

## **Media Release**

EMBARGOED UNTIL AFTER ISSUANCE OF MINISTER'S PARLIAMENTARY REPLY

### **Analogue TV broadcast to cease from 1 January 2019**

**3 in 4 households ready for Digital TV. DTV Assistance Scheme may be enhanced to include more HDB households.**

**SINGAPORE – 6 November, 2017:** Households will now have one more year to switch to Digital TV (DTV). The cessation of analogue TV broadcast has been shifted from end-2017 to 31 December 2018 to allow more time for households to switch over to DTV. In addition, IMDA is studying enhancements to the DTV Assistance Scheme (DTVAS) with a view to assist more HDB Singaporean households with the switchover. These announcements were made by Dr. Yaacob Ibrahim, Minister for Communications and Information, in a written parliamentary response issued earlier today. Mediacorp will continue to broadcast in both analogue and digital formats until 31 December 2018. From 1 January 2019, broadcast free-to-air TV programmes will only be shown in digital format.

About 3 in 4 Singapore households are already receiving DTV either over the air, or through their Pay TV subscription. To facilitate the switch over to DTV and ensure that more Singaporeans receive adequate assistance to switch over to DTV, IMDA is studying enhancements to the DTVAS and will announce the enhancements early next year. The DTVAS provides households with a free digital set-top box, indoor antenna and installation. Households who qualify under the current DTVAS criteria can continue to apply to receive assistance.

#### **Analogue channel logo on TV screens to inform affected viewers**

To help viewers determine whether they will be affected by the analogue TV switch-off, all analogue TV channels will now automatically include an “Analogue” channel logo on the top right hand corner of the TV screen. Households who see this channel logo will need to switch over to DTV to continue watching Mediacorp TV channels from 1 January 2019.

IMDA and Mediacorp have also launched a dedicated DTV microsite – [www.digitaltv.sg](http://www.digitaltv.sg), with a simple 2-step guide (“Check and Connect”) on how to receive DTV signals. Members of the public may also call Mediacorp at 6435 6288 for general and technical enquiries.

## **Digital TV - Better quality pictures and sound, multi-language subtitles and electronic programme guides**

Singapore’s switch to DTV involves the adoption of the DVB-T2 (Digital Video Broadcasting – Second Generation Terrestrial) broadcasting standard. This move towards the DVB-T2 standard is in tandem with the global trend to enhance TV viewing experience.

DTV also allows viewers with Toggle Red Button-registered HbbTV sets (Hybrid Broadcast Broadband TV) to access Mediacorp TV shows, Toggle Original content and Catch-Up TV. Broadly, Singapore’s switch to DTV also frees up scarce radio frequency spectrum, which will be used to provide better quality and higher mobile broadband speeds, ultimately improving end-user experience. Please refer to the Annex for more details about DTV.

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### **ISSUED BY THE INFOCOMM MEDIA DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**

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#### ***About Infocomm Media Development Authority (IMDA)***

*The Infocomm Media Development Authority (IMDA) will develop a vibrant, world-class infocomm media sector that drives the economy, connects people, bonds communities and powers Singapore's Smart Nation vision. IMDA does this by developing talent, strengthening business capabilities, and enhancing Singapore's ICT and media infrastructure. IMDA also regulates the telecommunications and media sectors to safeguard consumer interests while fostering a pro-business environment. IMDA also enhances Singapore's data protection regime through the Personal Data Protection Commission. For more news and information, visit [www.imda.gov.sg](http://www.imda.gov.sg) or follow IMDA on Facebook [IMDAsg](#) and Twitter [@IMDAsg](#).*

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**[To check against issuance]**

**PQ from Mr Melvin Yong Yik Chye:**

To ask the Minister for Communications and Information (a) whether the 160,000 low-income households identified for the Digital TV Assistance Scheme are equipped and ready for digital TV broadcasting; and (b) whether the Ministry plans to take further actions to facilitate digital TV adoption in Singapore before analogue broadcasting is phased out.

**Written Response:**

1. It is important that Singaporeans can continue to access Mediacorp's free-to-air channels (FTA) after analogue broadcasting is phased out, because these channels are freely accessible to all Singapore households and are a key source of news, information and entertainment in all four languages. Our FTA channels also carry Public Service Broadcast (PSB) programmes, which promote important societal values, celebrate our culture and heritage, and promote the Singapore identity. Today, about three in four Singapore households are already receiving Mediacorp's DTV channels either over the air, or through their Pay TV subscription.
2. To help low income households migrate to DTV before analogue broadcasting is phased out, the then-Media Development Authority (now the Info-communications Media Development Authority, or IMDA) introduced the Digital TV Assistance Scheme (DTVAS) in September 2014. The DTVAS provides low income households with a free digital set-top box and indoor antenna, as well as free installation, to allow them to use their existing television sets to receive DTV. Since the launch of the DTVAS, IMDA has sent out notification letters to over 139,000 eligible households. As of 17 October 2017, about 64,000 DTVAS packages have been deployed, benefiting roughly one in two eligible households.
3. IMDA is intensifying its outreach efforts to reach out to the remaining households who have not responded to the notification letters. Beyond intensive door-knock exercises, IMDA is also working with the grassroots, voluntary welfare organisations and senior activity centres to increase DTVAS awareness. Monthly DTV roadshows in the heartlands and booths in community events organised by the Citizens' Consultative Committees and Residents' Committees are also being organised. In addition, messages on analogue TV switch-off and DTV have been included in dialect programmes on Mediacorp channels, such as "Jiak Ba Buay" on Channel 8, to raise awareness amongst senior citizens.
4. We recognise that ramping up efforts to increase awareness of DTV is necessary but not sufficient. Hence, we will be doing more. IMDA will shift the analogue TV switch-off date from end-2017 to end-2018. The extension will provide the public an additional year to switch over to DTV. The end-2018 date will also be more aligned to our neighbours' (i.e. Malaysia and Indonesia) plans for analogue TV switch-off. This is relevant because the full benefits of freeing up spectrum from analogue TV switch-off can be reaped only when the region moves on this at the same time.
5. At the same time, IMDA is also studying enhancements to the DTVAS with a view to assisting more HDB Singaporean households adopt DTV. IMDA will announce the enhancements to the DTVAS early next year.
6. We remain committed to improving Singapore's digital readiness and enabling households to continue receiving PSB programmes upon analogue TV switch-off by 2018.

## **DIGITAL TV FACTSHEET**

### **DTVAS and Public Outreach**

1. The then-MDA launched the DTVAS in Sep 2014 to help low-income households make the switch to DTV. The assistance scheme package comprises a free digital set-top box, indoor antenna and installation.
2. To ensure that no one is left out of the transition to DTV, IMDA has been working with voluntary welfare organisations (VWOs) and the grassroots to reach out to seniors and persons with disabilities.
3. One example is IMDA's partnership with Lions Befrienders, a VWO, to include DTV education as a focal point during their outreach efforts. Volunteers from Lions Befrienders now provide information to seniors on the various ways to receive DTV when they make weekly house visits. Volunteers also take the opportunity to educate low-income households on IMDA's DTVAS and how to apply for it.
4. Other VWOs such as RSVP Singapore, Life Point (Sheng Hong Welfare Services), Handicaps Welfare Association and the Singapore Association for the Deaf have also helped disseminate information on DTV to their members. IMDA has also been working closely with Senior Activity Centres and Community Centres to showcase the benefits of DTV.
5. IMDA has worked with various agencies, such as the Housing and Development Board, Ministry of Social and Family Development, Ministry of Health, People's Association, and self-help groups to proactively identify eligible DTVAS households and facilitate application for the assistance scheme. Under the existing DTVAS, one- or two-room HDB rental flat dwellers and recipients of Comcare who meet the income eligibility criteria are automatically included in the scheme. They do not need to manually apply and will receive a letter from IMDA informing them of the follow-up steps, including contacting the appointed vendor, M1 Limited, for the installation of DTV equipment in their homes.
6. IMDA has been monitoring the adoption of DTV. There are still around one in four Singapore households who have not switched over. Thus, IMDA is studying enhancements to the DTVAS to assist more HDB Singaporean households switch over to DTV. Details of the enhanced scheme will be announced early next year. Households who qualify under the current criteria but not auto-included can continue to apply to IMDA.

7. Since the launch of the DTVAS, IMDA has sent out notification letters to over 139,000 eligible households who meet the income criteria. As of 17 Oct 2017, about 64,000 DTVAS packages have been deployed. Still, many households have not responded to IMDA's notification letters. IMDA urges all eligible households to take action early (i.e. make their appointments for installation or apply for the scheme if they are not auto-included) so that they can enjoy the benefits of DTV sooner. The People's Association and grassroots leaders are also working with IMDA to reach out to the community and help other eligible low-income households apply for the scheme. Residents can pick up the application form at their nearest Community Centre/Club or HDB Branch Office. They can also obtain the application form online. More information on the DTVAS can be found from our earlier [press release](#) in Sep 2014.

### DTV rollout milestones to date

8. Singapore's DTV journey started in 2012 when it was announced that the nation's free-to-air TV channels will go fully digital using the DVB-T2 broadcasting standard. This is in tandem with the global trend to migrate to DTV to enhance TV viewing experience and free up limited frequencies for new services. Compared to conventional analogue TV, DTV provides better quality pictures and sound, multi-language subtitles and electronic programme guides.
9. Since Dec 2013, all seven Mediacorp channels are being broadcast in digital format and in high definition (HD). To help viewers determine if they are watching analogue TV channels, all analogue TV channels will now automatically include an "Analogue" channel logo on the top right hand corner. Households who see this channel logo will need to switch to DTV to continue watching Mediacorp TV channels from 1 Jan 2019:



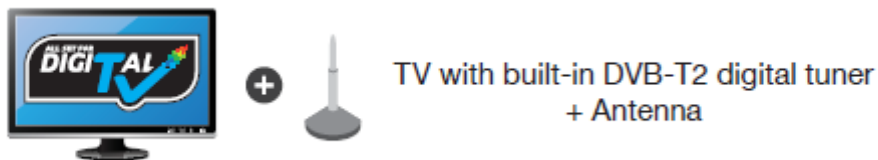
10. There are a few ways to switch over to DTV:

- Scenario 1 - StarHub Pay TV or Singtel Pay TV subscription: If your TV set is connected to StarHub Pay TV or Singtel Pay TV services, you do not need to do anything as you are already enjoying DTV.

- Scenario 2 - Connect your existing TV to a digital set-top box and indoor antenna: You do not need to buy a new TV set. If your TV set is not connected to a StarHub or Singtel Pay TV service, purchase a digital set-top box and indoor antenna, and connect them to your existing TV set to switch over to DTV.



- Scenario 3 - Upgrade to a TV with built-in DVB-T2 digital tuner (IDTV) and connect it to an indoor antenna: If you already have an IDTV, connect the IDTV to an indoor antenna to switch over to DTV.



For Scenarios 2 and 3, if you are living in a landed property with your own rooftop ultra-high frequency (UHF) antenna, you can connect it directly to a digital set-top box or IDTV.

11. The public can also look out for information brochures, videos, and posters in major retail shops, which provide information on how to switch over to DTV. To enable ground staff from retail outlets to better help consumers purchase the correct DTV equipment, IMDA has also worked with Nanyang Polytechnic – Singapore Institute of Retail Studies to conduct training workshops for sales staff. These workshops will train retailers on how to advise consumers to buy the right DTV equipment. Consumers can also identify DVB-T2 compliant equipment, receivers or TV sets through the DTV consumer labels issued by IMDA:



This label indicates that the IDTV or set-top box supports Singapore's DTV channels in stereo sound.



This label indicates that the IDTV or set-top box supports Singapore's DTV channels in surround sound when connected to a home theatre system.

12. The adoption of the DVB-T2 standard was confirmed after a successful trial conducted with Mediacorp. The trial, which involved some 500 households in Ang Mo Kio and Bedok, showed that DVB-T2 was suitable for deployment in Singapore's urbanised environment. DVB-T2 also offers higher efficiency, robustness and flexibility, enabling efficient use of valuable terrestrial spectrum for the delivery of audio, video and data services to fixed, portable and mobile devices. The then-MDA and IDA issued a set of technical specifications and developed a framework to ensure that DVB-T2 receivers brought in by retailers are able to receive all DTV channels as well as value-added services provided by Mediacorp. These services include closed caption subtitling, multi-language electronic programme guides, a display of classification ratings, and parental lock features. Information about the technical specifications and consumer label registration is available on IMDA's website.
  
13. IMDA has been running a series of roadshows in the heartlands to educate the public on the benefits and ways to receive DTV through showcases and activities. We encourage households to make the switch to DTV early to enjoy its benefits. More information is available at [www.digitaltv.sg](http://www.digitaltv.sg).