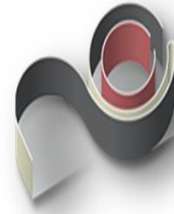




the dti

Department:
Trade and Industry
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



NATIONAL CONSUMER COMMISSION

a member of **the dti** group

Digital Switchover: How To Improve Consumer Choice?

18TH FEBRUARY 2015

POLICY PROPOSITIONS

- Efficiency in the provision of broadband.
- Freeing space in the Radio Frequency spectrum
- Provision of free-to-air services to 100% of the population.
- Improving mobile communication.
- Provision of electronic services both for government and commerce.
- Licensing other operators and increasing competition.

How will these policy imperatives enhance the livelihood of consumers and consumers' choice?



“RIGHT TO CHOOSE”

It is a fundamental consumer right in the consumer protection environment and it is part of our human right.

- ▶ Choice of the supplier of the service and the contract should not tie the consumer to other secondary agreements.
- ▶ The bundling of goods and services is permitted on condition the supplier can show the convenience/ benefit to the consumer in having those goods or services bundled which outweighs the limitation of the consumer's right to choice

Protection against discriminatory marketing – supply a different quality of goods or services to any person or category of persons



OPPORTUNITY: FREED BANDWIDTH

In most developing economies, digital satellite tv (direct-to-home) consumers use subscription based tv service in order to access premium content, leaving the majority of households without access.

- There should be a concerted effort to have more free-to-air channels than what consumers are experiencing at present.
- There should be sufficient coverage for consumers to have quality reception and where there are problems, there should be plans with timelines to provide universal access to all citizens.
- The licensing models (regulation) should deal with the issues of monopolies by right owners of content who sell exclusive rights to certain broadcasters.
- Where bundling of services is practiced in the subscription based television broadcasting, there should be direct financial benefit to the consumer without cross subsidization of channels



ACCESS: SET-TOP-BOXES

- ▶ Buying of Set-Top-Boxes to decode the signal will add additional cost to a consumer that owns a TV unit above the annual licence fee they are obliged to pay.
- ▶ There must be a compulsory specification that manufacturers and suppliers should comply with in supplying the set-top-boxes.
- ▶ Consumers must be alerted to those specifications to enable them to make informed choices.
- ▶ The device should conform with the return, repair and refund policies in the Consumer Protection Act.



AFTER-SALE SERVICES

- Specifications of the equipment (set-top-boxes) and level of services to be provided by the broadcasters should be communicated to consumers.
- The equipment should be durable for a reasonable period with free repairs during the warranty period.
- Installation/user manuals should be in plain and understandable languages.
- There should be toll-free numbers (landline and cellphones) for customer services to offer support to consumers.



ENFORCEMENT OF CONSUMER RIGHTS

The Commission has the responsibility to enforce the Act by:

- Investigating complaints on systemic issues affecting consumer generally
- Investigating complaints referred by consumers, or any person entitled to do so by the Act based on the impact on consumers and benefit
- Conduct research, monitor consumer markets and analyse trends
- Facilitate and communicate product recalls.



**LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,
THANK YOU!!!!**

