

# Communications and Digital Technologies SOEs merge

The Department of Communications and Digital Technologies has embarked on a process to merge some of its entities in line with the state owned enterprises (SOEs) rationalisation plan.



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These mergers are in line with last year's State of the Nation Address by the President, committing government to undertake a process of rationalisation of SOEs, in an effort to ensure that they serve strategic economic or developmental purposes.

"The state signal distributor Sentech will be merged with Broadband Infraco to form one state broadband infrastructure company. Domain name authority Zanda, the Film and Publications Board, and Icasa will merge to form one regulator.

"The Universal Service and Access Agency of South Africa will be repurposed to establish a state-owned digital fund company," the Ministry of Communications and Digital Technologies said on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, the Minister of Communications and Digital Technologies, Stella Ndabeni-Abrahams, has met with Board Chairpersons and Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) from the respective entities of her department.

The meeting follows a performance agreement that was signed between the Minister and President Cyril Ramaphosa last

month, to ensure that the department and its entities deliver on key targets.

The chairpersons and CEO's of entities, which fall within the department's portfolio, have pledged their support in ensuring that the Minister meets all the targets agreed on in the performance discussion with the President.

"There is an undertaking that the board chairpersons and CEOs of the respective entities will work closely to leverage on each other's strengths, and collaborate on key projects to avoid duplications. I must add that their commitment was quite encouraging," Ndabeni-Abrahams said.

The State Information Technology Agency (Sita) is currently collaborating with the South African Post Office (Sapo) to roll out information technology infrastructure to improve efficiencies within Sapo.

The department as a policy-formulating entity, relies on the government entities within its portfolio, to implement most of these policies.

The performance agreement with the President is legally binding and will be used for measuring the success of the department. Targets in the agreement include the following:

- 80% of the population must have access to the internet by 2024.
- Policy direction in relation to 5G must be issued by December 2021.
- A reduction in the cost of data must be achieved.
- Monitoring of Icasa and ensuring that the regulator is adequately resource to license 4G spectrum.
- Repositioning of the State Information Technology Agency (Sita) to drive the use of local technologies.
- Completion of decoder rollout and switching-off analogue transmitters for the Broadcasting Digital Migration project by 2021, and rearranging of spectrum radio frequencies.
- Release of special dividend by 2023.

The President has signed performance agreements with all his Cabinet ministers, outlining the targets they will have to meet.

These agreements – which are based on the targets contained in the Medium-Term Strategic Framework – have been made public so that the public can hold those who they elect into office to account.

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