

Smart TV to unveil service in Southern Africa

Smart TV, a promising Pan-African pay-television brand by Sweden's Next Generation Broadcasting, plans to launch services in three new markets in Africa.

 By [Walter Wafula](#) 26 Apr 2011



According to Martin Abuya, the chief executive officer Smart TV Uganda, the company will unveil its pay-TV service in Mozambique, Zambia and Tanzania as part of its expansion strategy on in Africa.

This will follow the successful launch of its pay channels in Ghana, Kenya and recently in Uganda, where the company has been licensed to help the countries in their analogue to digital migration processes.

In an interview, Abuya said the company has started putting together content from the new markets to boost its pay television bouquet that is currently on sale in East and West Africa. "We are putting together channels from Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Ghana, Mozambique and Zambia - all the countries in which we are going to be operating," he said in a recent interview. The channels from the markets will converge into its unique African channel branded Kwetu - the Swahili word for 'ours'.

Launch delayed

The channel was due to have been launched mid this year but the absence of adequate content to make it meaningful has forced the company to postpone its launch to a later date. "The target for Kwetu was June but obviously putting a 24-hour channel together is a lot of work, it might take longer." The company is now building up a resourceful library first to enable it to provide a variety of movies over the platform instead of broadcasting the same movies repeatedly.

In the markets where the company has launched its services, its bouquet currently consists of channels such as Hinolly, KidsCo, Fox, Al Jazeera, MTV Base, Serie A, Sentanta Sports Africa, and Showtime, among others. The content varies from movies, sports, to news programmes.

Smart is positioning itself as the preferred pay television service provider on the continent with a commitment to make pay TV a basic right to all TV households in Africa. The firm is investing heavily in local programming and has taken the initiative to subsidize its decoders to make them affordable. The firm is marketing its Set Top Box (STB) at UGX150 000 instead of the UGX190 000 at which it imports it.

MultiChoice drops price

Despite the attempt, market leaders like MultiChoice Uganda, the company behind DSTV, has also cut back the price of its decoder to match the pressure that is coming in from its competitors including; Smart T, StarTimes, MoTV and Pearl Digital Television. The company recently cut its fully installed decoder to

Shs210 000, from about Shs340 000 last year. However, Star Times and MoTV remain the most affordable pay TV service providers although they don't have the advantage of broadcasting the English Premier League which is best selling content on pay TV service in Africa.

Both MultiChoice and Next Generation Broadcasting have television rights for the British soccer League although the former has rights to broadcast all matches while the latter can only broadcast a few matches a day.

The two firms have taken their battle for football content to a new level, with both of them acquiring rights to broadcast the Uganda Super League live. To that effect, on Wednesday, MultiChoice signed an agreement with the League owners worth US\$5 million, for the next five years. The deal came only three months after Sm: TV moved to get a similar deal with the same League for US\$870 000.

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