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HONG KONG BACKS DVB FOR DIGITAL TV

The Information Technology and Broadcasting Bureau (ITBB) of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government has announced its preferred choice of DVB-T for its terrestrial digital TV broadcast services. The selection was made over the other competing digital broadcasting standards developed in Japan (ISDB) and the United States (ATSC).

Ms Eva Cheng of the ITBB announced on 1st December, 2000 "With the successful completion of the technical trials on digital broadcasting and having regard to the findings of two consultancy studies, the ITBB has drawn up policy proposals for digital terrestrial broadcasting in Hong Kong, which are set out in a consultation paper". Having carefully examined the features and operating characteristics of the three prevailing digital terrestrial television (DTT) standards under the Hong Kong environment Ms Cheng went on to say " The ITBB has come to the preliminary view of selecting DVB-T as the DTT standard in Hong Kong, and would welcome views from the industry and the Hong Kong community on the proposal during the three-month consultation period. DVB-T will maximise the use of spectrum during the transitional period and enable easier frequency planning and transition from analogue to the digital broadcast environment".

Anthony Smith, Head of Marketing Communications, DVB Project Office commented "This is great news for all those who have been actively involved with demonstrating the superiority of the DVB standard. DVB-T is truly a global standard. It is slated for use in 500 million television households throughout the world prior to decisions being made in South America, China and Russia. This equates to around 50 percent of the world's television market share, and since its launch a little over two years ago DVB-T broadcasts have begun in 30 countries".

Three distinct kinds of services are planned for Hong Kong's DTT environment. These are a multiplex service in relation to the rolling out of the DTT network; a TV programme service in relation to the provision of television programmes; and an additional service in relation to the provision of data services (e.g., home-banking or other interactive multimedia services).

The Hong Kong government plans to license these services separately to provide commercial operators with more flexibility to exploit the full benefits of DTT. This

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approach will also stimulate the development of products and services that will benefit the consumer.

Background

The DVB Project

The Digital Video Broadcasting Project (DVB) is an industry-led consortium of over 290 broadcasters, manufacturers, network operators, software developers, regulatory bodies and others in over 35 countries committed to designing global standards for the delivery of digital television and data services. The DVB standards cover all aspects of digital television from transmission through interfacing, conditional access and interactivity for digital video, audio and data. The consortium came together in 1993 to create unity in the march towards global standardisation, interoperability and future proofing.

To date, there are numerous broadcast services using DVB standards. There are hundreds of manufacturers offering DVB compliant equipment, which is already in use around the world. DVB dominates the digital broadcasting world. A host of other services is also on-air with DVB-T, including data on the move and high-bandwidth Internet over the air. DVB-T also makes possible the introduction of terrestrial pay-TV services. Currently, 32 countries have committed to the DVB-T standard.

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