

[LT] Licences for Digital Broadcasters Awarded

IRIS 2006-4:1/28

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On 14 February 2006 the Radio and Television Commission of Lithuania (RTCL) summed up the results of the tender for digital terrestrial television broadcasting, announced in October 2005 (see IRIS 2006-1: 17).

The tender was invited following the "Model for the Implementation of Digital Terrestrial Television in Lithuania" (see IRIS Merlin 2005-1 Extra), which was approved by the Government on 25 November 2004. The Model envisages terms and stages of the implementation of digital terrestrial television. Following the Model, the implementation of the digital terrestrial television will be carried out in stages by four digital television (DVB-T) networks (see IRIS 2006-1: 17).

The tender for digital terrestrial television was a great success. Six television broadcasters and three rebroadcasters applied with the request to participate in the tender. They offered twelve original TV programmes as well as packages of rebroadcast programmes, which altogether amounted to over 100 programmes.

On 1 March 2006 digital terrestrial television licences to broadcast their own original programmes were granted to the following broadcasters: *UAB " Baltijos TV "* (2 programmes), *UAB " Laisvas ir nepriklausomas kanalas "* (2 programmes), *UAB " Tele-3 "* (2 programmes), *UAB " K "* (2 programmes), *UAB " Spaudos televizija "* (1 programme). Two positions were reserved for programmes of the Lithuanian National TV, the public broadcaster, which was granted the right to broadcast those programmes without a rival.

The licences to rebroadcast programmes were issued to *UAB " Mikrovisata "*, *MMDS* operator (24 programmes) and *UAB " Tele-3 "* (5 programmes).

The winners of the tender acquired the right to broadcast or rebroadcast television programmes in the territory of Lithuania using the transmission services of the Lithuanian Telecom and Lithuanian Radio and Television Centre, the transmission providers, who had previously won the tender for providing digital transmission services over four DTT networks.

As all the applicants chose MPEG-4 compression, it will enable the Lithuanian audience to view 40 digital television programmes. Transmission of these programmes in Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania are planned to start by the end of 2006. Five other big towns will be able to access digital TV by the end of 2007.

In accordance with the "Plan for the Implementation of Digital Terrestrial Television", at least one of the digital TV networks will have to cover no less than 95 per cent of the territory of Lithuania by the beginning of 2009. The gradual switch-over period from analogue to digital terrestrial television will start in 2012. Until then, both analogue and digital television will be operating in Lithuania.

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Decisions of the RTCL on the results of the tender for digital terrestrial television broadcasting, dated 14 February and 1 March 2006

