



National Communications Authority
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الهيئة الوطنية للاتصالات

Guidelines On

Licence-Exempt Use Of Wireless Broadband Devices And Notification-Based Community Connectivity Networks

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National Communications Authority
Federal Republic of Somalia

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1. Introduction

These *Guidelines on License-Exempt Use of Wireless Broadband Devices and Notification-Based Community Connectivity Networks* are issued by the National Communications Authority (NCA) pursuant to its mandate under the National Communications Law, 2017, and in accordance with the Unified Licensing Framework adopted in November 2020.

The Guidelines establish a clear, proportionate regulatory framework for the use of license-exempt wireless broadband technologies and the operation of non-commercial, community-based connectivity networks under a notification regime. They are designed to remove unnecessary regulatory barriers while safeguarding efficient spectrum use, preventing harmful interference, and maintaining a clear distinction between commercial telecommunications services and non-commercial connectivity initiatives.

In response to Somalia's connectivity needs—particularly for schools, healthcare facilities, public institutions, and underserved communities—these Guidelines provide legal certainty for the deployment of low-power, shared-spectrum technologies that can support affordable, innovative, and locally driven connectivity solutions.

2. Objectives

The objectives of these Guidelines are to:

- a) Promote universal and affordable access to connectivity, particularly for social, educational, health, humanitarian, and public-sector use cases.
- b) Enable non-commercial and community-based networks to operate under a simplified, notification-based regulatory regime with minimal administrative burden.
- c) Encourage efficient and responsible use of license-exempt spectrum and low-power wireless technologies.
- d) Provide regulatory clarity by clearly distinguishing license-exempt and non-commercial connectivity use from licensed commercial telecommunications services.
- e) Support innovation and local connectivity initiatives while ensuring compliance with technical standards and interference-management requirements.

3. Legal Basis

These Guidelines are issued pursuant to the powers vested in the National Communications Authority under the National Communications Law, 2017. In particular, Article 6 authorizes the NCA to issue decisions, regulations, and directives necessary for the regulation, management, and orderly development of the telecommunications market. In addition, Article 61 requires the NCA to promote universal and affordable access to communications services, including measures that facilitate inclusive and widespread connectivity.

4. Definitions

For the purpose of these Guidelines:

- Licence-Exempt means authorization to operate wireless devices or networks without an individual or class license, subject to compliance with technical and operational conditions.
- Community Network means a non-commercial connectivity network established to serve a defined community, institution, or social purpose.
- A notification is a simple declaration submitted to the NCA for information and monitoring purposes, without prior approval or a fee.
- Wireless Broadband Device means radio equipment used for data transmission over short or medium range using shared or license-exempt spectrum.
- Non-Commercial Use means use not intended for profit-making, resale, or public commercial telecommunications services.

5. Licence-Exempt Wireless Broadband Devices

5.1 The following wireless broadband devices and technologies are **license-exempt** and may be used without individual or class licensing, provided they comply with applicable technical standards and power limits set by the NCA:

- a) Wi-Fi devices operating in licence-exempt frequency bands;
- b) Short-Range Devices (SRDs), including Bluetooth and RFID;
- c) Internet of Things (IoT) and Machine-to-Machine (M2M) devices;
- d) Low-Power Wide Area Network (LPWAN) technologies;
- e) Wireless sensors and similar low-power data transmission devices.

5.2 License-exempt use does not grant any right to exclusive spectrum access or protection from interference.

6. Notification-Based Community Connectivity Networks

5.1 Eligible Networks

The following networks qualify for **notification-based authorization**.

- a) Community networks established for social or community purposes;
- b) School connectivity networks;
- c) Hospital and healthcare facility networks;
- d) Government internal networks;
- e) Connectivity networks operated by humanitarian or non-governmental organizations.

5.2 Conditions

5.2.1 Community connectivity networks shall:

- a) Operate on a non-commercial basis;
- b) Use licence-exempt spectrum only;
- c) Not provide public commercial telecommunications services;
- d) Not interconnect with public switched telecommunications networks for voice services.

5.4 LTE and 5G technologies are excluded from this regime and shall remain subject to full individual licensing and spectrum authorization.

5.4 Notification Procedure

- a) Operators shall submit a simple notification to the NCA containing:
 - Name of the entity or institution;
 - Purpose of the network;
 - General location and coverage area;
 - Technology used
 - Contact details.
- b) No application fee or administrative charge shall apply.
- c) Submission of notification does not constitute a licence and does not require prior approval.

7. Obligations of Users

All users operating under these Guidelines shall:

- a) Avoid causing harmful interference to licensed services;
- b) Comply with applicable technical standards and power limits;
- c) Use equipment approved or recognized by the NCA;
- d) Cooperate with the NCA in case of interference or compliance investigations;
- e) Ensure that the network remains within the declared non-commercial scope.

8. Prohibited Activities

The following activities are strictly prohibited under these Guidelines:

- a) Provision of commercial telecommunications services to the public;
- b) Use of LTE or 5G technologies;
- c) Sale or resale of connectivity services;
- d) Operation of exclusive or protected spectrum networks.

9. Monitoring, Enforcement, and Transition

- a) The NCA may monitor and inspect networks operating under these Guidelines.

- b) Where a network exceeds the scope of licence-exempt or notification-based use, the NCA may require the operator to apply for an appropriate licence under the Unified Licensing Framework.
- c) The NCA may suspend or prohibit operation in cases of non-compliance or harmful interference.

10. Final Provisions

- a) These Guidelines shall enter into force on the date of issuance by the National Communications Authority.
- b) The NCA may review and update these Guidelines as necessary to reflect technological and market developments.