

INSTITUTE FOR DEVELOPMENT OF  
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION



## Georgia's Digital Broadcasting Switchover Strategy

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## 1. Introduction

The Government of Georgia, noting national interests of the state in developing both digital broadcasting and telecommunication and broadcasting fields, develops guidelines, strategic objectives and tasks for Georgia's digital broadcasting switchover.

**It is a strategic objective of the state that analog broadcasting in Georgia is completely switched off by June 17, 2015, while implementation of digital broadcasting switchover plan will be completed by that date. The above date has been set by International Telecommunication Union (ITU). Those circumstances mean that after June 2015 the existing analog television stations will no longer be legally protected from coverage of the stations from neighboring countries.**

The digital broadcasting switchover policy is based on the following principles:

- Consumer rights protection;
- Facilitation of information society development in Georgia;
- Ensuring freedom of expression and media pluralism;
- Facilitation of media freedom;
- Facilitation of competitive markets development;
- The most effective use of exhaustible frequency resources;
- Adherence to international standards;
- Implementation of obligations undertaken at international level.

One of the **objectives** of Georgia's digital broadcasting switchover strategy is to develop digital terrestrial broadcasting as a **competing platform** along with the existing broadcasting technologies.

Apart from the better quality broadcasting programs, digital broadcasting users will be in a position to enjoy new generation of interactive services, educational or other types of information services and products that can not be provided through analog network. Digital broadcasting switchover will create preconditions for television program diversity, audio visual media and service providers. Provision of additional and new generation services based on digital broadcasting network will be restricted within a digital broadcasting switchover period.

The objective of digital broadcasting switchover strategy rests with creation and maintenance of good and attractive conditions for investing in broadcasting and telecommunication market with purposes of ensuring **minimal financial participation of the state in the switchover process**. The strategy of the Government of Georgia aims at protecting interests of all stakeholders.

The Government of Georgia has the following objectives:

- Provide all terrestrial broadcasters operating in Georgia as well as all content producers with an opportunity of broadcasting through high capacity, sustainable and safe network based on transparent, non-discriminatory and cost-oriented tariffs;
- Ensure viewers' access to high quality and diverse programs.

The following stages will be covered to successfully introduce the strategy:

- Correct planning of the process;
- Amendments introduced to legislative acts;
- Implementation of information campaign accessible to all groups of the society;
- Selection and licensing of a multiplex operator;
- Subsidizing-financing of directions necessary for the process;
- Close control and revision of correct implementation of the digital broadcasting system introduction process carried out at all stages.

The strategy sets additional terms and criteria for priorities of allocating digital terrestrial television network in transitional and following periods. The strategy defines rules for commercial broadcasters' access to multiplexor resources in case of a restricted resource.

## 2. The strategy directions and evaluation criteria for its implementation

The present strategy **aims at** defining universal guidelines acceptable for all social groups that will cover the following directions:

1. Complete digital broadcasting of television programs through Georgian terrestrial network by June 17, 2015;
2. Create conditions for distribution of free, universal public broadcasting programs as well as national, regional or local level commercial broadcasting services;
3. Ensure relevant preconditions for effective use of radio frequency spectrum through optimization of broadcasting capacity and following public requirements;
4. Provide broadcasters with particular conditions for access to digital terrestrial television network as well as ensure openness of a broadcasting market and television content diversity;
5. Ensure more opportunities for practice of multinational Georgian culture through use of positive elements of digital distribution of television programs via terrestrial broadcasting network, as well as establish an improved media sphere in terms of enabling our citizens to access diverse and differentiated competitive free content;
6. End users depending on analog broadcasting will be provided with best available access to equipment compatible with digital terrestrial signal standards through facilitating their subsidizing process and introducing the lowest consumer prices at a retail market.

**Switchover from analog to digital broadcasting will never cause negative results for end users and broadcasters or deteriorate existing conditions.**

### 3. Technical and technological trends of digital broadcasting switchover policy

From technical and technological standpoint of digital broadcasting switchover, the task of the Government of Georgia is to plan the Georgian digital terrestrial broadcasting networks so that they are in conformity with short term and long term requirements of digital terrestrial television program broadcasting, opportunity of additional and related electronic services supply is ensured, some 85% of population are provided with universal broadcasting services to satisfy public interest and protected and sustainable networks are developed using best available resources.

The following trends will be taken into consideration while planning Georgian digital terrestrial network:

- Selection of a technology;
- Quantity of multiplex operators and networks in a transitional and post analog broadcasting switch off period;
- Percentage rate of population coverage;
- Necessity of planning new stations and opportunity of using existing infrastructure, equipment and transmitters;
- Adding certain quantity of new stations to ensure optimal coverage;
- Defining condition/position of receivers;
- Selection of a single and multiple frequency network or a hybrid model;
- Issues related to avoiding duplication of existing infrastructure or unreasonable use of a network;
- Issues related to safety of a universal broadcasting service network.

At an additional infrastructure planning stage 95% universal coverage obligation will be revised between size of costs and quality indicator.

In a transitional period the following data will be identified while issuing national terrestrial broadcasting network licenses:

- **Television broadcasting format – SDTV**
- **Program standard: DVB-T2**
- **Shrinking standard: MPEG4**

Stages	Television broadcasting format	Program standard	Shrinking technology
Parallel broadcasting	SDTV	Mandatory DVBT2	Mandatory MPEG4

Stages	Television broadcasting format	Program standard	Shrinking technology
After analog broadcasting switch off	Neutral SDTV & HDTV	Mandatory DVBT2	Mandatory MPEG4

*During digital broadcasting switchover period minimal conditions will be established only for receiving a digital signal in a fixed regime.*

Analog broadcasting in **Abkhazian Autonomous Republic** will be preserved until 2020, while in **Gali region** the coverage will occur in an ordinary regime from actual neighboring territories.

Digital broadcasting switchover action plan will cover the following trends:

- Selection of an optimal model among pace of a network set up, cost of a network and network quality;
- Definition of a main receiving regime and receiving installations;
- Definition of national, regional and local coverage services;
- Frequency plan and network topology;
- Head- end configuration;
- Equipment reservation planning;
- Distribution network types.

The following points will be established while defining specifications of digital terrestrial broadcasting receivers:

- A program system parameter;
- Compression system standard;
- Conditional access system parameter;
- Utilized frequency line;
- Radio frequency indicators.

In case of a demand for new generation HD and other services, a network provider will encounter a problem related to network capacity and quality that will not depend, for instance, on surrounding conditions. The best measure to prevent those risks is a network based on optical-fibrous platform. An optical-fibrous network has not alternatives. A broadcasting signal in geographically problematic areas will be supplied via radio links on the shortest distance (a hybrid model of those two technologies), while a network will be insured via satellite connection.

**The Georgian broad line network is well developed, especially on a main line level and it will necessarily be used to ensure network reliability and high capacity and develop high quality broadcasting service supply market.**

Given the existing restricted frequency resources, it **will be a priority** to set up a single frequency network (SFN) in digital zones with high concentration of population and relatively plain relief. A network based on DVB-T2 standard provides for maximum of its capacity in case it is set up according to a single frequency network topology. The most effective use of a spectrum is possible in case of a single frequency network topology set up (SFN), however, that solution will not deteriorate state of regional and local broadcasters.

To avoid lengthy errors in providing necessary services due to equipment damage or technical services, critical spare parts of elements participating in a transmitting chain will bear a certain reserve resource. The above issue will be regulated under contest terms.



## 4. Business model

Distribution of content through the first two multiplexors will happen free of charge. Paid services business model will be permissible upon engagement of a third multiplexor that will have a right to offer end users a mixed service. Possibility of offering the above services will depend on a condition of a television service market.

Public broadcasters' content will be distributed **through multiplexing and broadcasting network governed by a commercial legal entity** that will possess all relevant rights and assume obligations (MUX1), including the one related to distribution of public broadcaster's content, as a **"must carry"** content, based on a general authorization and digital broadcasting signal distribution license. In case of MUX2, a license covering those obligations will be issued based on a contest, while the following multiplex network set up licenses will be issued on the basis of a two stage auction (general contest terms will constitute criteria for the first stage, while price – for the second one).

Multiplex operators will allocate the following number of channels within a transitional period:

- Multiplex A (**national commercial multiplexor**) –15 Standard Definition TV services (SDTV) will be provided with MPEG 4 compression standard;
- Multiplex B – (**commercial multiplexor**) will cover 15 Standard Definition TV services (SDTV) with MPEG 4 compression standard.

A contest for selection of the first and second multiplex operators will be announced within short intervals or simultaneously. A person (including affiliated persons) will be restricted from simultaneous possession of one national or one regional digital broadcasting network license.

**Since inception of a broadcasting service and after finish of a transitional period, first multiplex operator (of a national broadcasting network) and a second multiplex operator established within that period as well as a new multiplex operator after completion of a transitional period will have a right to offer paid services of high definition television standard (HDTV) as well as supply of additional and related services upon permission of the Georgian National Communications Commission.**

A multiplexor resource access point will be defined so that it is accessible to willing operators. Access will be made available in accordance with the rules set forth by the law of Georgia on "Electronic Communications".

**During a digital broadcasting switchover period and afterwards, regional broadcasters will be granted access to the spots existing in digital zones relevant to their current broadcasting area. According to April 2013 data, currently 34 general broadcasters distribute television programs through use of a frequency spectrum, out of which there are 27 regional and local broadcasters and 7 – national. The analog broadcasting area is defined according to 25 broadcasting zones.**

Distribution of regional channels' content during a transitional period will be carried out on the basis of the following model – **regional channels are distributed in a parallel form through use of vacant frequencies and existing network. They are distributed via broadened digital zone.** In this case it is noteworthy that regional channels will cover each other (internal platform competition).

## 5. Issues related to licensing and authorization in a broadcasting field

According to European practice, as well as the EU Framework Directive and recommendations regulating the broadcasting field, the approach towards wired and wireless broadcasting shall be identical to ensure technological neutrality principle.

The following three rights will be covered by a broadcasting network license, while being issued:

- **Spectrum use right;**
- **Broadcasting distribution right;**
- **Operation right.**

Apart from a mandatory content, first multiplex operator shall be entitled to independently allow broadcaster's access on the basis of a contest or first operator in a queue in a non-discriminatory, transparent manner following initially established criteria and initially announced terms.

## 6. Authorization procedures

During transitional period multiplexing licenses will be awarded on the basis of a **public contest**, where **reasonableness of network solution and network set up dates, effectiveness of frequency spectrum use, access terms and tariff value, existence of network set up guarantees, protection of qualitative parameters of services to be provided to consumers and other important issues** as defined by the Georgian National Communications Commission under contest terms **will be compared**.

An economic model presented by a **contestant** will provide for an opportunity **to solve the given issue in a cost effective and high quality network manner and it will be formulated, first of all, through low tariffs charged for access**.

## 7. State subsidizing policy of Georgia's digital broadcasting switchover policy

State support policy covers measures in the following two directions: **end users' side and service providers' side, as well as equipment importers' side. Receivers that are subject to financing will be neutral towards the network and apart from receiving free digital terrestrial broadcasting signals, they will be in a position to be integrated in a cable or satellite network.**

State policy for support of digital broadcasting stakeholders covers those measures that will encourage **end users with purchasing power to obtain relevant equipment at an early stage of digital broadcasting switchover.**

The following issues will be taken into consideration while discussing financing schemes on a consumer level:

- **Ensuring consumers' switchover to digital broadcasting at an early stage, within a short period of time to gather the so called minimal critical mass;**
- **Providing real opportunities for persons below poverty rate and those with low income to purchase receivers or enjoy co-financing to purchase relevant TV sets or other equipment.**

According to the data as of January 2013, families with less than 70 000 rating scores registered in "targeted social support program" database will receive 100% financing. Families gathered in a group covering 70 001-200 000 scores will be entitled to 50% financing.

In order to stimulate digital broadcasting process and satisfy the purpose of evaluating persons below poverty rate, broadcasting terminals and related receivers will not fall under non-agricultural property category as a financing score indicator.

Lonely pensioners' aid program, apart from equipment cost subsidy, will cover installation works as well.

Norms establishing subsidizing procedures will be **unambiguous, easily understandable and perceivable, transparent. The Government will adopt procedures to set the rules for transfer of free equipment or providing state support for its purchase.** All terminals will bear relevant marking and have an **instruction** done in Georgian and other languages.

A term for cashing the voucher envisioned by the state subsidy will be equal to six months. Only receivers purchased on territory of Georgia will be subject to financing. The subsidizing voucher will be name specific and it will not be transferable to another person.

## 8. Measures to support regional broadcasters

In order to encourage regional and local broadcasters within a digital broadcasting switchover period, it would be recommendable to introduce **zero level regulation fee** related to income generated by those entities through distribution of signal in zones covered by their licenses. They may also be **released from taxes** only in cases of parallel broadcasting and during a digital broadcasting switchover period. A concession agreement between the state and a licensee may be concluded in lieu of analog licenses.

The following activities will be carried out to support broadcasters:

- Financial research in the field of digital broadcasting technologies and interactive programs, also infrastructural research projects;
- Introduction of subsidies for broadcasters to compensate additional costs during transition to digital broadcasting;
- Financial construction of transmitting networks in zones, where initial and follow-up analysis proves impossibility of achieving relevant digital coverage;
- Provision of financial aid to those broadcasters, which, due to objective circumstances, are in a reasonable position to suspend operation under their licenses prior to a license expiration term.

A financial support application of regional and local broadcasters will be based on the following criteria:

- **Regional status;**
- **Preserving current viability of a company;**
- **Technical expediency;**
- **Financing period;**
- **Area of signal distribution;**
- **Condition of free distribution of content.**

Support will be provided in a transparent manner, if necessary following proportionality principle: state aid will not prioritize any particular technology, cable and satellite platforms will be reviewed in parallel (unless there is no decision to subsidize a particular direction that will also be justified).

The aid will be provided to solve a temporary problem that has arisen during the switchover process. Beneficiaries will be selected in advance, according to precisely defined criteria. A beneficiary will certify that there is need for co-financing.

## 9. Competition regulation policy

**A contest for selection of two digital terrestrial broadcasting network management operators will be announced to ensure internal platform competition during a transitional period, in restricted frequency spectrum circumstances.**

Regulation of competition pursues the following objectives:

- Attraction of investments and ensuring of **minimal financial participation** of the state in digital broadcasting switchover process and at a later stage;
- Reduction of system and non-system barriers to market access;
- Financial and network stability of digital broadcasting business system;
- Introduction of innovations in the field;
- Effective use of exhaustible resources.

The following measures will be jointly taken to achieve the above objectives:

- Defining preliminary and following regulation issues, ensure timely and moderate regulation;
- “Must carry” regulation that is achieved through obligating mandatory distribution of content in particular competing technological platforms, mainly via certain public service channels. The above is important from media policy standpoint;
- “Must offer” regulation that will be based on the research carried out by the Georgian National Communications Commission and that will aim at identifying the most demanded channels at a national and regional level.

Regulation of competition will ensure maximum transparency of access terms, non-discriminatory character of an access and accessibility to all necessary elements of a network through cost minimization oriented and reasonable tariffs (minimization).

**One of the main objectives of the state in this regard is to set fair and equal terms for access to passive elements of digital broadcasting network and services related to co-location space.**

**The following activities will be carried out while regulating competition at transitional and follow-up stages:**

- Access to the infrastructure that may burden their accessibility to certain resources will be regulated within the scope of preliminary regulation;
- The Georgian National Communications Commission will regulate competition on a wholesale market within the scope of preliminary regulation;
- Competition will be defined for all segments of a wholesale market that will be used by broadcasting signal distribution providers, including television towers, in terms of access to co-location space, within the scope of preliminary regulation;

- To ensure competition at a regional level, the state will facilitate relevant conditions for regional and local broadcasters to save resources for receiving digital broadcasting access services and increase their content competitiveness;
- Competition for market segment of television signal distribution management services will be regulated;
- To ensure effective competition and regulation, normative acts regulating joint construction of existing physical infrastructure as well as use related issues, as recommended by the EU, will be adopted;
- The Georgian National Communications Commission will be authorized to review a dispute between a broadcaster and a network operator within a short period of time (especially at a transitional stage);
- Access permission contracts will be available for termination similar to telephone interconnection case – given permission and approval of the Georgian National Communications Commission;
- The Georgian National Communications Commission will restrict “first come first served access” principle of access to multiplexor capacities at a digital broadcasting switchover stage. While evaluating access issues, the Commission will be guided by essential criteria (given below) set by the law, as well as the terms that will be identified on the basis of a research related to broadcasters’ priorities. In case of identical conditions, a broadcaster that first filed an application will be granted access to multiplexor capacities;
- If a broadcaster at the same time holds a digital network license (if considered acceptable) it will be obliged to register costs separately at a digital broadcasting switchover stage in terms of network and broadcasting content production. In case of an increased threat of a restricted competition, a separation obligation will be imposed on a broadcaster within special obligations framework.
- Must carry and must offer obligations will be regulated within the scope of the Law of Georgia “On Electronic Communications”;
- To keep low equipment prices (on receivers) the state will ensure competition of imported equipment at a retail market, as well as present guarantees to ensure complete inter-replacement of imported receivers as their compatibility with other networks.

A contest winner network operator will fill all possible channel resources by means of a recommended multiplex model in the volume defined by the Georgian National Communications Commission on the basis of a principle set by the present strategy (first and second multiplexor quoting/composition method). A digital network service provider will engage in contractual relationship with program providers/broadcasters. Essential terms will be set by the Law of Georgia “On Electronic Communications” and relevant by-laws.

**A licensee selected in a transitional period will enjoy the following rights:**

- A right to use frequency (MUX1, MUX2) allocated by the Georgian National Communications Commission;



- Allocation of channels in a multiplexor based on an operator's decision under supervision of the Georgian National Communications Commission;
- A right to set up another network through use of other frequencies after analog broadcasting switch off;
- Use of network capacity parts that are not applied in broadcasting for additional services.

**A licensee selected in a transitional period will assume the following obligations:**

- An obligation of free distribution/allocation of channels falling under a special category (public broadcaster's content and/or must carry programs), as well as ensuring their availability for population at terms defined by a license;
- An obligation of unrestricted distribution of public radio programs;
- Development of a broadcasting network (performed by itself and/or by a sub-contractor) in accordance with contest terms, its attachments and contract provisions;
- Ensure MPEG4 compression and other technical conditions;
- Replacement of frequencies used by a broadcasting network provided it is necessary for further development of a network and services;
- Participation in marketing and consumer information related to digital broadcasting and digital broadcasting switchover;
- Participation in digital broadcasting switchover process, technical and communication management (systematic informing obligation related to its network construction and adherence to the presented schedule);
- Coverage obligation;
- Access obligation;
- Tariff, non-discriminatory and transparency obligation.

According to must carry obligation, content of a public broadcaster and those private broadcasters that have information and discussion programs and that are viewed by a certain percentage of particular local and/or digital region's population will be granted a mandatory access to multiplexor capacities in exchange to certain fee.

Provided there is a necessity for increasing internal platform competition, the Georgian National Communications Commission will be authorized to impose a so called "offer obligation" on a content provider in accordance with the Law of Georgia "On Broadcasting", to allow a platform operator to diversify a content interesting for viewers and distribute it through its network.

## 10. Regulation of channel allocation in a multiplex operator's network

The Georgian National Communications Commission will set terms for access to multiplexor capacities for a transitional period under a relevant legislative act, according to the following criteria:

- Priority will be assigned to access of those broadcasters, which held a broadcasting license prior to analog broadcasting switch off;
- While allocating channels in the first two multiplexors, a priority will be given to non-commercial broadcasters, as well as local and free channels;
- Priority will be given to those broadcasters, which will broadcast priority content.

At least two criteria will be satisfied simultaneously to allocate a channel in a multiplexor:

- Production of information and discussion programs;
- Entertainment programs – live sport, public, cultural etc. programs;
- Cognitive programs – historical, cultural, scientific, music etc;
- Artistic programs, movies and programs designated for children and youth.

## 11. Content of information campaign and its financing

**An information campaign aims at informing all interested groups of the society about essence and dates of the planned changes. An information campaign will ensure that all end users are provided with information about advantages of digital terrestrial broadcasting delivered in a plain, understandable manner, noting requirements of all ethnic or other groups.**

**The following activities will be carried out with that purpose:**

- Inform the public about ongoing preparation for digital broadcasting switchover and analog broadcasting switch off, indicating the dates;
- Inform the public about the advantages of digital broadcasting as compared to analog one;
- Present information about the content, beneficiaries of the planned subsidies, rules and size of the subsidy, location. The public will also be provided with all other types of information that may possibly be useful for end users with respect to digital broadcasting switchover (information-consulting web page, free consulting hotline, preparation of information clips and flyers etc).

**An information campaign will cover the following directions:**

- Provide information about free and paid digital broadcasting and analog broadcasting switch off dates;
- Information about parameters of equipment (receivers and TV sets) necessary for receiving digital services, as well as information about receiving antennas and parameters and data of braiding cables;
- Information about financing special requirement of handicapped persons and those with disabilities and special measures envisioned for support during an information and installation process.

## 12. Financing and price regulation

The following important issues will be taken into consideration while financing the digital broadcasting switchover process:

- Digital receivers' subsidizing and installation cost financing will be carried out in a neutral form through dissemination of vouchers among natural persons (families);
- Financing of advertising/information campaign costs for public information purposes;
- Strategy implementation management costs (analysis, opinion gathering, public opinion polls etc).

It will be ensured that during the strategy implementation there are no groups of population deprived of an opportunity to receive digital television services due to social vulnerability or any other reason.

The financing of the project implementation will be secured from the following three sources:

- State budget;
- Broadcasters' and partially network service operators' regulation fee collected and/or increased by the regulatory body;
- Resources that will be collected from distribution of multiplexing licenses during a transitional and follow-up periods.

During Georgia's digital broadcasting switchover process, multiplex operators of digital broadcasting network and broadcasters are deemed to be the main participants of legal relationship from the service providers' side. Similar to wholesale segments of telecommunication market the main challenge during transitional and follow-up stages of digital broadcasting switchover is **regulation of issues related to access to multiplexor resources**.

## 13. Management and supervision of strategy implementation

The Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia and the Georgian National Communications Commission will monitor implementation of digital broadcasting switchover strategy, as well as carry out activities necessary for public information.

The process monitoring system will cover two levels:

1. Separate measures and activities that will be carried out independently by particular agencies following the assumed obligations;
2. Joint measures and activities.

The system of strategy implementation monitoring will cover the following activities:

1. Submit the Government of Georgia and general public with reports describing activities of the Ministry and the Georgian National Communications Commission implemented in accordance with the present strategy;
2. Prepare quarterly reports.

## 14. Obligations of stakeholders

The action plan will precisely describe basic tasks/objectives and obligations of all stakeholders participating in the process of transition from analog to digital broadcasting, as well as comprise a detailed analysis of all laws and regulations to ensure their consistency with this policy and, if necessary, relevant amendments.

The main stakeholders in the process of transition from analog to digital broadcasting are as follows:

- ✓ The Government of Georgia and bodies responsible for implementation of this strategy;
- ✓ The Georgian National Communications Commission;
- ✓ The Public Broadcaster;
- ✓ Private Broadcasters;
- ✓ Network operators;
- ✓ Producers of receivers/integrated TV sets and retail traders;
- ✓ Consumer rights protection organizations;
- ✓ Companies installing antennas and cable systems and service personnel;

**The Government of Georgia and those Ministries that are responsible for implementation of the present strategy will ensure the following:**

- Finish digital switchover process by June 17, 2015 in accordance with ITU 2006 Geneva plan;
- Universal access to the Public Broadcaster's channels through various accessible platforms;
- Refine all legislative acts (laws and bylaws) related to the process;
- Use radio frequency spectrum that will be vacant after analog broadcasting switch off, i.e. digital dividend to generate maximum profit for the public through providing new generation services from the standpoint of creating new working places and ensuring economic development (changes in the national plan of frequency allocation);
- Coordinated work to achieve efficiency of digital broadcasting switchover process;
- Provide free (FTA) broadcasting services at least for all families receiving the existing analog broadcasting service;
- Envision best interests of population in digital broadcasting switchover support program that will be accessible for all consumers according to consumer digital information program;
- Not a single group of population will suffer any damage in the process of transition to digital broadcasting;
- Envision necessary subsidies to purchase digital receivers for those persons, who are subject to subsidies;
- Raise funds for advertising campaign.

**The Georgian National Communications Commission will ensure:**

- Timely settlement of radio frequency management issues related to transitional and follow-up periods, so that the spectrum, necessary for digital broadcasting, is not issued prior to inception of the process;
- Implementation of a concession agreement between public and private broadcasters and cable/network operators and the state and, if necessary, ensure that amendments to the concession agreement are prepared on time;
- Provision the Government of Georgia and other authorized agencies with recommendations that in short term period and/or if necessary will be reflected in regulatory legislation to avoid obstacles to digital broadcasting switchover process;
- Open operation of the Georgian electronic communications industry on the basis of effective competition and eliminate any system or non-system obstacles to digital broadcasting switchover process;
- Bringing new services, such as electronic program guides (EPG), conditional access services and other newest services in conformity with international standards of digital broadcasting and reflect the right of their use in other relevant standards.

**The Public Broadcaster will ensure the following:**

- First of all, taking every measure for public content accessibility and avoiding obstacles to digital broadcasting switchover;
- Supplying additional services that were not accessible for viewers on an analog platform;
- Provision of innovative programs that depend on high quality of digital broadcasting;
- Provision of new services to handicapped persons and elderly;
- Additional services for viewers with visual and hearing problems;
- Multilingual broadcasting for ethnic minorities living in Georgia;
- Active participation in supply of information that will be known to viewers, namely information about digital broadcasting, switchover process, equipment and installation process.

**Private broadcasters will ensure the following:**

- Facilitation of end users' information program about digital broadcasting;
- Supplying high definition programs after completion of a switchover process that will be popular among viewers (sport entertainment, education and other programs);
- Distribution of additional services that were not accessible during analog broadcasting.

**Network operators will ensure the following:**

- Make initial investment in digital terrestrial network set up on national, regional and local levels;

- Distribution channels characterized by a relevant capacity for transmitting all necessary DVB-T2 to distribute programs of public and private broadcasters;
- Cooperation with other stakeholders in the process of digital broadcasting switchover, consulting on technical details and other technologies;
- Support broadcasters in introduction of new technologies (interactive and new generation services).

**Equipment importers will ensure the following:**

- Importing of receivers that will be compatible with digital network of multiplex operators;
- Consultation with consumers concerning the issues related to digital receivers' accessibility and network compatibility, as well as issues related to technical details, prices, use of a manual etc.;
- Providing consumers with timely, adequate and complete information about receivers and other related appliances;
- Providing consumers with timely, complete and accurate information about dates for analog broadcasting switch off.

**Consumer rights protection organizations will ensure the following:**

- Maximum information provided to end users about the digital broadcasting switchover process;
- Consulting with end users about their rights;
- Provision of timely, adequate and comprehensive information to elderly and other vulnerable groups of population about positive sides of digital broadcasting and measures necessary for its adoption.

**Antenna and cable system sellers and installation companies will ensure the following:**

- Installation, services related to connection/introduction of general antenna systems and cables and related appliances during work performance;
- Timely, adequate and complete information provided to end users and services provided at acceptable prices.