

Delay in digital switch over project in Nigeria

Thirteen years after the approbation of Digital Switch Over (DSO) by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the Federal Government has not yet validated the N45 billion to the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), which has frustrated its take-off in the country.



Image source: Gallo/Getty.

During an inspection of facilities at Gospell Digital Technology (GDT) factory at Calabar Free Zone to ensure there is enough set up boxes for the population to buy, members of NBC team were showing regret about the delayed switch over due to 'multi-functional' reasons.

The Head of the NBC team, Salihu Bamidele, who represented the Chairman, Alhaji Ikra Aliyu Bilbis, stated, "We have done six states and there are more to it. There are some funds to pay some people who have worked before they can do more into it. There are other administrative paper works to be done which we are battling with. But as soon as we are able to sort that out as a regulator, it does not take anything for us to release the timetable because we know that by now, we are far behind. I appeal to the operators to work together as a team. Satellite providers have to come together and let us have one voice. They have all to be on the same page and that is part of the delay. The differences we have are administrative differences."

When asked when the DSO will launch fully with all the television stations in the country, he declared, "We cannot give any assurance because it involves funds and the NBC does not have the funds and that is why we are appealing to the Federal Government to yield to NBC's demand so that they can get this thing done. We do not have the money. The money is in billions. The white paper is the guideline that guides the operations of the DSO. So, we are trying to make sure that the Act establishing the NBC is reviewed so as to give it a legislative backing. Now, what we have is just the white paper, which is the guideline we are working with. So, you can see all kinds of bottlenecks here and there. But if we are on the same page with the press and everybody, we can get this thing done easily. We don't have legislation".

The Head of the NBC team had refused to reveal the total figure they needed for full launch but the Group Managing Director of GDT, Sir Godfrey Oluwabunwa, put the total figure NBC needs at N45 billion and only N15 billion had been approved but not released yet.

Source: NexTVAfrica.com.

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