



The Digital Migration Task Force for the Botswana Television Broadcasting Switchover process

Background

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) convened a Regional Radiocommunications Conference (RRC 06) to plan for Digital broadcasting on frequency bands VHF (bands III 174-230 MHz), and UHF (band IV and V 470-862 MHz) for the ITU Region 1 in 2006. The RRC 06 agreed that at least by 2015 all the countries in the African & European Region should have completed the digital switchover.

In Botswana, a Reference Group was established on 07 February 2008 to kick start the digital switchover/migration process.

The Reference Group made the following recommendations;

- That 'environmental impact' should be included in the list of 'high level requirements'.
- That the Task Force should investigate South Africa's reported phasing out of Television licenses and offer of subsidies for decoders as part of the country's digital migration strategy.
- That a formally constituted Digital Migration Working Group with clear Terms of Reference should be in place by March 14th 2008.

- That the working group should be inducted on April 24th 2008. A description of the state of broadcasting in Botswana and what needs to change in terms of broadcasting equipment, receiving equipment, studios and content.
- A consumer Education Strategy to map a consultative and feedback process.
- An Activity timeline (Key date schedule)
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- Draw the budget for the entire digital switchover programme.
- Review current legislation / policy for relevance and/or impact to digital broadcasting
- Determine the role of and engage local content producers in the process.
- Learn from regional and international benchmarks.

Stakeholder groups who were recommended to form the Digital Migration Task Force by the Reference Group were:

Institution
Ministry of Communications Science and Technology
Ministry of Trade and Industry

Ministry of Environment Wildlife and Tourism
Ministry of Works
BOCCIM
Attorney General's Chambers
Department of Culture
Botswana Defence Force
Botswana Police Force
Civil Aviation
Office of the President
Gaborone Broadcasting Company
Kemonokeng Holdings
Multichoice Botswana
Department of Broadcasting Services (DBS)
DBS Transmission Network expansion Project representative
Botswana Telecommunications Corp.
Mascom
Orange
Broadcasting Equipment Installers
Gateway Broadcasting Services Television (GTV)
Local Programme Producers
University of Botswana



The report of the Reference Group was presented to the Minister of Communications, Science and Technology for consideration and implementation. The Digital Migration Process is an MCST project which the National Broadcasting Board (NBB) has been given the mandate to spearhead with the assistance of the Botswana Telecommunications Authority (BTA) who are the NBB secretariat.

Task Force

On 13 November 2008, a preparatory meeting by the now constituted Task Force was convened following endorsement from the Minister of Communications, Science & Technology (MCST) to begin the migration process.

The Task Force came up with the following committees of which objective are to meet the ToRs requirements.

- Technical Committee

Areas of consideration are; Multiplexing, Dual Illumination transmission, standards (e.g. decoders), resource sharing (e.g. equipment), Receivers and to collaborate with CRASA.

- Content Committee

Areas of consideration are; production standards, funding of content, development of local content, content rights management and catalogue of possible programmes.

- Public Education

Areas of consideration are; campaign strategy, costs to the exercise, campaign schedules, Campaign Feedback, Development of messages and formats of information dissemination.

- Policy Committee

Areas of consideration are; licensing framework, local content development, dual illumination, subsidies/funding (subsidising cost of decoders), implication(s) to existing policies and plans, and, cost implications to the migration strategy.

Personnel for Committees

Suggested committee members

- Technical Committee

Botswana Telecoms Authority (BTA), National Broadcasting Board (NBB), Department of Broadcasting Services (DBS), Kemonokeng, Gaborone Broadcasting Company TV, Munhumutape African Broadcasting Corporation TV, (MABC TV), Botswana Telecomms Corporation (BTC), Mascom Wireless Botswana, and Orange Botswana.

- Content Committee



Dept of Tourism, Dept of Culture, Dept of Broadcasting Services (DBS), NBB and BTA, Ministry of Education, Multichoice Botswana, MABC TV.

- Public Education

MISA, Ministry of Education, Dept of Information Services (DIS), DBS, NBB and BTA.

- Policy Committee

Ministry of Communications, Science & Technology, Attorney General's Chambers (AG's), NBB and BTA.