

GUIDELINES ON DEPLOYMENT OF SUBMARINE CABLES INTO SINGAPORE

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Info-communications Media Development Authority (the “Authority”) is the lead agency for facilitating the deployment of submarine cable systems into Singapore. The Authority provides guidance to interested parties and facilitates the process for applying for the necessary permits from various authorities.
- 1.2 As of September 2016, Singapore is connected to 17 active submarine cable systems, with a potential bandwidth capacity of more than 410 Tbps. These 17 submarine cable systems are landed in three designated landing sites in Singapore, namely the Changi North landing site, the Tanah Merah landing site, and the Tuas landing site. All new submarine cable systems can only be deployed to designated landing sites and each landing site is available on a first-come-first-served basis.



Map Source: The World Factbook

- 1.3 This set of Guidelines is intended to provide an overview of the process for obtaining the necessary approvals and permits for the deployment of submarine cable into Singapore and to guide the interested parties on the process. There are five key steps that an interested party has to go through to land a submarine cable system in Singapore. They are as follows:
- i) Application to the Authority for a Facilities-Based Operations (FBO) licence or to amend an existing FBO licence to deploy the submarine cable system into Singapore;
 - ii) Consultation with the Maritime Port Authority (MPA) for the proposed submarine cable route;
 - iii) Application to the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) for Land Use Planning and Development Control approvals;
 - iv) Application to MPA (Committee for Marine Projects) for submarine cable corridor and installation approval; and
 - v) Application to Singapore Land Authority (SLA) for Wayleave and Temporary Occupational licences.

2 APPLICATION TO THE AUTHORITY FOR AN FBO LICENCE / AMENDMENT OF EXISTING FBO LICENCE

- 2.1 The first step for applicants interested to land a new submarine cable system into Singapore is to apply to the Authority for an FBO licence, if it does not already hold such a licence. A copy of the application guidelines can be downloaded from the Authority's website www.imda.gov.sg → Regulations, Licensing and Consultations → Licensing → Licences → Licence for the Provision of Telecommunication Services → FBO Licence.
- 2.2 To apply for the FBO licence, the applicant is required to submit a cable landing proposal to the Authority that includes a detailed description of the new cable system, the business plans and details of proposed deployment route and choice of landing site. At this stage, no detailed route of the cable is necessary as the applicant is likely to be in the early phase of planning. The applicant only needs to provide such details when submitting approvals to relevant agencies stated in the following sections. Upon approval by the Authority, the applicant will be awarded an FBO licence.

- 2.3 As for applicants who already hold an FBO licence from the Authority, they will have to write in to seek the Authority's approval to amend the FBO licence to include details of the proposed submarine cable system as well as the associated services.
- 2.4 In general, the Authority's assessment for the new submarine cable deployment is based on the following considerations:
- i) Financial viability of the project and benefits that the new submarine cable system will bring to the infocomms industry, consumers and the economy in Singapore; and
 - ii) Efficient usage of land resources and sea corridor in the submarine cable deployment. Applicants are encouraged to plan for deployment of spare cable fibres together with the new submarine cable system to cater for future expansion of new submarine cable routes. The Authority looks favourably to new methods of cable deployment that can result in more efficient use of land resources and sea corridors.
- 2.5 The Authority generally takes up to four weeks to assess a new FBO application and about two weeks to assess a request for licence amendments. A longer timeline may be required if the applicant is unable to provide the required information to the Authority for the application. Upon award of the FBO licence or amendment of the existing FBO licence, the Authority will follow up with a letter of support to the MPA on the proposed submarine cable landing.
- 2.6 For any enquiries regarding the application of an FBO licence for the deployment of submarine cable systems, please contact:

*Info-communications Media Development Authority,
Competition Management and Access
10 Pasir Panjang Road, #10-01 Mapletree Business City
Singapore 117438.
Tel: (65) 6211 1827*

3 CONSULTATION WITH MPA FOR THE PROPOSED SUBMARINE CABLE ROUTE

- 3.1 Upon the award of the FBO licence, the next step for the applicant is to submit an application to the MPA for assignment of cable corridor. The submission shall include details on the preferred route and landing location.
- 3.2 The applicant should refer to MPA's website under foreshore and marine developments for the general guidelines and requirement for installation of submarine for further details.

*Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA)
7B Keppel Road #19-07, Tanjong Pagar Complex,
Singapore 089055
Website: www.mpa.gov.sg
Tel: (65) 6325 2418*

4 APPLICATION TO URA FOR LAND USE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT CONTROL APPROVALS

Land Use Consultation and Approval

- 4.1 To obtain land use approval, the applicant is required to consult the relevant agencies (e.g. the Singapore Land Authority, National Environmental Agency, National Parks Board, and Land Transport Authority) through the Authority and seek their clearances first before submitting an application to URA for approval. The proposal to URA shall include both the sea route portion as well as the land route portion, including the beach manhole and up to the cable landing station. Clearances from the other agencies are also to be attached in the submission to URA. The applicant is to submit the proposal through the Authority to URA and other relevant agencies.
- 4.2 For the land use proposal, the applicant is required to submit seventeen (17) copies of (a) detailed cadastral plans including the exact location of the beach manhole and connectivity to the nearest road and landing station; and (b) detailed marine plans showing the submarine cable alignment and how it is to be aligned relative to other cables within the approved corridor in the area, to the Authority.

Environmental Impact Assessment

- 4.3 In addition, the applicant is required to submit to the Authority four copies of a report that assesses the impact that the submarine cable system deployment may have on the environment¹. This environment impact assessment will be circulated by the Authority to URA and other relevant technical agencies for their inputs and assessment.
- 4.4 All comments on the land use proposal from the relevant agencies will also be consolidated by the Authority and provided to URA. As part of the land use consultation and approvals, URA or any of the agencies may impose specific conditions for the landing of the submarine cable system.
- 4.5 In general, the agencies' assessment of the proposal takes into consideration, but is not limited to, the following:
- i) The route of the submarine cable system in the sea as well as on land;
 - ii) The impact of the submarine cable system on existing and future developments;
 - iii) The potential impact to the environment as a result of the proposed cable deployment; and
 - iv) Whether the applicant has considered and is ready to put in place measures to minimise any potential environmental impact and dispose waste material arising from construction in a safe and acceptable manner.
- 4.6 Interested parties can approach the Authority to obtain further details on the land use proposal submission.
- 4.7 Upon receiving URA's land use approval through the Authority, the applicant is required to submit an application directly to URA Conservation & Urban Design Group (DCG) for clearance under the Foreshore Act. More information can be found at the following URL: <http://www.ura.gov.sg/forms/doc/dc-fs-sr.doc>
- 4.8 The process for obtaining URA's approval for the land use proposal generally takes about two to three months upon the complete submission of the land use proposal. The DCG clearance would take an additional two to three

¹ The environment impact assessment report requires applicants to provide an assessment on whether the proposed method of cable deployment has any environmental impact on Singapore waters, which includes information such as whether there would be any disturbances to the seabed, whether the cable pass through any marine reserves, whether there would be any pollution caused during the cable deployment, and how will the waste/soil in the drilling processes be disposed. Please contact the Authority for more information on the environmental impact assessment report.

weeks to complete after URA's planning approval has been obtained for the submarine cable.

- 4.9 For any enquiries regarding the URA's requirements on the submission of land use proposal, you may contact:

*Urban Redevelopment Authority,
45 Maxwell Road, URA Centre. Singapore 069118.
Group Director (Physical Planning Group)
Fax : (65) 62263546*

5 APPLICATION TO MPA (COMMITTEE FOR MARINE PROJECTS) FOR SUBMARINE CABLE ROUTE APPROVAL

- 5.1 Concurrently, the applicant is to submit a formal application to the MPA for the deployment of the proposed submarine cable system. This should include the desktop study from the route survey done, including timeframe for intended works and area of works into Singapore. A total of three copies of the plans will be required for submission. This application is made to the Committee of Marine Projects of MPA ("COMET"). Further details on the submission to COMET can be found at the following URL:

http://www.mpa.gov.sg/sites/port_and_shipping/port/foreshore_and_marine_development_projects/page/comet_applications.page

- 5.2 The MPA generally takes approximately three weeks to review the application. Upon approval, the applicant can proceed to submit to MPA the operational procedures for maritime works and application of Port Marine Notice (if applicable), subject to the applicant having obtained URA's planning approval as described in section 4 above.
- 5.3 For any enquiries regarding the MPA's requirements on submarine cable deployment, you may contact:

*Maritime & Port Authority of Singapore (MPA)
7B Keppel Road #19, Tanjong Pagar Complex,
Singapore 089055,
Tel: (65) 6325 2418*

6 APPLICATION TO SLA FOR WAYLEAVE AND TEMPORARY OCCUPATIONAL LICENCES

- 6.1 The applicant is required to apply to SLA for a Wayleave Agreement (WA) for the deployment of the submarine cable systems to Singapore. The applicant is required to use the Temporary Occupation Licence (TOL) Application Form (can be obtained from URL: <http://www.sla.gov.sg/htm/ser/ser0206.htm>) and submit it together with all supporting documents and all clearances (inclusive of photocopies of licences) from the relevant authorities such as URA, MPA, LTA, NParks, PUB, etc to SLA for processing. A non-refundable processing fee is payable at the time of application via CashCard, Nets or Credit/Debit Card at our customer service counter or by cheque made payable to "Commissioner of Lands, SLA". The applicant is required to submit to SLA at least two (2) copies (together with softcopy in jpeg/pdf format not exceeding 5MB in size) of the cadastral plan indicating the detailed proposed cable (including its ancillary) route.
- 6.2 Upon the receipt of the TOL Application Form and all clearances from the relevant authorities, the normal processing time for the issuance of WA (subject to approval) is eight (8) weeks, similar to a normal TOL application process. During the processing, the applicant is not allowed to enter and use the site for the deployment of submarine cable system.
- 6.3 If the application is approved, an offer letter will be sent to the applicant. The applicant is required to pay an initial three months' market rental (inclusive of GST), a security deposit (in the form of cash, banker's guarantee or insurance guarantee (issued by MAS-approved insurance companies)] and stamp duty upon the acceptance of offer. A Wayleave Agreement (WA) will then be issued. The payment of subsequent monthly market rental will be made through the Interbank GIRO.
- 6.4 For any enquires regarding SLA's requirement on the application of a Wayleave Agreement for the deployment of the submarine cable system to Singapore, you may contact:

*Singapore Land Authority
Land Lease (Private) Department
55 Newton Road, #12-01
Revenue House
Singapore 037987
Tel: (65) 63239829*

7 ACTUAL DEPLOYMENT

- 7.1 Upon receiving the approvals as detailed above, the applicant may proceed to commence physical deployment of the submarine cable system. Applicants are to note that no works shall be carried out on the seabed without obtaining SLA's Wayleave approval.

Notes:

1 This document has no legal standing and is not intended as a substitute for legal advice. While every effort has been made to provide an accurate and authoritative account of the licensing regime and requirements from the relevant agencies, the licence(s)/approvals to be granted to successful applicants will be the complete authoritative text.

2 The information contained in this document is intended to assist interested parties in applying for the relevant licences/approvals. It does not bind the Authority or any other agencies to any particular course of action in relation to the handling of any application, or to the terms of any licence/approvals to be granted, or to grant any licence/approvals to any party. The Authority/agencies reserve the right to change its policies and/or to amend this document without prior notice.

3 The grant of the licence/approval is at the sole discretion of the Authority/agencies. The Authority/agencies reserves the right not to accept any application submitted. The Authority will undertake to explain to the applicant concerned, on the applicant's request, why the applicant is unsuccessful in its application for a licence.

4 The Authority/agencies reserves the right to disclose the identities of parties who have submitted applications. All other information received will be treated in confidence.