



Spectrum

# Digital Migration Process in Kenya

Summary

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## Introduction

This booklet summarizes a case study of the digital television migration in Kenya. For countries that want to connect more people, making Digital Dividend spectrum available is key. As one of the largest and most diverse economies in East Africa, Kenya is a hub for technology and innovation in the region.

Kenya's experience with the digital television migration, including the key challenges faced and the solutions implemented, highlights valuable lessons that can provide useful information and guidance to regulators and policymakers from other countries where similar migration processes are ongoing or being planned.

Planning for the analogue to digital television migration in Kenya began in 2006. The government viewed the migration as a vehicle to not only deliver improved audio-visual quality and diversity of content to Kenyan consumers, but also to efficiently utilise spectrum, resulting in a digital dividend (freed up spectrum).

One key thing the digital television migration in Kenya shows is that irrespective of what challenges the process faces, they can be overcome.



## How to succeed

In Kenya, as in other countries, the digital migration process required consideration and implementation of a broad range of topics including policy issues, the state of the broadcasting market, funding for the migration, public outreach, consumer equipment availability and the inclusion of stakeholders in the planning process. The following are some key lessons from Kenya's migration experience:

### 1. It all starts with a well-planned roadmap

Governments can facilitate a smooth and successful digital migration process by establishing a well-planned migration roadmap and obtaining buy-in from stakeholders.

### 2. Transparency enhances credibility

The migration roadmap should include as many details as possible regarding the repurposing of the digital dividend spectrum, including specific timelines for clearing the band and awarding the spectrum. In addition, the plan should specify the process the government will use to grant the spectrum to new operators. Transparency regarding the process will greatly enhance its credibility and allow for proper planning by interested participants.

### 3. Industry input is needed to succeed

Governments should request and give due consideration to industry input throughout the migration process, including during the planning that precedes any actual technical changes. Due consideration of these inputs and well-reasoned decisions will promote buy-in from stakeholders, which reduces or eliminates the possibility of legal challenges and delays.

### 4. Only delay the process when absolutely necessary

In developing timelines for the process, all stakeholders should understand that adjustments will likely be necessary to address challenges and unanticipated developments.

At the same time, multiple timeline adjustments create confusion and lack of certainty for consumers about the digital migration process. Such adjustments should be implemented only when objectively necessary and when their benefits outweigh the increased uncertainty.

### 5. Choose technical standards with international backing

When choosing technical standards, it is important to seek international harmonisation to benefit from economies of scale. On the consumer side, the provision of set-top boxes (STBs) is key, including its affordability and availability. For both the network and consumer perspectives, proper consideration should be given to the digital television deployment capacity in different regions of the country.

### 6. Make sure to have well-run consumer awareness campaigns

In developing consumer awareness campaigns, governments should work to gain cooperation from media outlets and be prepared to combat misinformation to consumers. Emphasis should be placed on media outlets with the greatest reach, which may include more traditional channels, such as newspapers and radio.

## Why the digital dividend is so important?

Digital Dividend spectrum is ideal for mobile broadband because it consists of lower-frequency bands that can cover wider areas with fewer base stations than mobile broadband spectrum that relies on higher frequencies.

This lowers deployment costs and allows operators to provide broader, more affordable coverage, especially in rural areas where connectivity can be a challenge.

But it is about more than just rural areas. Digital Dividend spectrum also delivers benefits in urban areas, as it supports improved indoor coverage, because these frequencies can more easily penetrate buildings.

Therefore, for the benefit of all citizens, the Digital Dividend should be allocated and assigned for mobile use in alignment with regionally harmonised band plans as soon as possible. A smooth and efficient digital migration is a key enabler of realizing the benefit of the Digital Dividend.



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