terms and conditions upon which the Company shall transmit broadcasting through transmission stations operated by the Company;

"Authority" means the Independent Broadcasting Authority established under section 3;

"broadcast" means emit sound or images by means of Hertzian waves, satellite or a wired electromagnetic system for the reception by the public -

- (a) otherwise than within a self contained building; and
- (b) extending to or connecting at least 2 buildings;

"Chairperson" means the Chairperson of the Authority;

"Company" means the company known as MultiCarrier (Mauritius) Ltd and referred to in section 28;

"Conditional Access System" means any technical measure or arrangement whereby access to protected radio or television broadcasting service in unencrypted form is made conditional on subscription or any other form of prior individual authorisation;

"Corporation" has the same meaning as in the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation Act 1982;

"digital broadcasting" means the practice of using advanced digital compression techniques to encode and transmit audio, text, data, images and video signals resulting in more efficient bandwidth usage;

"Director" means the Director of the Authority appointed under section 11;

"employee" -

(a) means any person who works under a contract of employment with the Authority;

(b) includes the Director;

"financial crime offence" has the same meaning as in section 41A(5) of the Courts Act;

"financial year" means the period starting on 1 July and ending on 30 June in the following year;

"Internet Protocol" means a standard consisting of a set of rules governing digital data communications on the Internet;

"Internet Protocol Television service" means a service which provides scheduled television programming over a public network and may provide additional features such as data, text and audio signals which are ancillary to the scheduled television programming;

"law practitioner" has the same meaning as in the Law Practitioners Act 1984;

"licence" means any licence specified in the First Schedule;

"licensee" means the holder of a licence;

"local authority" has the same meaning as in the Local Government Act 1989;

"Mauritius Telecommunications Authority" has the same meaning as in the, Telecommunications Act 1998.

"member" means a member of the Authority and includes the Chair person;

"Minister" means the Minister to whom responsibility for the subject of matters relating to the Authority is assigned;

"Multimedia" means the combination of multiple forms of media such as audio, video, text, graphics, fax, and telephony in the communication of information;

"Multiplex" means a bundle of television broadcast programs that have been digitised, compressed and combined into a single data stream;

"Multiplex Operator" means the Company acting as such in accordance with section 28;

"public network" means a network set up and operated by a public operator, to which the general public has access and through which it can connect to other networks or the Internet;

"qualified auditor" has the same meaning as in the Statutory Bodies (Accounts and Audit) Act;

"reception apparatus" means any instrument intended for the reception of a broadcast program;

"Review Panel" means the Independent Broadcasting Review Panel set up under section 30;

"terrestrial Multiplex Operator" means the Company;

"transmission station" means a station for the transmission of broadcasting for reception by the public.

Amended by [\[Act No. 9 of 2015\]](#); [\[Act No. 18 of 2021\]](#)

## PART II - THE AUTHORITY

### 3. Establishment of Authority

- (1) There is established for the purposes of this Act the Independent Broadcasting Authority which shall be a body corporate.
- (2) Subject to subsection (3), the Authority shall not, in the exercise of its functions, be subject to the control of any person, body or other authority.
- (3) The Minister may issue such directions to the Authority in relation to matters affecting the national security and public order and the Authority shall comply with those directions.

### 4. Objects of Authority

The Authority shall –

- (a) promote the provision of a diverse range of radio and television broadcasting services throughout Mauritius;
- (b) promote the development of broadcasting services which are responsive to the needs of the Mauritian audience;
- (c) preserve and promote the plural nature of Mauritian culture by ensuring that licensees include in their services programmes reflecting the linguistic and cultural diversity of Mauritius;
- (d) ensure that licensees include in their services regular locally produced programmes;
- (e) ensure that broadcasting services are not controlled by foreign nationals;
- (f) impose limitations on cross media control of private broadcasting services;
- (g) ensure fair competition between broadcasting licensees;
- (h) set acceptable standards for programmes and advertising and monitor compliance with those standards;
- (i) ensure that broadcasting services -
  - (i) are of such a nature as not to encourage or incite crime or racial hatred leading to disorder or offending public feeling;
  - (ii) give adequate coverage to information, education, culture, entertainment and recreation;
  - (iii) are impartial and accurate;
- (j) be the sole authority empowered to issue licences for broadcasting;
- (k) levy fees in respect of licences issued;
- (l) inquire into public complaints against a licensee and take any action it thinks appropriate;
- (m) promote together with the Mauritius Telecommunications Authority, the most efficient use of the broadcasting frequency bands;
- (n) monitor, after consultation with the Mauritius Tele-communications Authority, the availability of segments of broadcasting frequency bands and make recommendations for the allocation of frequencies to licensees of broadcasting services.

## **5. Powers of Authority**

- (1) (a) The Authority may, for the purposes of this Act, give written directions to the Corporation or any licensee and they shall comply with those directions.  
  
(b) Any licensee who fails to comply with paragraph (a) shall commit an offence.
- (2) The Authority may require the Corporation or any licensee to provide such information as it thinks necessary in relation to its broadcasting operations.
- (3) The Authority may, in writing, authorise a member or any person to enter the premises of the Corporation or of any licensee to -
  - (a) inspect any equipment, apparatus or material which may-be found on the premises;
  - (b) take possession of the recording of a broadcast programme where the Corporation or any licensee has, pursuant to a direction under subsection (1), been directed to produce the recording and he has failed to do so.
- (4) The Authority may-
  - (a) set up such committees as it thinks fit to assist in implementing this Act;
  - (b) delegate to any such committee such of its powers as it thinks fit other than the power -
    - (i) to issue licences; or
    - (ii) to borrow money or incur expenditure exceeding 50,000 rupees.
- (5) The Authority may, in the exercise of its regulatory functions, impose such administrative penalties as it thinks fit.
- (6) (a) The Authority may, pursuant to its powers under this Act, issue a Code of Ethics, Code of Advertising Practice or such other Code as it may determine.
  - (b) Any Code issued under paragraph (a) shall be binding on a licensee.
  - (c) The Authority may, from time to time, review the Codes issued pursuant to paragraph (a).
  - (d) The Code of Ethics and Code of Advertising Practice in force shall be deemed to have been issued under paragraph (a).

Amended by [\[Act No. 18 of 2021\]](#)

## **6. Constitution of Authority**

The Authority shall consist of -

- (a) a Chairperson who shall be appointed by the President after consultation with the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition;
- (aa) a representative of the Ministry;
- (b) a representative of the Ministry responsible for the subject of information;
- (c) a representative of the Attorney-General's Office;
- (d) a representative of the Ministry responsible for the subject of arts and culture;
- (e) the Chairperson of the Mauritius Telecommunications Authority;
- (f) not less than 3 nor more than 5 persons who shall, subject to section 7, be appointed by the Minister- having regard to their experience in the field of broadcasting policy and technology, media issues, frequency planning, entertainment, education or in any other related activities.

Amended by [\[Act No. 9 of 2015\]](#)

## **7. Disqualification**

- (1) No person shall be appointed under section 6(f) if –
  - (a) he is a member of the National Assembly;
  - (b) he is an office bearer of a political party or political Organisation; or
  - (c) he, his spouse or any of his children has an interest in a concern engaged in broadcasting, advertising or audio-visual production.
- (2) A member shall cease to be a member where -
  - (a) he becomes a member of the National Assembly;
  - (b) he becomes a member of a political party or is actively engaged in politics; or
  - (c) he, his spouse or any of his children, acquires an interest in a concern engaged in broadcasting, advertising or audio-visual production.

## **8. Meetings of Authority**

- (1) A meeting of the Authority shall be held at such time and at such place as the Chairperson may determine.
- (2) The Authority shall regulate its own procedure.
- (3) Where the Chairperson is absent from a meeting, the members present shall elect one of the members present to chair the meeting.
- (4) Subject to subsections(5)and(7),the Authority shall meet at least 5 times in a year.
- (5) The Chairperson may convene a special meeting at anytime.
- (6) Not less than 6 members may, by notice in writing, submit a request to the Chairperson to convene a special meeting.
- (7) Where a request is made under subsection (6), the Chairperson shall convene a special meeting within 21 days of the receipt of the notice of the request
- (8) A notice under subsection (6) shall specify the purpose for which the meeting is to be convened.
- (9) Five members shall constitute a quorum at any meeting of the Authority.

#### **9. Term of office**

- (1) A member appointed under section 6(a) or (f) shall hold office for 3 years and shall be eligible for re-appointment.
- (2) The appointment of a member under section 6(a) or (f)shall not be terminated except for a reason specified in section 37(3)(b)of the Interpretation and General Clauses Act.

#### **10. Remuneration**

Every member shall receive such allowance or remuneration as the Authority may determine.

#### **11. Director**

- (1) The Authority shall appoint a Director on such terms and conditions as, it thinks fit.
- (2) The Director shall be the chief executive officer of the Authority.
- (3) The Director shall be responsible for the running of the day-to-day business of the Authority and the implementation of the Authority's decisions.
- (4) The Director shall -
  - (a) exercise appropriate supervision over the other employees of the Authority;
  - (b) attend every meeting of the Authority;



- (c) keep the minutes of proceedings of the Authority;
  - (d) oversee the keeping of the accounts of the Authority.
- (5) In the exercise of his functions, the Director shall act in accordance with such instructions as he may receive from the Authority.

## **12. Appointment of staff**

- (1) The Authority may appoint, on such terms and conditions as it thinks fit, such employees as may be necessary for the proper discharge of its functions.
- (2) A person shall not be eligible for appointment under subsection (1) where -
- (a) he is a licensee;
  - (b) his spouse or any of his children is a licensee;
  - (c) he, his spouse or any of his children has a financial interest in a body corporate or other body which is a licensee.
- (3) An employee of the Authority shall be under the administrative control of the Director.

## **PART III – FINANCE**

### **13. General Fund**

The Authority shall establish a General Fund-

- (a) into which shall be paid all the revenue of the Authority; and
- (b) out of which shall be paid all the expenses incurred by the Authority.

### **14. Revenue and expenditure**

- (1) The revenue of the Authority shall consist of-
- (a) such fees or charges as may be levied on a licensee or on any other person;
  - (b) such amounts as may be received from the Consolidated Fund;
  - (c) any other sum that may lawfully accrue to the Authority.
- (2) The Authority may incur expenditure in relation to salary, wages, fees, allowances, administrative expenses and any other item for the purposes of implementing its objects under this Act.

### **15. Raising of loans**

The Authority may raise loans to finance any expenditure which it may incur under this Act.

**16. Auditor**

- (1) The auditor to be appointed under section 5(1) of the Statutory Bodies (Accounts and Audit) Act shall be a qualified auditor.
- (2) Without prejudice to the duties and powers of the auditor under the Statutory Bodies (Accounts and Audit) Act, the qualified auditor shall, not later than 4 months after the end of every financial year, examine and audit -
  - (a) the annual statement of the Authority's income expenditure;
  - (b) the balance sheet made up to the end of the financial year showing the assets and liabilities of the Authority.

**17. Annual report**

- (1) The Authority shall, as soon as practicable after the end of every financial year, cause to be published a report in relation to its functions, activities, affairs and financial position in respect of the previous financial year.
- (2) The report specified in subsection (1) shall include-
  - (a) a copy of the audited accounts specified in section 16;
  - (b) a copy of every written direction issued under section 5(1) during the previous year, together with an indication of compliance or non-compliance therewith.
- (3) The Authority shall, as soon as practicable but not later than 8 months after the end of every financial year, forward a copy of the report specified in subsection (1) to the Minister who shall lay it on the table of the Assembly.

**PART IV – LICENSING**

**18. Prohibition against broadcasting**

- (1) Subject to subsection (2), no person shall provide a broadcasting service unless –
  - (a) he is licensed to do so under this Act;
  - (b) in the case of terrestrial broadcasting, he provides such a service pursuant to an access agreement with the company for the transmission of broadcasting by the Company for reception by the public.
- (2) Subsection (1) shall not apply to the National Assembly for the broadcast of its proceedings.

Amended by [\[Act No. 21 of 2016\]](#)

### **18A. Judge in Chambers**

- (1) Where a person refuses to give evidence or, to communicate or produce any record, document or article, on the ground of confidentiality, the Director may make an application to the Judge in Chambers for an order directing that person to disclose the evidence required, or communicate or produce any record, document or article needed, for the exercise, by the Authority, of its regulatory powers.
- (2) The Judge in Chambers shall make an order under subsection (1) where he is satisfied that the evidence, record, document or article the disclosure of which is sought is bonafide required by the Authority in relation to the exercise of its powers under this Act.

Added by [\[Act No. 18 of 2021\]](#)

### **19. Application for licence**

- (1) Any person who wishes to obtain a licence under this Act shall make an application to the Authority in such form and manner the Authority may approve.
- (2) The Authority may require the applicant to furnish -
  - (a) information in relation to his ability to provide a broadcasting service or to the technical material available to him;
  - (b) information which may be reasonably necessary in order to enable the Authority to -
    - (i) determine whether the applicant is a fit and proper person to hold a licence under this Act;
    - (ii) properly consider the application.
- (3) Subject to subsections (3A), (3B) and (3C), the Authority shall not grant a licence where the applicant-
  - (a) already holds a licence or, directly or indirectly, controls or has an interest in an organisation, association, company or corporate body which already holds a licence;
  - (b) is not a citizen of Mauritius or is not ordinarily resident in Mauritius;

- (c) is a member of a political party or is actively engaged in politics;
- (d) is a political party or association;
- (e) is a religious organisation or association;
- (f) is a local authority; or
- (g) has been adjudged bankrupt or declared insolvent or has been found liable for defamation or sedition, or has been convicted for any offence involving fraud or dishonesty;
- (h) is a company or body corporate –
  - (i) formed, registered or incorporated in a foreign country; or
  - (ii) 49.9 per cent or more of the shares of which are owned or controlled, directly or indirectly, by a foreign national, company or body corporate, where the Authority is satisfied that the control of the company or body corporate, as the case may be, is not by virtue of any shareholder agreement or other instrument, effectively vested in a foreign national, a foreign company or a foreign body corporate; or
  - (iii) 49.9 percent or more of the directors of which are foreign nationals; or
  - (iv) 20 percent or more of the shares of which are owned or controlled, directly or indirectly, by an individual who, or by another company or body corporate which, owns or controls, directly or indirectly, any newspaper or magazine, or any printing press publishing such newspaper or magazine.

**Amended by [\[Act No. 20 of 2009\]](#)**

- (3A) The Authority may grant a licence specified in item 2A of Part III of the First Schedule to a company, notwithstanding that it does not satisfy the requirements of subsection (3)(h)(ii), (iii) or (iv).

**Added by [\[Act No. 20 of 2009\]](#)**

- (3B) The Authority may grant, with regard to Internet Service Providers licensed by the Information and Communication Technologies Authority, a licence specified in Part III of the First Schedule notwithstanding the fact that the licensed Internet Service Provider did not satisfy the requirements of subsection (3)(h)(ii) and (iii).
- (3C) The Authority may grant to the Corporation one or more of the licences specified in items 1 and 2 of Part I and item 1 of Part II of the First Schedule.
- (4) On receipt of an application under subsection (1) the Authority, where it is satisfied that segments of broadcasting frequency bands are available and will be allocated to the applicant by the Mauritius Telecommunications Authority, shall
- (a) cause notice thereof to be published in the Gazette and, for 3 consecutive days, in not less than two daily newspapers;
  - (b) invite all interested persons who so wish, to lodge with the Authority such objections as they may have against the application.
- (5) Any person who wishes to object to an application shall, not later than 21 days after the last date of the publication specified in subsection (4), lodge his objection in writing with the Authority.
- (6) An application under this section shall be accompanied by such non-refundable fee as may be prescribed.

Amended by [\[Act No. 9 of 2015\]](#); [\[Act No. 13 of 2019\]](#); [\[Act No. 18 of 2021\]](#)

## **20. Consideration of application**

- (1) The Authority shall, in determining whether to grant an application for a licence, have regard, inter alia, to -
- (a) any objection made under subsection 19(5);
  - (b) the objects specified in section 4;
  - (c) whether or not the applicant is qualified to offer the broadcasting service;
  - (d) the likelihood that the applicant shall comply with any condition of his licence;
  - (e) the ability of the applicant to satisfy the Authority that it shall comply with the code of conduct specified in the Second Schedule.

- (2) The Authority shall promote pluralism in the media by giving priority of consideration to applicants who are able to satisfy the Authority that their broadcasting services shall be subject to no editorial control other than an independent editorial control exercised from within the broadcasting business of the prospective licensee.

## **21. Grant or refusal of licence**

- (1) The Authority shall, not later than 3 months after the expiry of the period of 21 days specified in section 19(5), inform the applicant and the objector of-
  - (a) its decision to grant or refuse the application for a licence;
  - (b) the reasons for its decision.
- (2) Where the Authority does not, at the end of the period of 3 months specified in subsection (1), make a decision on the application, it shall be deemed to have refused to grant the licence.
- (3) The Authority may grant a licence subject to such terms and conditions as it thinks fit to impose and on payment of the such prescribed fee.
- (4) A term or condition specified in subsection (3) may relate to-
  - (a) a requirement that the licensee shall afford, in such manner as may be prescribed, a right of reply to a person whose character, goodwill or reputation has been adversely affected by a broadcast;
  - (b) the amount of any charge or fee leviable by the licensee from any person who avails himself of the broadcasting service provided by the licensee.
- (5) Notwithstanding the other provisions of this Act, where the Authority is of the opinion that, by granting an application, the attainment of the objective of promoting a diverse range of radio and television broadcasting services and the plural nature of Mauritian culture may be impeded, the Authority may refuse an application.
- (6) A licensee shall comply with the terms and conditions of a licence.
- (7) A licensee shall carry out its activities in compliance with the code of conduct specified in the Second Schedule.

## **22. Duration of licence**

- (1) Subject to sections 22(4), 24 and 25, a licence for-
  - (a) radio broadcasting shall be valid for a period of one year;
  - (b) television broadcasting shall be valid for a period of 5 years.
- (2) A licensee who wishes to renew his licence shall, 90 days before, before the expiry of the licence, give written notice of his intention to the Authority.

- (3) Any licensee who fails to make an application for the renewal of his licence within the delay specified in subsection (2) shall be deemed to have waived his right to renew his licence.
- (4) The Authority may, notwithstanding any pending judicial process, take into account any sanction imposed by it on a licensee, for the purpose of determining whether or not to renew a licence.
- (5) The Authority shall consider the past conduct of a licensee prior to determining whether or not to renew a licence.
- (6) In this section –

“judicial process” does not include any order or direction by a Court prohibiting the enforcement of the sanction.

**Amended by [\[Act No. 18 of 2021\]](#)**

### **23. Transfer and surrender of licence**

- (1) No licensee shall, except with the written consent of the Authority, assign or transfer his licence.
- (2) A licensee may surrender his licence at any time before its expiry.
- (3) A licensee who wishes to surrender his licence shall give written notice of his intention to the Authority.
- (4) No person shall, except with the written consent of the Authority assign, sell, transfer or otherwise dispose of, any interest or share in a company which is a licensee.
  - (ii) by adding the following new subsections –
- (5) Where a person intends to assign, sell, transfer or otherwise dispose of, any interest or share in a company which is a licensee, he shall –
  - (a) furnish to the Authority, such information or document as the Authority may require;
  - (b) give at least 90 days' prior notice to the Authority of his intention to do so.

(6) Where the Authority determines that there are just and sufficient reasons for an assignment, sale, transfer or disposal and they are not for speculative purposes, it may give its written consent to such assignment, sale, transfer or disposal.

**Amended by [\[Act No. 13 of 2019\]](#)**

### **23A. Due diligence**

(1) In the exercise of its powers under Part IV of this Act, the Authority shall conduct such due diligence exercise as it may determine.

- (2) In carrying out the due diligence exercise under subsection (1), the Authority may –
- (a) consider such reliable and independent source documents or information as it may determine; and
  - (b) seek assistance from such competent authorities or person as it may determine.

(3) The powers of the Authority under this section may, notwithstanding subsection (1), be used in such circumstances as the Authority may determine and shall not be limited to the exercise of the Authority's power under Part IV.

**Amended by [\[Act No. 13 of 2019\]](#); [\[Act No. 18 of 2021\]](#)**

### **24. Variation and revocation of licence**

- (1) A licensee may make a written application to the Authority to vary the terms and conditions of his licence and the Authority may accede to the request subject to such conditions as it thinks fit.
- (2) Subject to subsections (5) and (7), the Authority may revoke a licence where it is satisfied that -
- (a) the licensee has failed to operate within 6 months of the issue of the licence or within such additional period as may be allowed by the Authority;
  - (b) the licensee has ceased his operation under his licence;
  - (c) the licensee has given to the Authority information which is false or misleading in a material particular;
  - (d) the licensee has failed to comply with the code of conduct specified in the Second Schedule;
  - (e) it is in the public interest to do so;



- (f) the licensee no longer satisfies any of the conditions set out under section 19.
- (3) revoke a licence subject to subsections (5) and (7), the Authority may where it is satisfied that the licensee has contravened this Act or any regulations made under this Act of a term or condition of his licence.
- (4) Subject to subsections (5) and (7), the Authority may vary the terms and conditions of a licence for the reasons specified in subsection (2).
- (5) Where the Authority is of the view that a licence should be revoked or varied, it shall give written notice of its intention to the licensee together with the reasons therefor.
- (6) The Authority shall, in a notice under subsection (5), require the licensee to show cause in writing, within such time as maybe specified in the notice, why the licence should not be revoked or varied.
- (7) The Authority shall, after considering the explanations of the licensee inform him in writing of its decision and the reasons for its decision.

## **25. Suspension of licence**

- (1) Notwithstanding section 24, where the Authority is satisfied that-
  - (a) the licensee has failed to start operations within 6 months of the issue of the licence or within such additional period as may be allowed by the Authority;
  - (b) the licensee has ceased his operation under his licence;
  - (c) the licensee has given the Authority information which is false or misleading in a material particular;
  - (d) the licensee has failed to comply with the code of conduct specified in the Second Schedule;
  - (e) it is in the public interest to do so,it may suspend a licence.
- (2) Any decision taken under subsection (1) shall -
  - (a) be notified in writing to the licensee;
  - (b) have effect for not more than 21 days.

## **26. Register of licences**

- (1) The Director shall keep a register of every licence and of its essential particulars.
- (2) The register shall be open to inspection by the public.

- (3) The Director shall keep the register up to date and shall register any transfer, surrender, variation, revocation or suspension of a licence.

**27. Derogation in respect of and restrictions on broadcasting by Corporation**

- (1) Subject to subsection (2) the Authority shall issue to the Corporation at the commencement of this Act, a licence, which shall be valid for a period of 10 years, in respect of any broadcasting service which at that date the Corporation is providing to the general public, and which the Corporation continues, in whole or in part to provide, and in respect of which a fee is payable in accordance with the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation (Collection of Licence Fees) Act 1984.
- (2) For the purposes of subsection (1) a broadcasting service provided only upon payment of a subscription fee shall not be regarded as being provided to the general public.

**28. Broadcasting transmission Company**

- (1) Subject to subsection (4), the Company shall have the exclusive right –
  - (a) to carry on the business of terrestrial broadcasting;
  - (b) to act as Multiplex Operator for the operation and management of digital broadcasting platforms, including multiplexing and distribution of licensees' broadcast programs, maintenance of a Conditional Access System and the provision of interactive services; and
  - (c) to act as the exclusive terrestrial Multiplex Operator for digital terrestrial television broadcasting.
- (2) All transmission stations and any equipment or asset relating thereto and owned or operated by the Corporation shall, within such period after the incorporation as may be determined by the Minister, be transferred to and vest in the Company on such terms and conditions as the Minister may determine.
- (3) No person shall cause any broadcasting to be transmitted otherwise than in accordance with section 18.
- (4)
  - (a) The Company shall, for the purpose of acting as a Multiplex Operator, apply to the Information Communication and Technologies Authority for the appropriate licence and approvals for the use of radio frequencies or the transmission of digital broadcasting.
  - (b) Pending the determination of the application made under paragraph (a), the Company shall be considered to be licensed under the Information and Communication Technologies Act to operate a Multiplex platform.

Amended by [\[Act No. 9 of 2015\]](#)

**PART V – ADMINISTRATIVE PENALTY AND INDEPENDENT  
BROADCASTING REVIEW PANEL – Amended by [\[Act No. 18 of 2021\]](#) (Refer to Section 20  
of Act No. 18 of 2021)**

**Sub-Part A – Administrative Penalty**

**29. Administrative penalty**

- (1) In the exercise of its powers under section 5(5), the Authority may impose an administrative penalty on a licensee.
- (2) (a) Without prejudice to the sanctions provided in sections 24 and 25, the Authority may impose an administrative penalty on any licensee who refrains from complying, or negligently failed to comply, with the Act or regulations made under the Act, Codes, any direction of the Authority or any conditions of his licence.
- (b) The Authority shall, when determining the quantum of the administrative penalty to be imposed on the licensee, consider, inter alia, the gravity of the breach committed by the licensee and his compliance with the Act.
- (3) (a) The Authority may cause to be published in the Gazette, in such form and manner as it may determine, a public notice setting out the administrative penalty which is imposed on a licensee.
- (b) The notice under paragraph (a) shall not contain any information which the Authority considers to be sensitive.
- (4) An administrative penalty imposed under this Act shall not exceed 500,000 rupees.
- (5) The imposition of an administrative penalty under this Act shall be without prejudice to any other power, penalty, sanction or remedy provided under this Act.

**29A. Disciplinary proceedings**

- (1) Where the Director has reason to believe that a licensee –
  - (a) has contravened this Act or regulations made under this Act, the Codes, any direction or any condition of his licence
  - (b) has not complied with the Laws of Mauritius;
  - (c) has committed a financial crime offence;

(d) no longer fulfils any condition or criterion specified under the Act for the grant of a licence;

(e) is not a fit and proper person

he may refer the matter to the Authority for a decision.

(2) The Authority may decide to impose an administrative penalty or refer the matter to an appropriate body.

(3) (a) The Director may also refer to the Authority a public complaint in relation to the matters referred to in section 29A(1)(a).

(b) A person aggrieved by a broadcast, or his authorised agent, may, within 30 days of the broadcast, make a complaint in writing to the Director.

(4) Where a matter is referred under subsection (1) or (3) and the Authority considers that the imposition of an administrative penalty is warranted, it shall, in a notice issued to the licensee specify –

(a) the intention of the Authority to impose an administrative penalty;

(b) the type and terms of the administrative penalty; and

(c) the right of the licensee to make written representations to the Authority within such delay as the Authority may determine in the circumstances, but not exceeding 21 days from the date of the notice.

(5) Where –

(a) after considering the written representations under subsection (4)(c); or

(b) no written representations are received within the delay specified in the notice under subsection (4)(c); and

(c) the Authority decides to maintain its recommendation for the imposition of an administrative penalty,

it shall issue a written notification to the licensee, stating the type and the terms of the administrative penalty.

(6) Any licensee who is aggrieved by the decision of the Authority under subsection (5) –

(a) may, within 21 days of the issue of the written notification, make an application to the Secretary of the Independent Broadcasting Review Panel specifying the reasons for a review of the decision; and

(b) shall, at the same time, file a copy of his application with the Authority.

- (7) Where a licensee is unable to make an application within the delay specified in subsection (6)(a) and he proves to the satisfaction of the Independent Broadcasting Review Panel that his inability to do so was due to illness or any other reasonable cause, the Independent Broadcasting Review Panel may accept to hear the belated application on such terms and conditions as it may determine.
- (8) Notwithstanding an application under subsection (6)(a) but subject to subsection (10), the decision of the Authority under subsection (5) shall be given effect immediately after the period of 21 days from the date of the decision.
- (9) The decision of the Authority shall be published in the Gazette in such form and manner as the Director may determine.
- (10) The Independent Broadcasting Review Panel may, after hearing the person aggrieved by the decision or upon examination of an application under subsection (6), within 7 days of a receipt of the application and pending the hearing of the application on its merits, suspend the implementation of the decision of the Authority under subsection (5) on such terms and conditions as it may determine.
- (11) Any administrative penalty issued by the Authority pursuant to its powers under section 5(5) shall be a debt due to the Authority and may be recovered by the Authority as a civil debt in a Court of competent jurisdiction.
- (12) Any administrative penalty paid to the Authority shall be credited to the General Fund.
- (13) This section shall be in addition to, and not in derogation of, the powers of the Authority in sections 24 and 25.
- (14) Nothing in this section shall be construed as limiting the powers of the Authority as provided for in sections 24 and 25 where a licensee has breached subsection (1).

### **Sub-Part B – Independent Broadcasting Review Panel**

#### **30. Independent Broadcasting Review Panel**

- (1) There is set up for the purpose of this Sub-part a review panel which shall be known as the Independent Broadcasting Review Panel.
- (2) Any person aggrieved by a decision of the Authority may apply to the Review Panel for a review of that decision.

### **30A. Membership of Review Panel**

(1) The Review Panel shall consist of –

- (a) a Chairperson, who shall be a barrister-at-law of not less than 5 years standing and who shall, from time to time, be appointed by the Minister on such terms and conditions as the Minister may determine; and
- (b) 2 members having wide experience in the field of broadcasting policy and media issues, to be appointed by the Minister.

(2) The Review Panel shall, in the exercise of its functions not be subject to the direction or control of any other person or authority.

(3)(a) The Review Panel shall sit on an ad hoc basis.

- (b) At any sitting of the Review Panel, 2 members shall constitute a quorum.

(4) The Director shall designate an officer of the Authority to act as Secretary to the Review Panel.

### **30B. Termination of appointment**

- (1) The Chairperson of the Review Panel may resign by giving one month's notice in writing to the Minister.
- (2) The Chairperson of the Review Panel shall cease to hold office where he is unfit to be the Chairperson because of breach of trust, misconduct or default in the discharge of his duties.

### **30C. Staff of Review Panel**

The Authority shall extend such technical, administrative and secretarial assistance as may be necessary to enable the Review Panel to properly discharge its functions under the Act.

### **30D. Composition of Review Panel for particular matters**

- (1) The Review Panel may co-opt a person having experience in the field of broadcasting, journalism, communication, finance or law for the purposes of dealing with a particular application for review.
- (2) A person co-opted under subsection (1) shall be deemed to be a member of the Review Panel for the purpose of that particular application for review.

- (3) A person co-opted under subsection (1) shall not have the right to vote.

### **30E. Disclosure of interests by members of Review Panel**

Any member of the Review Panel shall, in relation to any matter before the Review Panel, in which he or any person related to him by blood or marriage has a pecuniary or other material interest –

(a) disclose the nature of the interest in writing to the Chairperson of the Review Panel and where the member is the Chairperson of the Review Panel, to the other members of the Review Panel, before the meeting convened to discuss that matter; and

(b) not take part in any deliberations of the Review Panel relating to that matter without the approval of the other members of the Review Panel.

### **30F. Conduct of reviews**

(1) Where the subject of an application for review is a decision of Authority, the Authority shall be a party to the proceedings.

(2) The Authority may, in respect of any other decision, be a party to the review proceedings.

(3) (a) Any party to the proceedings before the Review Panel may be represented by counsel or attorney or other representative duly authorised by him who shall be allowed reasonable opportunity to present the case.

(b) The counsel, attorney, or such other person as the party to the proceedings under paragraph (a) may authorise, shall be given reasonable opportunity to present the case.

(4) The Review Panel shall not be bound by the rules of evidence but may remain guided by them on any matter as it considers appropriate in the circumstances.

### **30G. Proceedings of Review Panel**

(1) The Review Panel shall hold hearings which shall be conducted in public unless otherwise directed by the Independent Broadcasting Review Panel.

(2) The Review Panel shall sit at such place and time as the Chairperson of the Review Panel may determine.

(3) The Review Panel shall regulate its proceedings as it may determine and shall ensure that proceedings are conducted in a manner which is consistent with the rules of natural justice and procedural fairness.

- (4) The Chairperson of the Review Panel may make rules, not inconsistent with this Act, for or with respect to the proceedings of the Review Panel.
- (5) Regulations may provide for the payment of costs by the parties in relation to the matter before the Review Panel.

### **30H. Powers of Review Panel**

In the exercise of its functions under this Act, the Review Panel may –

- (a) administer an oath, an affirmation or a declaration;
- (b) proceed in the absence of a party who, by notice, has been given a reasonable period to attend the proceedings; or
- (c) from time to time, adjourn the proceedings.
- (d) summon a person to appear before the Review Panel to –
  - (i) give evidence; or
  - (ii) produce documents in the possession, custody or control of the person or persons named in the summons;
- (e) require a person appearing before the Review Panel to give evidence either on oath or affirmation.

### **30I. Protection of persons before Review Panel**

- (1) A law practitioner or other person appearing before the Review Panel on behalf of a party shall have the same protection and immunity as a law practitioner, legal consultant or law firm has in appearing for a party in proceedings before the Supreme Court.
- (2) Subject to this Act, a person summoned to attend or to appear before the Review Panel as a witness shall have the same protection, and shall, in addition to the penalties provided by this Act, be subject to the same liabilities as a witness in proceedings before the Supreme Court.

### **30J. Offences relating to proceedings of Review Panel**

Any person who, without reasonable cause –

- (a) fails to attend the Review Panel after having been summoned to do so;



- (b) refuses to take an oath before the Review Panel, or to answer fully and satisfactorily to the best of his knowledge and belief any question lawfully put to him in any proceedings before the Review Panel or to produce documents when required to do so;
- (c) knowingly gives false evidence, or evidence which he knows to be misleading, before the Review Panel;
- (d) at any hearing of the Review Panel –
  - (i) wilfully insults a member;
  - (ii) wilfully interrupts or disturbs the proceedings; or
- (d) does any other act or thing that would, if the Review Panel were a Court of law, constitute a contempt of the Court,  
  
shall commit an offence and shall, on conviction, be liable to a fine not exceeding 100,000 rupees and to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 3 years.

### **30K. Determination of Review Panel**

- (1) On the hearing of an application for review, the Review Panel may, where the review is conducted pursuant to section 30(2) –
  - (a) confirm, amend or cancel a decision made by the Authority; or
  - (b) remit the matter to the Authority for reconsideration;
- (2) Where there is a disagreement among the members of the Review Panel, the decision of the majority shall be the determination of the Review Panel.
- (3) Any determination of the Review Panel shall –
  - (a) be in writing; and
  - (b) include –
    - (i) the reasons for the determination;
    - (ii) a statement of its findings on material questions of fact; and
    - (iii) a reference to the evidence or other material on which the findings are based.
- (4) The Review Panel shall cause its determination to be served on each party to the proceedings.

- (5) Subject to subsection (6), a determination of the Review Panel shall come into operation on the date of the determination.
- (6) The Review Panel may specify in the determination the date on which the determination is to come into operation.
- (7) Any determination of the Review Panel shall be published in such form and manner as the Review Panel may determine.

### **30L. Judicial review**

Any party who is dissatisfied with a decision of the Review Panel under Sub-Part B may apply to the Supreme Court for a judicial review of the decision.

Amended by [\[Act No. 18 of 2021\]](#)

## **PART VI – MISCELLANEOUS**

### **31. Oath of office**

A Member of the Authority or the Review Panel, the Director and every employee of the Authority shall, before assuming office, take the oath specified in the Third Schedule.

Amended by [\[Act No. 18 of 2021\]](#)

### **32. Conflict of interest**

(1) Where –

- (a) a member;
- (b) a member of the Review Panel; or
- (c) the spouse or any child of a member specified in paragraphs (a) and (b),

has a pecuniary or other material interest in a matter to be determined by the Authority or the Review Panel, as the case may be, that person shall, at or before the meeting at which the matter is to be considered, disclose the interest and not take part in the determination.

- (2) No employee of the Authority shall own or acquire an interest in the activities of a licensee.

- (3) Where an interest in a licensee devolves upon an employee of the Authority, by inheritance or otherwise, he shall, unless the Authority otherwise determines, forthwith dispose of that interest.

Amended by [\[Act No. 18 of 2021\]](#)

### **33. Confidentiality**

No –

(a) member of –

(i) the Authority;

(ii) the Review Panel; or

(b) employee of the Authority,

shall, except in the course, and for the purpose, of the performance of his duties, disclose to any other person anything that comes to his knowledge which relates to a matter which is to be, is being or has been determined by the Authority or the Review Panel.

Amended by [\[Act No. 18 of 2021\]](#)

### **34. Reception apparatus**

- (1) The Authority may in relation to a parabolic antenna or such other reception apparatus as may be prescribed, determine the type and specifications thereof.
- (2) Where a type of, and specifications for, any reception apparatus have been determined pursuant to subsection (1), no person shall import, assemble, use or possess any reception apparatus other than one that is of the type and has the specifications so determined.

Amended by [\[Act No. 18 of 2021\]](#)

### **35. Exemptions**

- (1) Article 910 of the Code Napoleon shall not apply to the Authority.
- (2) The Authority shall not be liable to income tax.
- (3) The Authority shall not pay any charges or duties in respect of any document executed by it or under which it is the sole beneficiary.

### **36. Limitation of liability**

- (a) a member of the Authority or the Review Panel; or
  
- (b) an employee of the Authority shall not be personally liable for any damage or loss suffered by any person in consequence of any act or thing which was done in good faith or done or omitted in the course of the exercise or performance of a power, duty or function under this Act.

Amended by [\[Act No. 18 of 2021\]](#)

### **37. Offences**

- (1) Any person who-
  - (a) provides a broadcasting service without being licensed under this Act;
  - (b) contravenes the terms and conditions of his licence;
  - (a) assigns or transfers his licence without the written consent of the Authority;
  - (b) being summoned to attend a hearing, give evidence or produce any document, record or other matter, fails to do so;
  - (c) being an employee of the Authority, owns or acquires an interest in the activities of a licensee;
  - (d) being a member or employee specified in section 35, discloses, without any reasonable cause, to any person anything that comes to his knowledge relating to any matter which is to be is being or has been determined by a body specified in that section;
  - (g) otherwise contravenes any provision of this Act, shall commit an offence.
  
- (2) Any person who commits an offence shall, on conviction, be liable to a fine not exceeding 500,000 rupees and to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 5 years.

Amended by [\[Act No. 18 of 2021\]](#)

### **38. Regulations**

- (1) The Authority may make such regulations as it thinks fit for the purposes of this Act.

- (2) The Authority may, by regulations, amend the Schedules.
- (3) Any regulations made under subsection (1) may provide-
  - (a) for the levying of fees or charges;
  - (b) that any person who contravenes them shall commit an offence and shall, on conviction, be liable to a fine not exceeding 500,000 rupees and to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 5 years.

Amended by [\[Act No. 18 of 2021\]](#)

### **39. Consequential amendments**

- (1) The Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation Act 1982 is amended -
  - (a) in section 3(3), by inserting immediately after the words "this Act" the words "and the Independent Broadcasting Authority Act 2000";
  - (b) by repealing section 18.
- (2) The Statutory Bodies (Accounts and Audit) Act is amended in Part II of the Schedule by inserting the following body in its appropriate alphabetical order -

Independent Broadcasting Authority

### **40. Transitional provisions**

- (1) For the purposes of the Statutory Bodies (Accounts and Audit) Act, the period extending from the commencement of this Act to 30 June next following shall be deemed to be the first financial year of the Authority.
- (2) Section 7(1) of the Statutory Bodies (Accounts and Audit) Act shall not apply to the first financial year of the Authority.

### **41. Commencement**

Proclaimed by [\[Proclamation No. 44 of 2000\]](#) w.e.f 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2001

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## **FIRST SCHEDULE**

*(section 2)*

# LICENCES

## Part I

### Radio Broadcasting Licences

**1. Public Radio Medium Wave Broadcasting Licence**

To establish and operate a radio broadcasting service in the medium wave frequency band on those frequencies allocated to the Corporation and in terms of the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation Act.

**2. Public Radio FM Broadcasting Licence**

To establish and operate a radio broadcasting service in the VHF FM band on those frequencies allocated to the Corporation and in terms of the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation Act.

**3. Private Commercial Free to Air Medium Wave Radio Broadcasting Licence**

To establish and operate a private commercial free to air radio broadcasting service in the medium wave frequency band on those frequencies allocated to the licensee.

**4. Private Commercial Free to Air FM Radio Broadcasting Licence**

To establish and operate a private commercial free to air broadcasting service in the VHF FM band on those frequencies allocated to the licensee.

**5. Deleted by [\[Act No. 18 of 2021\]](#)**

**6. Narrowcasting Radio Licence**

To establish and operate a private radio broadcasting service whose reception is limited to

-

(a) a specific audience in a precise location;

(b) specific events held over a limited period of time;

(c) programme of limited appeal.

Amended by [\[Act No. 18 of 2021\]](#)

## Part II

### Terrestrial Television Broadcasting Licences

#### 1. Public Television Broadcasting Licence

To establish and operate a public television broadcasting service in the VHF/UHF Television frequency band on each multiplex allocated to the Corporation by the Multiplex Operator.

Amended by [\[GN No. 87 of 2018\]](#)

#### 2. Private Commercial Television Broadcasting Licence

To establish and operate a private television broadcasting service in the VHF/UHF Television frequency band on those frequencies allocated to the licensee.

## Part III

### Subscription Television Broadcasting Licences

#### 1. Subscription Television Rebroadcasting Licence

To establish and operate a subscription television rebroadcasting service whereby television signals received by any technological means are retransmitted for reception by subscribers through the Company on payment of a monthly subscription fee.

#### 2. Subscription Television Direct to Home Satellite Broadcasting Providers Licence

To provide television services to the public whereby television signals are transmitted by satellites for direct reception by the general public via receive-only dish antennas and decoders managed by the services provider upon payment of a monthly subscription fee.

**2A. Subscription Television Direct to Home Satellite Broadcasting Services Provider Licence (For companies operating only elsewhere than in Mauritius)**

To provide subscription television direct to home satellite broadcasting services to the public elsewhere than in Mauritius, whereby television signals are transmitted by satellite for direct reception by the general public, upon payment of a monthly subscription fee.

Added by [\[Act No. 20 of 2009\]](#)

**2B. Subscription Television Direct to Home Satellite Broadcasting and Rebroadcasting Services Provider Licence**

To provide television services to the public whereby television signals are transmitted by satellites for direct reception by the general public via receive-only dish antennas and decoders and simultaneously allow the same signals received to be retransmitted for direct reception by the general public on multi platforms managed by the services provider on payment of a monthly subscription fee.

Added by [\[GN No. 153 of 2016\]](#)

**3. Subscription Cable Television Broadcasting Provider Licence**

To provide television services to the public via a cable network to which the general public is connected upon payment of a monthly subscription fee.

**4. Internet Protocol Television Service Licence**

To establish and operate a service which provides scheduled television programming over a public network and which may provide additional features such as data, text and audio signals which are ancillary to the scheduled television programming.

Amended by [\[Act No. 9 of 2015\]](#)

**Part IV  
Other Licences**



1. Deleted by [\[Act No. 18 of 2021\]](#)

2. **Narrowcasting Television Licence**

(1) To establish and operate a private narrowcasting television licence service whose reception is limited to –

- (a) a specific audience in a precise location;
- (b) specific events held over a limited period of time;
- (c) programme of limited appeal.

(2) The narrowcasting television licence service will be issued in the following categories-

- (a) horseracing broadcasts, per event;
- (b) commercial broadcasts, per day/event/meeting; or
- (c) social or cultural broadcast, per day/event/meeting.

Subscription Television Rebroadcasting Services Licence.  
Subscription Television Direct to Home Satellite Broadcasting  
Service Provider Licence"

Amended by [\[GN No. 38 of 2002\]](#); [\[GN No. 153 of 2016\]](#); [\[Act No. 44 of 2001\]](#); [\[Act No. 18 of 2021\]](#)

**SECOND SCHEDULE**

(sections 21, 24, 25)

**CODE OF CONDUCT FOR BROADCASTING SERVICES**

## 1. Preamble

The fundamental principle to be upheld is that the freedom of all broadcasting licensees is indivisible from, and subject to, the same restraints as those relevant to the individual person, and is founded on the individual's right to be informed and to freely receive and disseminate opinions.

## 2. General

Broadcasting licensees shall -

- (a) not broadcast any material which is indecent, obscene or offensive to public morals or offensive to the religious convictions or feelings of any section of the population or likely to prejudice the safety of the State or the public order or relations between sections of the population;
- (b) not, without due care and sensitivity present material which depicts or relates to brutality, violence, atrocities, drug abuse and obscenity;
- (c) exercise due care and responsibility in the presentation of programmes where a large number of children are likely to be part of the audience.

## 3. News

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- (1) Broadcasting licensees shall report news truthfully, accurately and objectively.
- (2) News shall be presented in the correct context and in a balanced manner, without intentional or negligent departure from the facts, whether by -
  - (a) distortion, exaggeration or misrepresentation;
  - (b) material omission; or
  - (c) summarization.
- (3) Only that which may reasonably be true, having due regard to the source of the news, may be presented as fact, and such facts shall be broadcast fairly with due regard to context and importance. Where a report is not based on fact or is founded on opinion, supposition, rumors or allegations, it shall be presented in such manner as to indicate clearly that such is the case.
- (4) Where there is reason to doubt the correctness of a report and it is practicable to verify the correctness thereof, it shall be verified. Where such verification is not practicable, that fact shall be mentioned in the report.
- (5) Where it subsequently appears that a broadcast report was incorrect in a material respect, it shall be rectified forthwith, without reservation or delay. The rectification shall be presented with such a degree of prominence and timing as may be adequate and fair so as to readily attract attention.

- (6) Reports, photograph or video material relating to matters involving indecency or obscenity shall be presented with due sensitivity, due regard being had to the prevailing moral climate. In particular, broadcasting licensees shall avoid the broadcasting of obscene and lascivious matter.
- (7) The identity of rape victims and Other victims of sexual violence shall not be divulged in any broadcast without the prior consent of the victim concerned.

#### **4 Comment**

- (1) Broadcasting licensees shall be entitled to comment on and criticize events of public importance.
- (2) Comment shall be presented in such manner that it appears clearly to be comment, and shall be made on facts truly stated or fairly indicated and referred to.
- (4) Comment shall be an honest expression of opinion.

#### **5. Controversial issues of public importance**

- (1) In presenting a programme in which controversial issues of public importance are discussed, a broadcasting licensee shall make reasonable efforts to fairly present significant points of view either in the same programme or in a subsequent programme forming part of the same series of programmes presented within a reasonable period of time and in substantially the same time slot.
- (2) A person whose views have been criticized in a broadcasting programme on a controversial issue of public importance shall be given a reasonable opportunity by the broadcasting licensee to reply to such criticism, should that person so request.

#### **6. Elections**

During any period starting, in respect of National Assembly Elections, on the day of election and ending on the day poll is to be taken, all licensees shall comply with such guidelines as shall be issued by the Authority.

#### **7. Privacy**

In so far as both news and comment are concerned, broadcasting licensees shall exercise exceptional care and consideration in matters involving the private lives and private concerns of individuals, bearing in mind that the right to privacy may be overridden by a legitimate public interest.

#### **8. Paying a criminal for information**

No payment shall be made to persons involved in crime or other notorious behaviour, or to persons who have been engaged in crime or other notorious behaviour, in order to obtain information concerning any such behaviour, unless compelling societal interests indicate the contrary.

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**THIRD SCHEDULE**

[ Sections 30H, 30J and 31]

**OATH**

I, ....., holder of National Identity Card number .....,  
being appointed Chairperson/Member/Director/employee\* of the Authority/the Independent  
Broadcasting Review Panel\* do hereby swear/solemnly affirm\* that I will, to the best of my  
judgment, act for the furtherance of the objects of the Authority/ Independent Broadcasting  
Review Panel and shall not, on any account and at any time, disclose, otherwise than with the  
authorisation of the Authority, or where it is strictly necessary for the performance of my duties,  
any confidential information obtained by me by virtue of my official capacity.

.....

Taken by me

.....

Master and Registrar  
Supreme Court

*\* Delete as appropriate*

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Amended by [\[Act No. 18 of 2021\]](#)