

Ten days left before implementation of full digital TV broadcast

Hong Kong will implement full digital TV broadcast on December 1 (00.00 hours) this year. With the 10-day countdown to the end of analogue TV transmission, households still using analogue TVs should take action immediately to add a digital set-top box or switch to a digital TV set, otherwise they will not be able to access local free TV programmes, a spokesman for the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau urged today (November 21).

According to the latest survey findings, by October this year, 95 per cent of Hong Kong households had already switched to digital TV, while only 2.2 per cent (around 58 000) of households were still using analogue TVs and among those only less than 10 per cent of households indicated that they had not switched to digital TV owing to financial reasons. A basic model of a digital TV receiver costs about several hundred dollars to over \$1,000. Households in need can apply for the Community Care Fund Digital Television Assistance Programme, said the spokesman.

The programme is administered by the Hong Kong Council of Social Service (HKCSS). Analogue TV households benefiting from specified social assistance programmes or are of low-income will not be required to go through additional means testing. Eligible households can choose one of the following digital TV receivers: a set-top box, a 24-inch digital TV set or a 32-inch digital TV set. Within eight weeks after receipt of an application, the electrical appliances contractor will liaise with the applicant and arrange one-stop services, including delivery and installation of a digital TV receiver as well as disposal of the old analogue TV set. As of now, over 18 800 eligible households have benefited.

With only 10 days left before the implementation of full digital TV broadcast on December 1, the spokesman urged eligible households to submit applications immediately. The HKCSS and contractor have enhanced their services, in order to process applications and complete installations as soon as possible, with a view to minimising the number of households affected.

The programme will run until July 15, 2021. For details on the programme, please visit the website (digitaltv.hkcss.org.hk/en/) or call 2922 9230.

To enhance the public awareness of full digital TV broadcast, the Government has launched a series of publicity and promotion programmes since last year to remind analogue TV users to allow sufficient time to obtain digital TV receivers. The promotion programmes include Announcements in the Public Interest; count-down reminders shown on analogue TV channels; newspaper advertisements; roving exhibitions and seminars in the community; promotional messages on radio and TV programmes, in MTR stations, tram stations, and on various means of public transport, such as buses and mini-

buses etc.