
GOVERNMENT NOTICE

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS

No. 670

19 August 2011

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS ACT, 2005 (ACT NO. 36 OF 2005)

AMENDMENT OF BROADCASTING DIGITAL MIGRATION POLICY ISSUED UNDER GOVERNMENT GAZETTE NO. 31408 ON 08 SEPTEMBER 2008

The Minister of Communications intends to amend the Broadcasting Digital Migration Policy issued in *Government Gazette* No. 31408 on 08 September 2008, to the extent indicated below:

Substitution of paragraphs 3 and 8 of the Table of Contents of the Policy

The following paragraphs are hereby substituted for paragraphs 3 and 8 of the Table of Contents of the Policy:

“3. ACCELERATED DUAL ILLUMINATION PERIOD, ACCELERATING THE BENEFITS OF DIGITAL TV”

3.1 Digital switch-on and analogue switch-off”;

“8. IMPLEMENTING THE MIGRATION TO DIGITAL

8.1 The Establishment of the Digital Dzonga and Digital Migration Office”.

Amendment of List of Acronyms of the Policy

The List of Acronyms of the Policy is hereby amended by the insertion of “DVB-T2 Digital Video Broadcasting – Second Generation Terrestrial” after “DVB-T Digital Video Broadcasting – Terrestrial”.

Substitution of paragraphs 2 and 4 of the Forward by the Minister of the Policy

The following paragraphs are hereby substituted for paragraphs 2 and 4 of the Forward by the Minister of the Policy:

“This Broadcasting Digital Migration (BDM) policy sets our parameters of migrating the country's broadcasting from analogue to digital. The parameters were planned around a dual illumination period commencing in April 2012 as approved by Cabinet. The policy is an outcome of a strong collaboration between

government and industry and their firm commitment in building a people-centred and inclusive information society, thus improving the lives of our people.”;

“In conclusion, the time to migrate to digital broadcasting system has inevitably arrived. We need to embrace it because it is a major step in improving our people's lives and I sincerely hope that this policy is a bold step in our quest to achieve that goal. The looming switch-on date in April 2012 requires us to work at a lightning speed concomitant with our business unusual strategy as announced by the President of the Republic in his state of the Nation address earlier this year because the future is digital.”.

Substitution of subparagraph 8 of paragraph 1 of the Executive Summary of the Policy

The following subparagraph is hereby substituted for subparagraph 8 of paragraph 1 of the Executive Summary of the Policy:

“For the digital migration process in South Africa to be successful within the dual illumination period, it is necessary to have a clear government policy and Implementation Plan. Also critical is the co-operation of all the relevant stakeholders working together with government. Given the country's socio-economic status, it may also be necessary to consider incentive schemes to support a significant number of households.”.

Substitution of subparagraphs 1, 2 and 9 of paragraph 2 of the Executive Summary of the Policy

The following subparagraphs are hereby substituted for subparagraphs 1, 2 and 9 of paragraph 2 of the Executive Summary of the Policy:

“The switch-on date of the broadcasting digital terrestrial television signal is April 2012 and the switch-off date of the analogue terrestrial television signal is December 2013. This shorter dual illumination period will reduce the costs of digital migration.

Achieved in a phased manner, national broadcasting digital signal coverage shall be covering 60 percent of population by the end of 2011, 74 percent of population by early 2012 and close to 100 percent by late 2013 enabling analogue switch-off.”;

“The following Technical Standards are approved:

- DVB-T2 is adopted as the national standard for broadcasting digital terrestrial television in South Africa.

- DVB-S (EN 300 421) is adopted as the national standard for broadcasting digital satellite television in South Africa.

- MPEG-4 is adopted as the compression standard for South Africa's Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT) rollout, while existing direct-to-home (DTH) services continue to use MPEG-2 with the option to migrate to MPEG-4 when commercially viable.”.

Amendment of paragraph 1.1.10 of the Policy

Paragraph 1.1.10 of the Policy is hereby amended by the deletion of the words “three year”.

Substitution of subparagraphs (d) and (j) of paragraph 1.2.3 of the Policy

The following subparagraphs are hereby substituted for subparagraphs (d) and (j) of paragraph 1.2.3 of the Policy:

“d) give effect to the decision to implement digital migration within a dual illumination period;”;

“j) provide for the establishment of a body referred to as Digital Dzonga to advise the Minister on broadcasting digital migration and the Digital Migration Office to manage and monitor the implementation of digital migration in South Africa.”.

Substitution of paragraphs 2.1.3, 2.1.4 and 2.2.1 of the Policy

The following paragraphs are hereby substituted for paragraphs 2.1.3, 2.1.4 and 2.2.1 of the Policy:

“2.1.3 Universal Service and Access or the availability and accessibility of broadcasting services to all citizens is a key component of successful digital migration. In order for households to continue to receive television services on their current analogue TV sets after the analogue signal is switched off in December 2013, Set-Top-Boxes (STBs), which convert the digital signals into analogue signals, are required. The total TV-owning households in SA are estimated at 10 million, of which approximately 94 percent rely exclusively on free-to-air broadcasting services. Of these 10 million TV households, about 4.5 million are poor households who would find it very difficult to afford STBs by December 2013.

2.1.4 Government has decided, as a matter of policy, to make the STBs affordable and available to the poorest TV-owning households. This support by Government should be seen as part of its commitment to bridging the digital divide in South Africa. The government has therefore decided to subsidise the poor TV households through the Universal Service and Access Fund.

Accordingly, for South Africa, the STBs will have special features which enable access to e-government services for all citizens, especially those who thus far have had limited or no access. Digital broadcasting also enables the provision of services in a multiplicity of languages, thus increasing access to information which in line with Government's Information Society vision, is an important tool for societal and economic development. This is essential to meet our poverty reduction goals.”;

“2.2.1 The South African Government adopted ASGI-SA in 2005. This initiative aims to guide and improve the country's economic growth. South Africa's economy is on its way to recovery despite the global financial crises that had a devastating effect on the job market.”.

Substitution of heading of paragraph 3 of the Policy

The following heading is hereby substituted for the heading of paragraph 3 of the Policy:

“3 ACCELERATED DUAL ILLUMINATION PERIOD, ACCELERATING THE BENEFITS OF DIGITAL TV”.

Substitution of paragraphs 3.3.1 and 3.3.2 of the Policy

The following paragraphs are hereby substituted for paragraphs 3.3.1 and 3.3.2 of the Policy:

“3.3.1 Taking into account the resolution of the ITU that the transition from analogue to digital terrestrial television broadcasting should end on 17 June 2015, the Cabinet decided that in South Africa, the switch-on date of the broadcasting digital signal and the switch-off date of the analogue signal should be April 2012, and December 2013 respectively.

3.3.2 The Government recognises that the aggressive dual illumination period in South Africa will be a significant challenge. However, this shorter period provides a range of national benefits, including the following:

- a) The best economic outcome through bringing forward the digital dividend and reducing cost duplication during the transitional period;
- b) Room to manoeuvre in relation to the global ITU-RRC agenda for digital migration;
- c) Bridging the 'digital divide' between technology have and have-nots; and
- d) Support for the emerging digital broadcasting industry in terms of the deployment of services, content and equipment.”.

Substitution of paragraphs 5.1.2.7 and 5.1.3.1 of the Policy

The following paragraphs are hereby substituted for paragraphs 5.1.2.7 and 5.1.3.1 of the Policy:

“5.1.2.7 robust STB Control Software System that will enable addressable messaging and ability to turn off lost or stolen decoders.”;

“5.1.3.1 DVB-T2 is adopted as the national standard for terrestrial digital television broadcasting in South Africa. DVB is reported to be the fastest growing DTT platform in Europe and other parts of the world. Many governments have started to plan for analogue switch-off and DVB-T2 has become the de facto standard, which has been adopted by the whole of the ITU Region 1 comprising Europe, Middle East and Africa.”.

Substitution of paragraphs 6.1.10 and 6.1.11 of the Policy

The following paragraphs are hereby substituted for paragraphs 6.1.10 and 6.1.11 of the Policy:

“6.1.10. Government is committed to the development of the three tier broadcasting system. In particular, government intends to use the opportunity brought by DTT to facilitate the development of Community TV. Accordingly, community TV should be accommodated in the existing DTT multiplexes. This will also ensure that all analogue frequencies allocated to community TV services are cleared to facilitate the smooth migration process.

6.1.11. In terms of GE-06/WRC recommendations, part of the digital dividend will be set aside for mobile communications services. This will commence a process towards convergence in the use of the radio frequency resources. In addition, government will consider opportunities to facilitate the introduction of Video on Demand and digital audio broadcasting services.

6.1.12 In terms of the Broadcasting Act, the network of radio frequencies dedicated for public broadcasting shall be co-assigned to and managed by Sentech as the common carrier on a non-preferential and non-discriminatory basis. Sentech must also provide broadcasting signal distribution to commercial broadcasters, taking into consideration that the ECA allows for self provisioning by broadcasters. Such services shall also be provided on non-preferential and non-discriminatory basis.

6.1.13. Consistent with the ITU Treaty, this Policy further provides for the establishment of two (2) metropolitan frequency networks designated for the provisioning of mobile broadcasting services during dual illumination period.”.

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Please note that comments received after the closing date may be disregarded.

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