

Media Statement: Broadband roll-out project in the OR Tambo District Municipality.

Sunday, 12 February 2017

Today, Sunday 12 February 2017, the OR Tambo district municipality is proud to announce the commencement of the first phase of the Broadband roll out project with in two (2) of its local municipalities in the district.

The district municipality was earmarked by the President of the Republic of South Africa, Mr Jacob Zuma in his 2015 State of the Nation Address (SoNA) as one of the eight district municipalities that were prioritised for the first phase of broadband roll-out aimed at changing the living conditions of citizens and boosting the local economic growth.

The project seeks to expand, modernise and increase universal access to Information and Communications Technologies (ICT's) infrastructure and electronic communication services, including broadband in the rural area within South Africa.

The Broadband roll out project is guided by a policy and strategy approved by Cabinet, "South Africa Connect", in December 2014 that aims to connect government offices in the eight district municipalities including the OR Tambo district.

This project will address many of the challenges experienced by local Government, local business and citizens of the municipalities. The project will provide voice and high-speed data connectivity services.

Through the Universal Service and Access Agency of South Africa (USAASA) a State Owned Company, under the Minister of Telecommunications and Postal Services, Dr

Siyabonga Cwele, work has commenced on the broadband roll out project in the OR Tambo district.

USAASA is tasked, through the Universal Service Access Fund (USAF), with bridging the digital divide by ensuring universal access to ICTs in especially in the underservices areas with South Africa.

USAASA, in the interest of fulfilling its mandate issued a once off subsidy to Brightwave Technologies, a 100 percent black owned licensed operator to construct and/or extend broadband infrastructure and provide services thereof in the King Sabata Dalindyebo (“KSD”) Local Municipality and Mhlontlo Local Municipality which are part of the OR Tambo District Municipality. The project is a private public partnership the is co-funded by Brightwave Technologies (Pty) Ltd.

“This broadband initiative facilitated by USAASA will enhance the ICT status in under-serviced areas within the Mlontlo and KSD local municipalities and address a need for an integrated broadband network towards the development and creation of smart villages.” said Lumko Mtimde, the CEO of USAASA

The project commenced in the third quarter the 2016/ 2017 financial year and has thus far produced site installation to 22 health facilities and 31 education facilities in KSD local municipality and site installation to 13 health facilities within Mlontlo local municipality.

PROJECT BRIEF

Aligned to the SA Connect policy, health facilities, schools, government buildings were identified as primary sites. The contract is expected to provide:

- a. **Backhaul Infrastructure:** Construction and/or upgrading (if existing) of backhaul infrastructure to connect the sample municipality to the nearest national backbone Point-of-Presence (“POP”).
- b. **Access Infrastructure:** Construction and/or upgrading (if existing) of base stations or network points to ensure broadband coverage over the sample municipality. Deployment of public WI-FI Hotspots of interest locations, the list of which shall be provided during project implementation.

- c. **Connectivity to Organisations and Institutions:** Provide dedicated broadband connectivity services to Organisations and Institutions located within the selected sample municipality. Organisations and Institutions may include Government Buildings, Educational Institutions, Health Facilities, Medium to Large Enterprises and others.
- d. **Connectivity to Inhabitants:** Provide broadband connectivity services to all inhabitants of the selected municipality, should they choose to take up said services. Inhabitants include individuals, households and small businesses.

King Sabata Dalindyebo is expected to have 10 Backhaul Sites and 589 Access Network Sites and Mhlontlo to have 7 Backhaul Sites and 420 Access Network Sites.

A total of 609 priority sites will be completed in March 2017 and the balance of 400 subsidised by Brightwave Technologies in November 2018.

EMPLOYMENT AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The contract is expected to create employment and enterprise development opportunities which amongst others include:

A. Opportunities Created to date

The following two companies have been selected and are already on board:

- Zaneth GT Trading
- Gidadumela Trading

On the 9 February 2017, Brightwave Technologies trained the listed companies on configuring of equipment and on how to install them:

- Abangula ICT Solutions
- DFND Networks
- Mvundla Networks
- FICE Strategic
- That Guy IT Solutions

Each company, led by young black people, is expected to have at the least 6 members.

B. Further Employment Opportunities

- Technical: equipment installation and commissioning, electrical installation, call centre, IT support, etc.;
- Sales: sales agents, digital/brand ambassadors, marketing, etc.
- Administration: Office manager, project managers, general workers (cleaners, drivers, etc.), in-service training for graduates.

C. Enterprise and Economic Development

- Empowerment of local Internet Service Providers (ISPs) and creation of new ones;
- Support and establishment of local Internet Cafes
- Creation of Co-operatives or Brightwave franchises
- Creation and support of local systems integrators to provide the likes of Microsoft Office 365; SAP
- Support to local B&Bs. Already in the process of signing a long term accommodation lease.
- Support of local landlords for warehousing, Data Centre, offices and conference facilities;
- Support for car hire companies;

“We anticipate that this broadband project will not only improve government service through efficient service delivery, but also facilitate the availability of specialised content and applications such as e-Health for local clinics and hospitals, e-Education for teachers and learners, e-Agriculture for local farmers to gain access to agricultural markets and e-Commerce for our local SMMEs” says The Honourable Executive Mayor, Ms Nomakhosazana Meth.

End/

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Issued jointly by:

**OR Tambo District Municipality and Universal Service and Access Agency of
South Africa (USAASA)**