

[LT] Implementation of Digital Television

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On 26 October 2005, the Radio and Television Commission of Lithuania announced a tender for awarding a licence to broadcast and re-broadcast television programmes over the digital terrestrial television networks. The aim of the tender is to determine the winners who will have the right to use the digital terrestrial television networks. These networks will give the Lithuanian audience the possibility to view up to 40 digitally broadcast programmes. The digital programmes will have better sound and visual quality, they will give the possibility to choose the language or subtitles and to use EPG services or interactive services as well as other advantages of digital technology. The winners of the tender will be announced by 1 March 2006.

The announcement of this tender is the first step towards the implementation of the digital terrestrial television in Lithuania. It was invited following the Model for the Implementation of Digital Terrestrial Television in Lithuania, which was approved by the Government on 25 November 2004 (see IRIS Merlin Database 2005-1: Extra). The Model foresees terms and stages of the implementation of the digital terrestrial television in Lithuania. The responsibility of the implementation of the Model is vested with the Ministry of Communications.

Following the above-mentioned Model, the implementation of the digital terrestrial television will be carried out in stages by four digital television (DVB-T) networks. The tasks of the first stage of the implementation of the digital terrestrial television set for the digital television transmission providers are the following: by 30 June 2006, to install digital terrestrial transmitters in Vilnius (capital of Lithuania), that could together transmit not less than 20 television programmes; by the end of 2007, to install digital terrestrial transmitters in 5 biggest Lithuanian towns, that together could transmit not less than 16 television programmes; by the beginning of 2009 to try to achieve, that the coverage of at least one of the digital terrestrial networks would reach not less than 95 per cent of the whole territory of the Republic of Lithuania.

Following the Model, the gradual switchover process from analogue terrestrial to digital terrestrial television will have to be started in 2012.

Lithuania has not yet adopted any decision regarding the final switch-off date of the analogue terrestrial television. This will be decided taking into account the

progress of the digital terrestrial television implementation as well as other circumstances related to digital television.

Digital television in Lithuania is not a novelty any longer. This technology was first used to broadcast television programmes in spring 2004. At present Lithuanian viewers, who possess digital set-up boxes can watch three television programmes.

While implementing digital terrestrial television, Lithuania will have to solve a number of problems and will have to adopt important decisions in choosing TV signal compression technology (e. g.: MPEG-2 or MPEG-4), and finding the ways for supplying the citizens with the digital set-up boxes.

Information on the tender is available at:

<http://www.rtk.lt/en/news.php?strid=1011&id=28310>

