



**MINISTRY  
COMMUNICATIONS AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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**MEDIA STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND DIGITAL  
TECHNOLOGIES, MR MONDLI GUNGUBELE, MP REGARDING ANALOGUE SWITCH  
OFF AND THE END OF DUAL ILLUMINATION ON BROADCAST DIGITAL MIGRATION**

21 June 2023: 13:00H00 PRETORIA – GCIS Tshedimosetso House

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1. We live in an era where demand for high-speed connectivity has grown significantly due to technology evolution, growing population, and capacity to support our smart city objectives. Spectrum and High-Speed Telecommunication are essential enablers required to support the growth of the ICT sector.
- 1.2. It is public knowledge that the Digital Migration Process is a national priority given its impact on the release of High Demand Spectrum and the development of the ICT sector. It is also public knowledge that spectrum has been auctioned to various companies to provide South Africans with faster, affordable, and better-quality services and generally undertake investments that promote economic growth and employment.
- 1.3. The Analogue Switch-Off is a critical step that enables release of Spectrum and positions South Africa for next generation technologies. By taking this next step, we are making it possible for the companies that bought Spectrum to finally proceed with the investments that can be undertaken.
- 1.4. In December 2022, after significant progress in the implementation of the Broadcasting Digital Migration, we commenced a process of consultation on the possible analogue

switch-off date. This 1<sup>st</sup> phase was published through a Government Gazette. We received a total of 17 responses from industry players during this consultation phase.

- 1.5. Following the submission of written responses by industry players, we engaged in the second phase of consultation with Broadcasters (your eTV, the SABC and Community Broadcasters), the Signal distributor (Sentech), and the regulator, the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA).
- 1.6. I want to take this opportunity to thank all key stakeholders who participated in the Analogue Switch-Off Consultation Process. The engagement has been cordial and has enabled us to make progress regarding confirmation of the Analogue Switch-Off date for South Africa.

## **2. ANALOGUE SWITCH OFF APPROACH AND TIMELINES**

- 2.1. Having consolidated Broadcast Digital Migration objectives with outcomes of the consultation process, we have resolved to adopt a two-step approach towards Analogue Switch-Off as follows:
  - a) **Step 1**: Immediately switch-off analogue services above the 694MHz band to release spectrum for other telecommunications use and the set date for this step is the 31<sup>st</sup> of July 2023.
  - b) **Step 2**: Temporarily accommodate some of the high population areas below 694MHz, and switch-off within a given period and the set date for this step is the 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2024.
- 2.2. A two-step approach towards Analogue Switch-Off is deemed to be a viable approach for the industry. This approach is accepted to be a win-win approach that will enable Analogue Switch Off progress, release spectrum and allow key stakeholders to recover from post COVID economic decline and load-shedding impact.
- 2.3. Ladies and Gentlemen, we have been switching-off the analogue network countrywide:
  - 2.3.1. MNET has switched-off all their 84 sites.
  - 2.3.2. The SABC has switched off analogue in 5 provinces, namely, the Free-State, Northern Cape, North-West, Limpopo and Mpumalanga.
  - 2.3.3. eTV has switched-off 30 of their 84 sites across the country.
- 2.4. The 2-step approach will address the remaining sites, and we are planning to immediately clear 51 transmitters above 694MHz, this is inclusive of cross border sites that may cause

interference with neighbouring countries. We will thereafter progressively switch-off all remaining sites towards the final Analogue Switch Off date as set in step 2.

- 2.5. The Department will continue to work with the industry players and the Regulator to ensure that Analogue Switch Off is achieved, spectrum is released, and digital migration is finally concluded.

### **3. INDIGENT HOUSEHOLD REGISTRATIONS & STB INSTALLATIONS**

- 3.1. Since the beginning of the Set Top Boxes (STB) registration process in 2015, about 1,5 million applications have been received for Government subsidised STBs. These numbers include the number of registrations for the extended period of July to 30 September 2022.
- 3.2. We have been monitoring applications that were received after the 30th of September 2022 cut-off date, and we are continuing to receive late applications for Government subsidized STBs.
- 3.3. We cannot leave anyone behind and have resolved to support those who registered after the 30 September 2022 deadline till such a time that we have fully migrated the country to digital. This is necessary to ensure that indigent households that registered late are provided for during and after the ASO process.
- 3.4. We are planning to provide registered households with STB installations through to the end of this project, in alignment with the available budget. We are currently driving installations in the provinces where we will be undertaking Analogue Switch-Off.
- 3.5. We are measuring our STB installation progress per location and where we will undertake Switch Off. The majority have received STB Installations.

### **4. BDM PUBLIC AWARENESS**

- 4.1. Throughout the implementation of the programme, public awareness programmes are conducted through multiple platforms to ensure the digital migration message reaches South Africans irrespective of where they are.
- 4.2. A multi-pronged and multichannel approach to drive the message was adopted in SABC Radio Stations, Community Radio Stations, SABC Television channels and via scroll messages on television broadcast.
- 4.3. We continue to deploy teams on the ground across provinces doing community activations to educate people about Digital Migration, Drive Registrations and STB installations. The Local Government Authority (SALGA) and the National House of Traditional leaders, ward councilors, ward committee members and community

development workers have helped us navigate community dynamics and locate registered households.

- 4.4. Social media platforms continue to help us to further disseminate the message to the public of South Africa as can be seen on the platforms of the department, entities, municipalities, and the public individuals that we regard as ambassadors of the television broadcasting revolution.
- 4.5. We will continue to intensify our awareness campaign going forward through a focused and impactful awareness campaign. We will work jointly with Broadcasters to elevate the digital migration awareness campaign.
- 4.6. We appeal to stakeholders to rally behind the Go-Digital brand towards successful migration.

**Together let's move South Africa forward!!!**

**Thank you**

**Issued by the Ministry of Communications and Digital Technologies**

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