

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.**

Background



- 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.

DSO Status of the Caribbean (2)



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.

DSO Status of the Caribbean (4)



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.

DSO Status of the Caribbean (5)



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 made 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.

End of Presentation

