

1. CONTEXT

1.1 South Africa is a member of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), which is a United Nations (UN) body responsible for telecommunications; and South Africa is a member of Region-1 of the ITU with other African countries. In 2006, South Africa acceded to the ITU Regional Agreement in Geneva 2006 (GE06) that determined that Region 1 countries must migrate from Analogue Television to Digital Television by the 17th of June 2015. The Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT) migration process is a global technology enhancement initiative that aims to leapfrog countries into digital domains, targeting to improve quality of services and enable efficient use of spectrum resources.

1.2 As country, we initially aimed to complete the migration process in 2011 in what we termed a Policy Date but the programme suffered serious setbacks during the technology negotiation processes. At this point, we remained with the ITU set date for Region 1 of June 2015, however the country also missed this date and furthermore did not seek exemption at the 2015 World Radiocommunications Conference (WRC-15), and thus South Africa did not qualify for another extension after missing the June 2015 migration deadline.

1.3 During the 2021 State of the Nation Address, His Excellency President Cyril Ramaphosa announced that South Africa must complete the broadcast digital migration by 31st March 2022. This is the goal date that the Department of Communications and Digital Technologies is working hard to ensure that it is met through the implementation of the Digital Migration Plan that was approved by Cabinet at its meeting of 29 September 2021.

2. PROGRESS STATUS OF THE BROADCAST DIGITAL MIGRATION (BDM) PROGRAMME

2.1 The government undertook to assist beneficiary households (households earning total salary of less than R3500 per month) with installation of set-top-boxes to ensure universal migration. The process of registering beneficiary households to be supported commenced in 2015 and to date 1.184 million qualifying households have been registered out of the estimated 3.75 million qualifying households (as per StatsSA 2018 data).

2.2 Since the inception of the BDM programme, 556 954 beneficiary households have been migrated from the current total of 1.184 million. In addition, almost 10.5 million households out of just over 14 million TV households (2018 StatsSA estimates) self-migrated through private satellite boxes. as follows:

- DSTV = 7.8 million households
- OpenViewHD = 2.3 million households, and
- StarSat = 450, 000

2.3 To date, Sentech has been able to switch off all (84 sites) Multichoice analogue transmissions, 105 out of 288 (37%) SABC analogue transmissions and 4 of the 95 (4%) eTV analogue transmissions.

3. THE REVISED PLAN

3.1 Cabinet has approved the adoption of a Managed Integrated Model that actively involves all broadcast media players to contribute to the ramp-up the Set-Top Box installation capacity through their use of the boxes of these players to ensure rapid reach. The broadcasters and SENTECH will continue to use local installers as part of the SMME development. The Department has started engagements with industry players and enterprise development entities including funders on additional opportunities and enterprise development support that could be made available to these installers amongst others.

3.2 We have shifted from staggered provincial approach towards a consolidated national approach, where STB installations and ASO will happen simultaneously in all 9 provinces of South Africa, although we anticipate different completion and migration dates. According to our Plan, we are anticipating the following completion dates:

ASO MACRO SCHEDULE																								
ACTIVITIES	September			October			November			December			January			February			March			April		
	SEP	OCT	NOV	SEP	OCT	NOV	SEP	OCT	NOV	SEP	OCT	NOV	SEP	OCT	NOV	SEP	OCT	NOV	SEP	OCT	NOV	SEP	OCT	NOV
GRAND TOTAL ENGAGEMENTS	576 000 000																							
CAPACITY BUILDING & REFINANCING	750																							
GRAND TOTAL ACTIVITIES	576 000 000			15 000																				
NORTHERN CAPE	576 000 000			15 000																				
NORTH WEST	576 000 000			15 000																				
MPUMALANGA	576 000 000			15 000																				
WESTERN CAPE	576 000 000			15 000																				
KWAZULU NATAL	576 000 000			15 000																				
EASTERN CAPE	576 000 000			15 000																				
FREE STATE	576 000 000			15 000																				
GAUTENG	576 000 000			15 000																				

MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

Khumbudzo Mtsharheni



4.2 South African citizens who are still receiving television services directly from an Aerial/Antenna that get mounted on a pole and do not have set-top box or smart TV set, should find themselves a set-top box or a smart TV to be able to receive digital Television. A set-top box is a device that enables you to receive digital Television services, they can be accessed from South African Post Office and various retailers across the country.

4.3 You will not be affected by the Analogue switch-off, if you are already receiving your television through DSTV, OVHD, Telkom-One, StarSat and any other streaming platforms or you have a digital TV. Digital televisions that have in-built digital tuners and enable you to receive DTT. Manufacturing of digital TVs commenced as early as 2010, and we aware that majority of Television set manufactured and distributed after 2015 have digital tuners. To test if your TV has a digital tuner, please run a manual or auto channel search on your TV.

4.4 We have a list of compatible digital TVs from Samsung, LG, HiSENSE and Skywoths. We are continuing to engage other manufacturers of TV sets and will publish compatible TV sets lists, as from Monday, 11 October 2021, on various entities websites (SA government, DCDT, SENTECH, USAASA, SABC, SITA, and SAPO) and the Digital Migration Call Centre which contact details will be shared within the month of October 2021.

4.5 Households Qualifying for Support

4.5.1 Given the low numbers of registered beneficiary households, Cabinet approved a last call for registration with a cut-off date of 31 October 2021, this last call is also made fully aware of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on household incomes. In terms of this call:

- The qualifying households who register on or before 31st October 2021, will be connected before the ASO; and
- The households that register after the 31st October 2021 will only be connected within three (3) to six (6) months after the ASO.

4.5.2 We call upon all eligible households to register at the nearest post office on or before the 31st October 2021 to receive government assistance for your STB installation. We are also finalizing a registration App and the details will be announced in the near future.

5. BENEFITS OF DIGITAL MIGRATION

5.1 We have to fulfil our obligations to the ITU, to give effect to;

- Efficient use of Spectrum,
- Improve media Quality of Service, and
- grant South Africans a developmental opportunity.

5.2 Improved quality – Digital Television Pictures are clearer, and there will be no more snowy pictures.

5.3 Digital Television will offer you:

5.3.1 Improved Free-to- Air Services

- More Channels, Compared to current 4 channels on analogue (SABC1,2,3 and eTV) on a Free-To Air. You will be able to receive 12 Television channels on DTT.
- The public bouquet services will allow South Africans to receive all 19 SABC radio on DTT, irrespective of where you are in South Africa. This is not possible with analogue technology.

5.3.2 Improved Pay and subscription Services

- Compared to previous 2 channels on analogue Pay TV (Mnet & CSN), you can now receive 14 TV channels on Pay DTT.

6. To ensure that this Plan is executed, I have established a Project Steering Committee which is constituted by CEOs and Technology Executives of all affected and participating stakeholders. The Steering Committee is chaired by the Minister and meets on a fortnightly basis to lead the switchover process. I have also appointed a project manager to oversee the digital migration and ASO process. We will report to the Cabinet on a monthly basis and update the nation about the progress at least once a month.

THANK YOU.

