Commonwealth Digital Broadcasting Caribbean Forum

Knutsford Court Hotel, Kingston, Jamaica

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Background

• The CBU is a 47 year old Broadcasting Union serving broadcasters in the Dutch, English, French and Spanish territories of the Caribbean;

• The union has over 40 members in more than 20 Caribbean territories - membership is in full and associate categories;

• The union is open to indigenous broadcasters (radio and television), production facilities, digital media entities, print publications, cable and satellite broadcasters, media training bodies and information agencies.
Background

• The CBU developed a policy position paper on DSO in December 2013 which was discussed and adopted by broadcasters at its Annual General Assembly in August 2014;

• It was considered and discussed by a special Council of Trade and Economic Development meeting of CARICOM, including Ministers of Information, Communication and Telecommunications in 2017;

• Paper evaluated digital formats and compression standards, multiplex/multicasting options, e-waste disposal, economic considerations, public education needs among other issues. No one standard was recommended for adoption across the region.
At CBU 2017 AGA it noted with concern the haphazard “progress” being made and appealed to regulators and policymakers to quickly providing an equitable the enabling environment for a new digital broadcasting ecosystem that would:

- Clearly authorize and announce DSO and ASO timelines;
- Clearly address how and if radio and television transition will be harmonized;
- Settle and make known the scope of proposed digital licenses;
- Identify feasible incentives for indigenous broadcasters to switch over;
- Take steps to prevent (maybe curtail) digital waste dumping.
DSO Status of the Caribbean (1)

Anguilla
• No FTA broadcaster present;
• Strong cable penetration, though not 100%;
• Recent Hurricane left the market without formal televised information source for weeks;

Antigua and Barbuda
• Has only one FTA broadcaster;
• No FTA service available for a year;
• Cable the only source of receiving the national broadcaster;
• Cable penetration estimated at 65%;
• Target is for HD workflows and ATSC broadcast on UHF frequencies by end of 2018.
Aruba, Bonaire, Curacao
• Two, one and four FTA broadcasters respectively;

• No decision on switchover for broadcasters;

• All operate using HD workflows since 2009 but analogue transmissions;

• No ASO date determined.

Bahamas
• Has one FTA broadcaster;

• Since December 2012 has been operating in HD with ATSC 1.0

• Transmissions are done in the VHF band;

• Dual transmissions now being done – analogue and digital.

• No ASO date determined.
DSO Status of the Caribbean (3)

**Barbados**
- One FTA broadcaster;
- No decision reported on DSO standard, timeline or compression;
- State owned FTA and wireless cable (MMDS) broadcaster – the latter in DVB transmissions.

**Bermuda**
- Has **one** FTA broadcaster;
- Since May 2017 has been operating in ATSC 1.0 standard on UHF frequencies;
- Decision driven by private interests with no DSO/ASO policy/timeline set.
British Virgin Islands
• Total cable market – no FTA broadcaster;

• No discussion on digital broadcasting;

• In period of natural disaster – again no television coverage since September 5, 2017;

Belize
• Has two FTA broadcaster;

• There has been no discussion/consultation on DSO or DTB;

• Broadcasters use some HD equipment in production.
Cayman Islands
- One FTA broadcaster with limited coverage;
- Strong cable market with local HD coverage distributed via cable.
- No DSO discussion reported.

Dominica
- No FTA broadcaster;
- No discussion on switchover prior to devastation by hurricane in September and certainly none since.
DSO Status of the Caribbean (6)

Cuba
- One central FTA broadcaster with over 20 substation broadcasters;
- Adopting the DTTMB Standard which is being funded by the Chinese as a grant.

Grenada
- Two FTA broadcasters;
- No discussion on DSO/ASO;
- Some HD and SD productions being done.
DSO Status of the Caribbean (7)

Guyana
• 20 FTA broadcasters;
• Extensive discussion and consultation in the past year;
• No decision on standard;
• 2020 set as date for DSO.

Haiti
• Three National broadcasters
• Many regional broadcasters
• At least one DVBT-2 regional broadcaster;
• No information on DSO/ASO date.
DSO Status of the Caribbean (8)

Jamaica
- **Three** FTA indigenous broadcasters;
- Extensive discussion on DSO/ASO;
- Some HD and SD productions being done;
- ATSC 3.0 preferred. 2018 DSO and 2021 ASO agreed in principle.

Montserrat
- No broadcaster; total cable market;
- No DSO discussion.
DSO Status of the Caribbean (9)

**St. Kitts and Nevis**
- One FTA indigenous broadcasters;
- No broadcast for more than 10 years; cable has <100% penetration;
- Some HD and SD productions being done;
- No discussion on DSO;

**St. Lucia**
- Two indigenous FTA broadcasters;
- Over 65% cable penetration;
- No discussion on DSO; some HD production done.
DSO Status of the Caribbean (10)

St. Maarten
• No FTA indigenous broadcaster;
• Some HD and SD productions;
• Local cable channel supplies information;
• Recent devastation by hurricane removed local TV information;
• No discussion on DSO.

St. Vincent and the Grenadines
• One indigenous FTA broadcaster;
• No discussion on DSO;
• No SD or HD production at present.
DSO Status of the Caribbean (11)

Suriname
- Three FTA indigenous broadcaster;
- Some HD and SD productions;
- DSO started in June 2014 with ATSC 1.0 transmissions in the UHF and VHF bands;
- Multicasting arrangements being used.

Trinidad and Tobago
- Six indigenous FTA broadcaster;
- After 2015 target date passed, no new date reported;
- Extensive discussion has been ongoing; DVBT-2 was announced but later ATSC was also announced.
Observations

• In 16 of 24 countries highlighted there has been no discussion on DSO at all - Overall the region is lagging in the decision-making on digital television broadcasting - in most countries no determination on DSO/ASO dates, standards, compression, business model/ecosystem made;

• In 17 of the 24 territories examined THERE HAS BEEN NO DISCUSSION ON DSO!

• Broadcasters have mostly made steps into digital production and backhaul but the last mile to consumers needs policy determination;

• Where a few broadcasters have mode that move, they are State-owned and funded or Telecoms owned and funded, (except in Bermuda 4th highest per capita income in the World which is 70% higher than that of the USA);
Conclusion

- The CBU repeats its call for regional policymakers and regulators to be more decisive in driving the consultations to conclusions and implementation with emphasis on:
  - Agreement on what business model is feasible for indigenous broadcasters in the new ecosystem;
  - What digital licensing regimes will be implemented to facilitate this;
  - What are the realistic timelines now being set.