# [MT] Broadcasting Authority Consultation Document on the Eligibility Criteria for General Interest Objective Stations

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*Kevin Aquilina*
*Faculty of Laws, University of Malta*

On 23 March 2010, the Broadcasting Authority launched a consultation on the eligibility criteria for the classification of broadcasters that fulfil general interest objectives.

The Broadcasting Authority is playing a key role in the digital switch-over. Among its responsibilities the Authority has been charged with the selection process of the stations that will become General Interest Objective (GIO) Channels and will be carried on the digital multiplex platform to be operated by the public service broadcaster.

The purpose of the consultation document is to consult on the eligibility criteria that the Broadcasting Authority proposes to establish for the selection of broadcasters that are deemed to fulfil general interest objectives and whose content would be entitled to carriage on the proposed GIO network on a free-to-air basis.

The Broadcasting Authority has set out the mandatory criteria for holding a general interest objective broadcasting licence. These include, inter alia, quality programming throughout schedules; reduction of repeat programmes; quality technical infrastructure; promotion of education, culture, the arts and national identity in programming; news and current affairs programming; programming for children; programming that provides access to persons with a disability; and broadcasting content prepared by independent producers. In addition, the Consultation Document is advocating the adoption of non-mandatory criteria which comprise a comprehensive and accurate information service in the interests of a democratic and pluralistic society; promoting a healthy lifestyle; and promoting environmental awareness and education.

A two-tier selection process for general interest objectives stations is proposed. The first stage is addressed to the public service broadcaster and existing licensed analogue free-to-air broadcasters. Stage two will then be opened for existing holders of a television broadcasting licence who do not broadcast on an analogue free-to-air frequency and applicants for a new television broadcasting licence who satisfy the requirements of the Broadcasting Act for a television

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licence.

Reactions to the proposals being made in this Consultation Document as well as to the provisions of the Draft Multiplex Licence which are attached to the consultation document have to be submitted to the Broadcasting Authority by Friday, 23 April 2010.

***Consultation Document on the Eligibility Criteria for the Classification of Broadcasters that fulfill General Interest Objectives***

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