



PBICT STATEMENT ON KEY STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENTS AFFECTING TRANSFORMATION IN THE ICT SECTOR

For Immediate release

13 August 2026

The Progressive Blacks in ICT (PBICT) wishes to update its members, stakeholders and the broader South African public on a series of strategic engagements undertaken with the Department of Communications and Digital Technologies (DCDT), the State Information Technology Agency (SITA), Broadband Infraco (BBI), and industry stakeholders on the proposed amendments to the Electronic Communications Act.

These engagements form part of PBICT's continuing programme to advance meaningful transformation, broaden participation by historically disadvantaged individuals and enterprises, and ensure that public policy and state-led digital programmes contribute towards an inclusive South African digital economy.

ENGAGEMENT WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

On 7 August 2026, the leadership of PBICT met with the Minister of Communications and Digital Technologies. The meeting was also attended by the Director-General and senior departmental leadership, including Chief Executive Officers of SOE's in the department.

The engagement was constructive and focused on the state of transformation within the ICT sector and the institutional mechanisms required to accelerate it.

PBICT raised serious concerns regarding the current functionality of the B-BBEE ICT Sector Council. While the Council was established to monitor transformation and advise the sector, its present configuration has not enabled it to respond adequately, decisively or urgently to the transformational challenges confronting the industry.

PBICT consequently proposed that the Council be reconfigured and strengthened to ensure that it is representative, properly capacitated, accountable and capable of monitoring compliance and driving measurable transformation across the ICT value chain.

The meeting further discussed continued non-compliance with the 30% historically disadvantaged individual ownership requirements contained in the Electronic Communications Act. PBICT maintained that transformation provisions cannot remain policy aspirations without effective monitoring, enforcement and consequences for non-compliance.

The organisation called for greater coordination between the Department, ICASA and other relevant institutions to ensure that licensing and regulatory decisions actively

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (ELECTED: 31/05/2025) #AccessAndOwnership

President: Mr Welcome Magagula • Chairperson: Mr William Ledwaba • Secretary General: Mr Luvo Grey • Treasure General: Mr Larry Smith
Deputy President: Ms Pindiwe Ntuli • Deputy Chairperson: Ms Jacky Mokobaki • First Deputy Secretary General: Ms Alidean Makaba • Second Deputy Secretary General: Mr Sipiwe Maname • Deputy Treasure General: Mr Mandla Phungula

Access and Ownership Coordinator: Victor Bergman • Internet For All Coordinator: Mr Samukelo Khomo • Gate Keepers Must Fall Coordinator: Mr Ohentse Toto • 4IR Steamie Coordinator: Mr Ndumiso Ngcobo
Local is Moja Coordinator: Mr Njabulo Khanyile • WeAre PBICT Coordinator: Mr Bohlale Buzani • School by Day Varsity by Night Coordinator: Ms Simlindiwe Sambo
Additional Members: Mr Sibongile Mbele, Ms Nomcebo Ngubane, Ms Lebogang Mogano, Mr David Manamela



advance transformation and do not entrench existing patterns of market concentration and exclusion.

PBICT further proposed the establishment of structured, twice-yearly engagements between the organisation and the Department. The Minister agreed to this proposal. These engagements will provide a formal platform to monitor progress, address emerging sector challenges and strengthen cooperation between government and organised Black ICT professionals and businesses.

PBICT welcomes this commitment and will work with the Department to ensure that these meetings are institutionalised and supported by clear agendas, measurable commitments and proper follow-through.

ENGAGEMENT WITH BROADBAND INFRACO ON SA CONNECT

PBICT also engaged Broadband Infraco regarding outstanding payments owed to internet service providers participating in the SA Connect programme.

BBI acknowledged the delays, apologised for their impact and reaffirmed its commitment to honouring legitimate payment obligations. PBICT emphasised that delayed payments place emerging service providers under severe financial pressure, threaten jobs and, in some instances, place otherwise viable Black-owned enterprises at risk of insolvency.

PBICT called for a fair and transparent payment process that treats all affected service providers equitably. BBI's Chief Financial Officer undertook to quantify the total outstanding amounts and develop a payment plan with clear timelines.

The engagement also considered the sustainability of connected sites, challenges relating to backhaul, and the circumstances surrounding sites that had been connected but were no longer operational. PBICT maintained that payment disputes, backhaul challenges and site-performance matters must be dealt with transparently and, where appropriate, as separate issues.

PBICT further proposed regular review meetings with BBI to monitor the payment plan, address structural weaknesses in the SA Connect programme and prevent the recurrence of similar problems during future phases.

Successful implementation of SA Connect cannot be achieved at the expense of the very small and emerging service providers that the programme should be helping to develop.

ENGAGEMENT WITH THE (SITA) STATE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AGENCY

During its engagement with SITA, PBICT raised the need for a more decentralised approach to government data infrastructure.



The discussions focused on the development of provincial data-centre capacity, data sovereignty and the importance of ensuring that government and citizen data remain under appropriate public and local control. PBICT believes that decentralised digital infrastructure can create opportunities for local enterprises, strengthen provincial economies, improve resilience and reduce overdependence on a limited number of established service providers.

PBICT and SITA also discussed the need for a dedicated engagement ahead of GovTech. The proposed session will allow stakeholders to identify practical challenges, exchange knowledge and obtain direct answers from SITA on matters affecting small and emerging ICT businesses.

PBICT has offered to facilitate this engagement and proposed the use of a suitable campus auditorium for a substantive, solutions-orientated discussion.

Significantly, SITA agreed to PBICT's proposal to re-establish the SITA Industry Transformation Unit. The Unit will play an important role in monitoring transformation within the ICT sector, strengthening accountability and ensuring that SITA's procurement and industry-development programmes meaningfully advance the participation of Black-owned enterprises, women, young people and historically disadvantaged professionals.

SITA further committed to finalising the outstanding Infrastructure Transversal Contract, RFB 2003, and appointing the successful bidders as a matter of urgency. PBICT emphasised that continued delays in concluding transversal procurement processes create uncertainty for industry participants, restrict market access and negatively affect the ability of emerging enterprises to plan and sustain their operations.

The meeting also reflected on the challenges experienced with the RFB 740 procurement process and the related systems difficulties. SITA acknowledged these challenges and undertook to apply the lessons arising from the process to prevent similar problems in future procurement programmes. PBICT welcomes this acknowledgement and will continue to advocate for procurement systems that are efficient, transparent, accessible and fair to all qualifying participants.

SITA also committed to filling critical vacancies within the organisation. This is necessary to strengthen institutional capacity, improve service delivery and ensure the long-term operational sustainability of the Agency. PBICT stressed that a properly capacitated SITA is essential to the successful implementation of government's digital transformation programme and the advancement of meaningful ICT sector transformation.

PBICT welcomes this commitment and will continue engaging SITA on the Unit's mandate, composition, resourcing and implementation. The re-establishment of the Unit must result in measurable transformation outcomes and should not become a symbolic or administrative structure without the authority and capacity to intervene.



CONSULTATION ON THE ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS AMENDMENT BILL

On 13 August 2026, PBICT convened a consultation with its members on the proposed Electronic Communications Amendment Bill. The session was attended and addressed by Mr Alf Wiltz, Chief Director responsible for Telecommunications and Information Technology Policy at the Department of Communications and Digital Technologies.

The proposed amendments seek to promote greater competition, reduce the cost of data and strengthen digital inclusion. Among the important interventions presented were:

- A “use it or share it” framework allowing ICASA to intervene where assigned spectrum remains unused, with consideration given to SMMEs and community networks.
- Mandatory roaming and Mobile Virtual Network Operator services from operators that have achieved the prescribed population coverage.
- Compulsory leasing of infrastructure declared to be an essential facility, including towers and landing stations.
- A national standard draft by-law to streamline wayleave approvals and facilitate rapid network deployment.
- Stronger market-inquiry and regulatory intervention powers for ICASA.

PBICT welcomes the broad intention of the Bill. However, the organisation cautions that formal equality in access and wholesale pricing will not necessarily produce substantive equality for smaller operators that do not possess the scale, capital or bargaining power of established national incumbents.

Members questioned how ICASA will prevent dominant operators from frustrating infrastructure access through prolonged technical, commercial or “reasonableness” assessments. Members also called for wholesale pricing frameworks that recognise the structural disadvantages confronting SMMEs and Black-owned operators.

PBICT further raised the question of how global satellite and low-Earth-orbit operators entering the South African market will be required to contribute to domestic transformation, local ownership, skills development, infrastructure investment and enterprise development objectives.

No international operator should be permitted to benefit from the South African market while bypassing the country’s transformation framework.

PBICT will consolidate the views received from members into a formal written submission ahead of the 21 August 2026 deadline. The organisation will also seek an urgent engagement with ICASA to understand how the regulator intends to implement and enforce the proposed provisions.

UPCOMING PROGRAMMES AND ENGAGEMENTS

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (ELECTED: 31/05/2025) #AccessAndOwnership

President: Mr Welcome Magagula • Chairperson: Mr William Ledwaba • Secretary General: Mr Luvo Grey • Treasure General: Mr Larry Smith
Deputy President: Ms Pindiwe Ntuli • Deputy Chairperson: Ms Jacky Mokobaki • First Deputy Secretary General: Ms Alidean Makaba • Second Deputy Secretary General: Mr Siphwe Maname • Deputy Treasure General: Mr Mandla Phungula

Access and Ownership Coordinator: Victor Bergman • Internet For All Coordinator: Mr Samukelo Khomo • Gate Keepers Must Fall Coordinator: Mr Ohentse Toto • 4IR Steamie Coordinator: Mr Ndimiso Ngcobo
Local is Moja Coordinator: Mr Njabulo Khanyile • WeAre PBICT Coordinator: Mr Bohlale Buzani • School by Day Varsity by Night Coordinator: Ms Simlindiwe Sambo
Additional Members: Mr Sibongile Mbele, Ms Nomcebo Ngubane, Ms Lebogang Mogano, Mr David Manamela



As part of its programme of action, PBICT will formally engage ICASA on the implementation and enforcement of the proposed ECA amendments, compliance with the 30% HDI requirements, spectrum policy, infrastructure access and the removal of regulatory barriers affecting Black-owned SMMEs.

PBICT is also pleased to announce that it will launch its new membership portal at this year's GovTech Conference. The portal will strengthen communication with members, improve membership administration and create a platform through which members can access opportunities, programmes, policy information and organisational updates.

In addition, PBICT will convene an empowerment session on Dynamic Spectrum Access. The session will equip members and emerging ICT enterprises with a practical understanding of how shared and underutilised spectrum can be used to expand connectivity, stimulate innovation and create new opportunities for participation in the telecommunications sector.

PBICT will host the National Township ICT Economy Symposium in Soweto on 12 October 2026. The Symposium will bring together government, regulators, state-owned entities, industry leaders, township-based enterprises and other stakeholders to develop practical interventions for building connected, inclusive and competitive township digital economies.

The Symposium will focus on expanding infrastructure, improving access to markets and funding, supporting innovation and creating meaningful opportunities for township-based ICT enterprises. Further information regarding the programme, venue and registration process will be communicated in due course.

These programmes form part of PBICT's commitment to ensuring that its members are not merely consulted on developments in the sector, but are properly informed, organised and empowered to participate meaningfully in the digital economy.

THE WAY FORWARD

Across all these engagements, one message remains clear: transformation cannot be reduced to policy statements, compliance reports or commitments without consequences. It must be reflected in ownership, licensing, procurement, infrastructure access, financing, market participation and the growth of sustainable Black-owned ICT enterprises.

PBICT will therefore:

- Pursue the proposed reconfiguration and strengthening of the B-BBEE ICT Sector Council.
- Monitor enforcement of the ECA's 30% HDI provisions.
- Institutionalise twice-yearly engagements with the Department.

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (ELECTED: 31/05/2025) #AccessAndOwnership

President: Mr Welcome Magagula • Chairperson: Mr William Ledwaba • Secretary General: Mr Luvo Grey • Treasure General: Mr Larry Smith
Deputy President: Ms Pindiwe Ntuli • Deputy Chairperson: Ms Jacky Mokobaki • First Deputy Secretary General: Ms Alidean Makaba • Second Deputy Secretary General: Mr Sipiwe Maname • Deputy Treasure General: Mr Mandla Phungula

Access and Ownership Coordinator: Victor Bergman • Internet For All Coordinator: Mr Samukelo Khomo • Gate Keepers Must Fall Coordinator: Mr Ohentse Toto • 4IR Steamie Coordinator: Mr Ndimiso Ngcobo
Local is Moja Coordinator: Mr Njabulo Khanyile • WeAre PBICT Coordinator: Mr Bohlale Buzani • School by Day Varsity by Night Coordinator: Ms Simlindiwe Sambo
Additional Members: Mr Sibongile Mbele, Ms Nomcebo Ngubane, Ms Lebogang Mogano, Mr David Manamela



- Monitor BBI's payment plan and continue advocating for affected SA Connect service providers.
- Advance discussions with SITA on data decentralisation, localisation and opportunities for emerging enterprises.
- Submit a consolidated PBICT position on the Electronic Communications Amendment Bill.
- Seek further engagement with ICASA on the implementation and enforcement of the proposed amendments.

PBICT remains committed to constructive engagement with government, regulators, state-owned entities and the private sector. At the same time, the organisation will continue to speak firmly and act decisively wherever transformation is delayed, diluted or frustrated.

The digital economy must not reproduce the inequalities of the past. It must become an instrument for economic inclusion, industrial development and the meaningful participation of Black professionals, entrepreneurs, young people, women and communities.

ISSUED BY THE PROGRESSIVE BLACKS IN ICT (PBICT)

Enquiries:

Office of the Secretary-General
Progressive Blacks in ICT

luvog@pbict.org

0766180755