

23. Does this subsidy only cover DTT households?

Both DTT and DTH will be covered by this subsidy.

24. Will I need to pay a subscription every month like DSTV?

No, the purchase of the STB is a once-off cost. You will, however, have to continue paying your TV licence as required by law.

25. How does South Africa fit into the worldwide broadcasting landscape?

South Africa coordinates its frequency plans with other countries to ensure that there is no interference with other countries' broadcasting signals.

This means that analogue TV broadcasts are currently protected from interference. However, the International Telecommunications Union has mandated that this protection should stop by 2015. Bilateral engagements with neighbouring countries have already resumed to mitigate the challenge.

26. Has this migration been done elsewhere in the world?

Yes. Examples of countries that are advanced in their migration processes include the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Sweden, the United States, France and Mauritius. Every country has committed to switch to digital TV.

27. Who are the various role players and what are their roles?

Government

Is responsible for developing the policy for Broadcasting Digital Migration. Government is also responsible for ensuring that funding is available for the Scheme for Ownership Support for poor households and for the development of an STB manufacturing strategy. The Department of Communications is driving this process on behalf of government.

Broadcasters

Terrestrial broadcasters need to migrate their services onto digital. The affected broadcasters are SABC, eTV and M-Net. They will be responsible for establishing new services and migrating existing services to digital. Broadcasters will have to manage analogue and digital services during the dual illumination transition period of approximately three years during which both the analogue and digital signals will run parallel.

Signal distributors

Responsible for rolling out the digital network infrastructure on behalf of broadcasters. The main signal distributors are Sentech and Orbicom for M-Net.

South African Post Office (SAPO)

SAPO will process payments for the STBs, issuing of the STBs and pay the installers of the equipment.

Universal Service and Access Agency of South Africa

USAASA's mission is to facilitate and maintain universal services and access to information and communications technology. As part of its mandate it has to disburse subsidised STBs to approximately five million TV-owning households that are considered needy and deserving.

Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA)

ICASA is responsible for regulating the telecommunications and broadcasting sectors. It will be responsible for the frequency planning and allocations, and the issuing of licences for digital services. New digital services cannot be launched without a licence or authorisation from ICASA.

Manufacturers

Responsible for the manufacturing of STBs and ensuring that the boxes are compliant with the standards set.

Retailers and consumer bodies

They will provide accurate information to the consumers so they can make the right choices when purchasing STBs and that shop-floor staff are properly trained to correctly advise the consumers. Their role is to ensure that STBs are available for purchase by consumers before the analogue signal is switched off.

Unions

To ensure that digital migration will indeed improve material conditions of South Africans and the working masses. Furthermore, that South Africans are well equipped to determine their own future in the country and in the economy.

The digital migration process presents opportunities for job creation in the manufacturing of the STBs and antennas, and the installation and repair thereof.

In addition, the establishment of a call centre as part of consumer support would also create employment opportunity for people.

For more information contact:

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DIGITAL
TERRESTRIAL
TELEVISION
(DTT) –
EVERYTHING
YOU NEED TO
KNOW



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Department:
Communications
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DIGITAL TERRESTRIAL TELEVISION (DTT) – EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW

1. What is digital migration?

It is a process of moving from analogue to digital TV broadcast.

2. What is DTT?

It refers to the use of a network of TV transmission towers on earth as opposed to satellites in space to broadcast digitally.

3. What is the difference between DTT and Direct to Home (DTH)

These are simply different ways of broadcasting a signal. Satellite TV broadcasts from a satellite in space from which you receive via your satellite dish. DTT uses transmitters on the ground to broadcast the signal, which is received using a TV aerial and a set-top box (STB).

SABC, eTV and M-Net are analogue signals broadcasting terrestrially. DStv and Top TV are digital signals broadcast from satellite.

4. Why do we need to change from analogue to digital TV?

In keeping with other countries and advancing technological developments worldwide, government has decided to migrate from analogue TV to digital.

The benefits of digital TV broadcasting include:

- Clearer sound
- More channels
- A digital TV guide that can easily be updated for more accurate schedules.
- Excellent picture quality. Picture quality that does not deteriorate with a weaker TV aerial signal. Your TV picture will either be perfect or you will have no picture at all. No more snowy pictures.
- Transmission of high definition (HD) TV pictures.

5. What do I need to switch to DTT?

You need an STB, depending on the type of access in your area whether DTT or DTH. This information will be made available to you in due course.

6. Does that mean I need a new M-Net decoder?

Yes – your current M-Net decoder is an analogue decoder and will have to be replaced with a digital decoder. Unless you have a DStv or Top TV.

7. What is an integrated digital TV?

In the next few years it may be possible to buy a TV with a built-in decoder. These are called integrated digital TV sets but they are not yet available in South Africa.

8. Will I need a new TV aerial?

Probably not. Some viewers may need new TV aerials. Whether or not you need a new TV aerial or an adjustment to your existing TV aerial will depend on the quality of the DTT signal in your area.

9. Will I need three STBs: One for SABC, one for eTV and one for M-Net?

No, only one. Your STB will be able to receive digital channels from all licensed South African broadcasters. Free-to-air broadcasters will need their own STB and M-Net will also use its own decoder.

10. What are the characteristics or technical specifications of the equipment I will need to receive DTT?

DTT transmissions in South Africa use DVB-T2 technology and MPEG-4 compression. Therefore, to receive DTT broadcasts, the technical specifications of SANS862 must be:

- compatible with the DVB-T2 standard
- capable of MPEG-4 video decoding.

11. When will the STB be available for purchase?

Watch the media for an official announcement on when they are going to be available in the market.

12. When will it affect me?

The Minister of Communications will announce the analogue switch-off date after consultation with Cabinet. If you do not have an STB by this date, you will not be able to watch any TV programmes received by your TV aerial.

13. If I am a DStv or Top TV subscriber, what do I need to do?

Nothing. The changeover to DTT affects only broadcasts received on a terrestrial TV. DStv and Top TV received on a satellite dish are already in digital format.

14. Will I be able to watch DTT if I only have a satellite dish?

No, you will need to have a TV aerial and an STB connected to enable you to watch DTT programmes.

15. If I have three TV sets in the house, will I need three STBs?

Only if you want each TV set to show different channels at the same time, otherwise one STB will be able to display the same programme on multiple TV sets.

16. Do I need an HD TV for this switchover to DTT?

HD TV is not required to watch digital broadcasts, but if the programme content was recorded in HD, the user of HD TV will see improved clarity and detail which was never possible on analogue broadcasts.

17. What do I do if my STB does not provide a good quality TV picture?

This could be caused by a faulty TV aerial or TV wiring or signal reception problems such as multipath error. The consumer support contact information will be announced in due course. Watch the media for an official announcement.

18. Can I still use my DVD or video player/recorder with DTT?

Yes. Usually, DTT STBs have additional outputs which can be connected to a DVD/video recorder or player.

19. Will I need to buy a new TV set to receive DTT?

No. All analogue TV sets will be able to receive DTT. Note that no TV currently in the market will be able to receive the digital TV channels without the STB. Even when a TV is 'digital ready' or 'HD ready' – it does not mean that it can receive the digital TV broadcasting without an STB.

20. How do I establish if my TV will be compatible to the STB?

All TV sets are compatible to the STB.

21. Is there a subsidy available to acquire DTT equipment? What if I cannot afford the STB? Does this mean that I will not be able to watch TV after migration?

The Government will provide free STBs to more than five million poor household TV owners. Priority will be given to those households in the border region areas of the country and those living around the Square Meter Array (SKA) areas in the Northern Cape.

The following groups are eligible to receive subsidies:

- Indigent South African people with green ID book.
- Households who are in possession of a functioning TV set and are not subscribers to paid TV services.
- Households dependent on social grants
- Households already covered by the SABC concessionary TV licence scheme.
- South Africans living around the border region areas of the country and SKA in the Northern Cape.

The Universal Service and Access Agency of South Africa (USAASA), a government agency, is mandated to disburse subsidies for STBs.

22. What will the STB cost?

Prices will be announced once the STBs are available in the market. The people who will not qualify for the government subsidy will have to buy their own STBs.