[GB] ITC launches second stage of consultation on Digital Terrestrial Television Licensing

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The Independant Television Commission (ITC) is launched on 5 June 1996 the second stage of its public consultation on the licensing of digital terrestrial television. The Broadcasting Bill, currently under consideration in the House of Commons, sets out a two-tier licensing structure under which the carriers of the services, the multiplex operators, are to be licensed separately from the services themselves. The ITC published on 22 May in draft form the proposed Invitation to Apply for Multiplex Service Licences, together with a draft licence and various supporting technical documents. Documents published today concern the licensing of services which will be carried on the multiplexes.

The ITC is seeking comments on draft Notes for Guidance of Applicants for two types of such licences: the Programme Services Licence and the Additional Services Licence (eg text and data services). These licences will enable broadcasters to provide services which will be carried on multiplexes once they have entered into agreements with multiplex operators. It will be for multiplex operators to choose which services they will carry. All programme services licensees will be required to comply with the consumer protection requirements contained in the ITC's Codes. Additional services licensees must also comply with the Codes where the services are sent for general reception, as opposed to being sent to closed-user groups. The award of the licences will not be by a competitive process and there will be no limit on the number of licences which the ITC can issue. Each licence can cover more than one service.

Comments on the draft documents were to be received in writing by the ITC no later than Friday 5 July. This was also the deadline for comment on the multiplex documents.

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