



# What Kenyans need to know about Migration to Digital TV Broadcasting

## 1. What is migration from Analogue to Digital Broadcasting?

Digital broadcasting will help realize the utilization of digital rather than analogue waveforms to carry broadcasts over assigned radio frequency bands. Sound and pictures are processed electronically and converted into digital format. This format is then transmitted and reconverted by appropriate receivers or set-top boxes into sound and TV programmes. The main focus of the migration process is the Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT).

## 2. Why must Kenya migrate?

The Regional Radiocommunication Conference (RRC-06) set 17 June 2015 as the deadline for all countries to migrate from analogue to digital terrestrial broadcasting technologies. It is, therefore, mandatory for all countries worldwide. Analogue technology is expensive to maintain and is gradually getting obsolete. Spectrum is also scarce and its efficient use is critical. Digital broadcasting means more valuable spectrum can be released and used for other services. The rest of the world is migrating to digital broadcasting and analogue broadcasting will not be protected from interference after 2015. Kenya plans to migrate by 2012.

## 3. What are the advantages of Digital Broadcasting?

With adoption of digital broadcasting, consumers in Kenya are now bound to enjoy improved reception quality, a variety of enhanced broadcasting applications, multimedia data and entertainment services, additional programme channels all this capped with more efficient use of the spectrum in the country. Market players will also reap the benefits from the reduced transmission costs and superior technology in their operations. Digital broadcasting presents an added opportunity for Kenya viewers to have avenues through which their own stories, concerns and lifestyles are reflected. Local content development will be a core part of the migration strategy.

## 4. What is the Digital Terrestrial Television?

DTT stands for 'Digital Terrestrial Television', which is the terrestrial broadcasting of television in digital format. Currently, terrestrial television in Kenya is broadcast in analogue format. Terrestrial denotes television broadcast using equipment situated on the ground rather than by satellite. The broadcast signal is sent to various towers on the ground and if you are within the area covered by a tower, then you will be able to receive the broadcast services via a terrestrial aerial which is usually placed on your roof or on your television set.

## 5. What is the difference between analogue TV and digital TV?

In analogue, the signal is transmitted using electromagnetic waves, which is not very efficient. In digital the signal is encoded and can be

compressed to allow for more channels to be broadcast. At least eight (8) new channels can be provided in the same frequency as one analogue channel.

## 6. Will I need to buy a new TV to receive Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT)?

Most current analogue television sets will be able to receive DTT using a set-top box. Your TV must have audio and video inputs (A/V), or alternatively have RF input, to ensure that your set-top box can be plugged into your TV. If you have this, you should be able to use your current TV set. You do not need a high definition (HD) TV, LCD TV or Plasma TV to receive DTT. In the next few years, there could also be TV sets with an integrated set-top box (that means a set-top box already built in with the TV). These are usually called idTVs. However, these are not yet available in Kenya.

## 7. What is a set-top box?

The set-top box is a receiver that will decode the digital signal to enable the channels to be displayed on your television set. This set-top box will plug into your TV set. The DTT set-top box (also referred to as a decoder) is not synonymous with the current existing satellite or terrestrial based pay TV services decoders.

## 8. Why do I need a set-top box?

You need a device which decodes the digital signal received via a standard aerial antenna and supplies the TV set with a video signal. Without the set-top box you will be unable to display the digital television services on your television set.

## 9. What is the timetable for the Migration in Kenya?

The migration to digital is a process that is expected to take a minimum of three years. During the migration period, viewers will still be able to receive the current analogue services. However, once commercial DTT starts, viewers who do not have a set-top box will be unable to receive any NEW digital channels or services.

The process of switching off the analogue signal in Kenya is expected to be completed by 2012. Once the analogue service is switched off, viewers will need to have a DTT set-top box to receive free-to-air terrestrial television services.

Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC TV) will be conducting a trial to test the new DTT services and technology to ensure that the service works once it is commercially available so that viewers do not lose access to the television programming they have been used to once the migration takes place. This trial will begin in October 2009.

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