

DSO Customer Support in Retailing

Best Practice Guidelines



il-bidla digitali
STAZZJONIJIET MALTIN BLA HLAS

The Digital Switchover Committee in collaboration with the



Table of Contents

1	Introduction.....	4
2	Purpose of these Guidelines.....	5
3	Guidelines on the Award and Use of the DSO Mark	6
3.1	Background.....	6
3.2	Timetable.....	6
3.3	The Key Processes	6
3.4	Process – Awarding the DSO Mark.....	8
3.5	Communications.....	9
3.6	Display of the ‘DSO Compatibility Card’ on DVB-T Receivers.....	9
3.7	Training on the DSO.....	9
3.8	Withdrawing the DSO Mark	10
3.8.1	Serious offences	10
3.8.2	Less serious offences	10
4	Key Roles of Involved Parties.....	11
4.1	Retailers.....	11
4.2	Aerial Installers	11
4.3	The DSOC.....	11

1 Introduction

The digital switchover refers to the process of switching over Malta's free-to-air analogue terrestrial television broadcasting service to digital, as well as ensuring that people have adapted or upgraded their televisions to receive free-to-air digital Maltese TV.

The DSO Customer Support in Retailing initiative (“the initiative”) aims to:

- ▶ ensure supply of DVB-T receivers compatible with the free-to-air ‘General Interest’ (GI) TV broadcast network during the DSO period; and to
- ▶ offer assistance to consumers when upgrading analogue TV sets to digital.

The initiative is **voluntary** and open to retailers and established full-time aerial installers. Retailers and aerial installers participating in the initiative are tangibly demonstrating their commitment to better serve the interests of consumers during the transition from free-to-air analogue TV to digital. These retailers and installers are in turn guaranteed support and involvement during the switchover, as well as nationwide publicity as part of the public information campaign carried out by Digital Switchover Committee (the ‘DSOC’).

This initiative is implemented and supervised by the DSOC. The initiative will be managed through a memorandum of understanding, taking the form of an Application Form, between the DSOC and the participating retailer and/or aerial installer.

2 Purpose of these Guidelines

The purpose of the DSO Customer Support in retailing Best Practice Guidelines (“the Guidelines”) is to:

- ▶ Document the concepts behind the initiative;
- ▶ list the benefits for the organisations participating in the initiative;
- ▶ define the practical aspects that need to be carried out by the organisations in order to obtain and maintain membership in the initiative; and
- ▶ define the role of the Digital Switchover Committee as the manager and supervisor of the initiative.

3 Guidelines on the Award and Use of the DSO Mark

3.1 Background

Participating retailers and aerial installers will be identified by the DSO Mark (“*Il-Mark Bidla Diġitali*”):



Figure 1 1: DSO Mark (“*Il-Mark Bidla Diġitali*”)

The DSO Mark constitutes one of the key elements of the digital switchover. It is a visible indicator that the retail outlet / aerial installer is voluntarily adhering to best practices established for the digital switchover period. The DSO Mark may serve as a means of enhancing corporate reputation as it indicates commitment by the retail outlet to better serve the interests of the consumer during a time of transition from free-to-air analogue TV to digital.

Care should therefore be exercised in its use by participating retailers. Whilst clearly displaying the DSO Mark, retailers and aerial installers need to keep in view their commitment as signatories to the memorandum of understanding and as subsequent holders of the DSO Mark. Serious and/or frequent defaulting of requirements and provisions established in the regulations can result in the withdrawal of the DSO Mark. This is without prejudice to any other regulatory measures in accordance with Maltese law.

3.2 Timetable

The DSO Mark will become operative as from 1 February 2011 and will cease on 31 December 2011, or on any other dates as may be decided by the DSOC in consultation with the GRTU. The application form may be downloaded from the DSO website at: http://www.dso.org.mt/DSOCSiR_appform/.

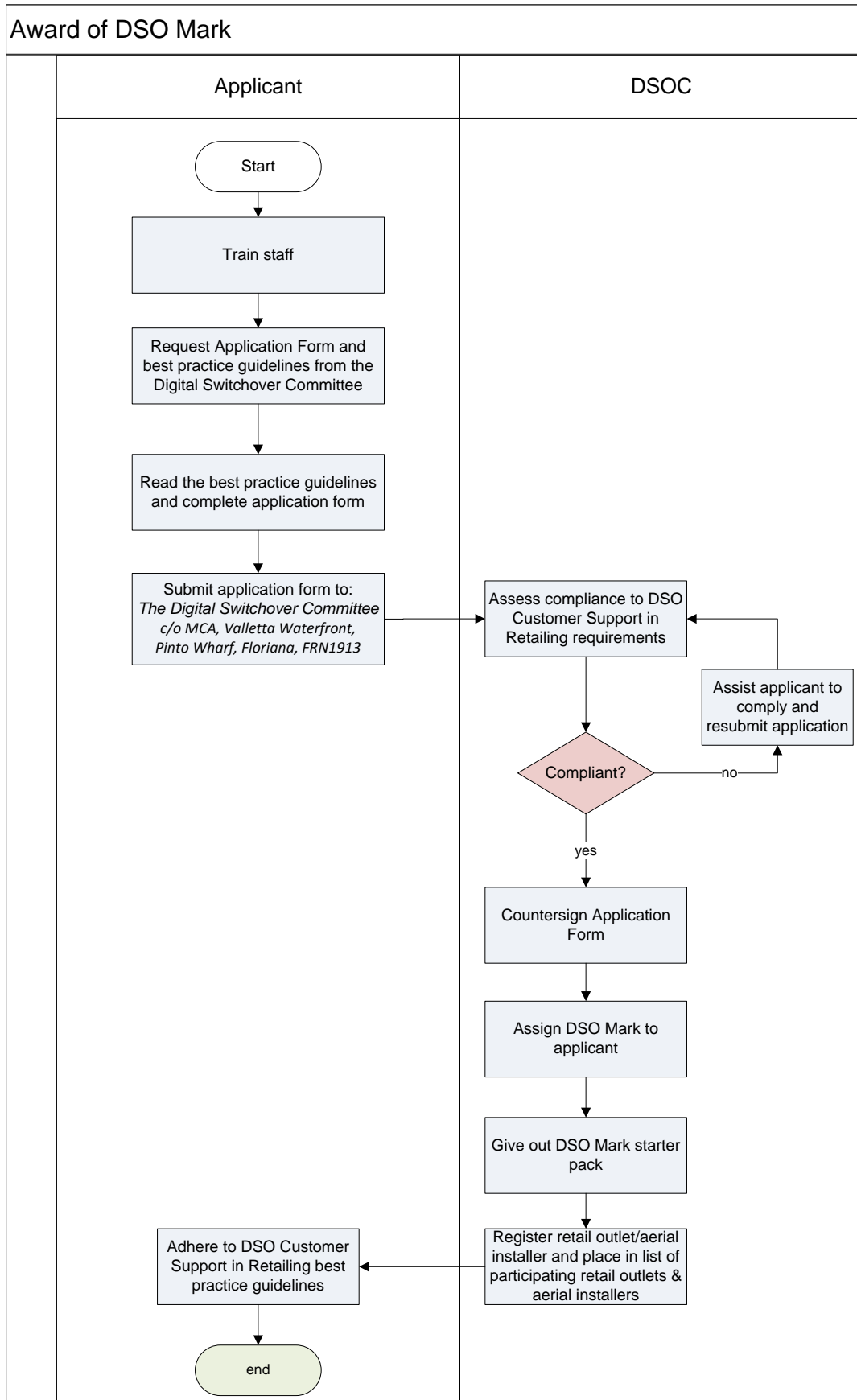
3.3 The Key Processes

The DSO Mark will be awarded following this procedure:

- i) The applicant attends training provided by the DSOC, downloads and reads the DSO Customer Support in Retailing Best Practice Guidelines (these guidelines – which may be downloaded from the DSO web site at: http://www.dso.org.mt/DSOCSiR_guidelines/).
- ii) The applicant submits the application form to the DSOC. The DSOC will be available to provide assistance during the application process.

- iii) The DSO Mark will be awarded by the DSOC to the retailer/aerial installer wishing to participate in the initiative after satisfying the requirements as defined in the application form and the these Guidelines.
- iv) In case of serious and/or frequent defaulting by the participating retailer, the DSO Mark will be withdrawn following written notice by the DSOC to this effect.

3.4 Process – Awarding the DSO Mark



3.5 Communications

Retail outlets and aerial installers play a special role in establishing and maintaining consumer confidence during the digital switchover period and in informing consumers both on the DSO and on products suitable for watching free-to-air digital Maltese TV. The DSO Mark seeks:

- ▶ to achieve good quality and user-friendly digital set-top boxes and iDTVs and which are compatible with the GI TV broadcast network; and
- ▶ to establish that customers are well served and well informed by retail outlets and aerial installers through the DSO period.

As a way to improve the visibility of organisations participating in the DSO Mark, the following will also be granted:

- ▶ Publication of minimum technical specifications which DVB-T digital receivers need to satisfy in order to be compatible with the free-to-air digital TV broadcast network. These specifications will serve as a guide to source suitable digital set-top boxes.
- ▶ Free staff training, that will improve the consumer trust in the digital switchover process in general and specifically in that retail outlet.
- ▶ The option of participants having a link to their website directly on the DSO website.
- ▶ The opportunity to use the DSO Mark in their adverts/promotional material.
- ▶ Inclusion in various DSO promotional activities where relevant.

3.6 Display of the 'DSO Compatibility Card' on DVB-T Receivers

The 'DSO Compatibility Card' can be placed near digital set-top boxes, iDTVs, and other DVB-T receivers that are compatible with the free-to-air digital TV broadcast network. This serves as a means for consumers to easily identify such devices.

By undertaking to display the 'DSO Compatibility Card' on DVB-T receivers, the retail outlet is automatically obliged to comply with the regulations for displaying the DSO Mark.

3.7 Training on the DSO

A key requirement for the DSO Mark to be issued to a retail outlet is for the retail outlet to ensure that at least one of its customer-facing staff is conversant with the DSO and familiar with compatible DVB-T receivers. In the case of aerial installers, the aerial installer needs to be conversant with the DSO and to be informed on the free-to-air digital DTV network set-up. This requirement seeks to ensure that customers are well served during the DSO period.

A participating retail outlet in this initiative will be expected to consent to one of its customer-facing staff to attend the planned training on the DSO. Training will be provided for free to customer facing staff, and is anticipated to take a maximum period of one hour.

Training will be provided for free to all established full-time aerial installers wishing to participate in the initiative.

Each participating retailer/aerial installer will be supplied with a business starter kit consisting of a DSO Mark sticker that can be affixed the shop window and a set of 10 DSO Compatibility Cards. Aerial installers will be provided by an identification tag.

3.8 Withdrawing the DSO Mark

The DSO Mark will be withdrawn in case of serious and/or frequent defaulting by the participating retailer.

3.8.1 *Serious offences*

The following cases are deemed to be serious offences which lead to immediate removal of the DSO Mark:

- i) The DSO Mark is used in a way which would tend to allow it to lose its distinctiveness, become liable to mislead the consumer, or be materially detrimental to or inconsistent with its good name, goodwill, reputation and image.
- ii) The retailer adopts or uses a symbol that is confusingly similar to the DSO Mark with the intention of misleading the consumer.
- iii) Intentional disregard of these Guidelines.
- iv) Evidence is presented to the DSOC that an aerial installer is fraudulently misleading customers. An example of this is when an aerial installer recommends that an aerial in good working order needs to be replaced.

3.8.2 *Less serious offences*

Less serious offences do not lead to an immediate removal of the DSO Mark. A warning is issued when one of the following less serious offences is committed, and the DSO Mark will be removed with the third warning.

- i) Incorrect information on the DSO is provided to the consumer, and where it can be demonstrated that it is not intended to mislead the consumer. In this case, the DSOC will provide customer facing staff with guidance on the DSO to clarify matters.
- ii) Incorrect placement of the DSO Mark.

4 Key Roles of Involved Parties

4.1 Retailers

The following tasks and responsibilities are to be provided for by participating retailers:

- i) Complete the DSO Customer Support in Retailing application form and submit to the DSOC.
- ii) Ensure that customer facing staff in each retail outlet is suitably trained on the DSO and on assisting consumers during the switchover period.
- iii) Tune all digital set-top boxes to receive the free-to-air Maltese TV channels, excluding all pay-TV channels from appearing in the list of channels and EPG.
- iv) Ensure that user manuals supplied with digital TV equipment is in English and, or Maltese.
- v) Display the DSO Mark and observe the requirements and provisions of agreement.
- vi) Take remedial action upon receipt of complaint or written warning from the DSOC, and inform the DSOC of the corrective action taken.

4.2 Aerial Installers

- i) Complete the DSO Customer Support in Retailing application form and submit to the DSOC.
- ii) Ensure s/he is suitably trained on the DSO and on assisting consumers during the switchover period.
- iii) Ensure that all works carried out on aerials meet a high standard and are to the customer's satisfaction.
- iv) Take remedial action upon receipt of complaint or written warning from the DSOC, and inform the DSOC of the corrective action taken.

4.3 The DSOC

The following tasks and responsibilities are to be provided for by the DSOC:

- i) Launch of the DSO Customer Support in Retailing initiative and issue related material for distribution to participating retail outlets and aerial installers.
- ii) Liaise with, and regularly update, constituted bodies representing retailers and aerial installers on matters related to the DSO Customer Support in Retailing.
- iii) Establish national DSO helpline (freephone 153).
- iv) Enrol organisations subscribing to the DSO Mark:
 - ▶ Sign agreement with participants,
 - ▶ Register the retail outlets,
 - ▶ Assign the DSO Mark.
- v) Establish and maintain a:
 - ▶ register of participating retail outlets/aerial installer, and a
 - ▶ register of participants who have been withdrawn from the initiative.
- vi) Place the list of participating retail outlet's/aerial installer's details on the DSO web site (www.dso.org.mt).
- vii) Conduct promotional campaigns on the DSO Customer Support in Retailing initiative.

- viii) Monitor progress of the initiative.
- ix) Investigate complaints and issues raised by consumers on possible misuse of the DSO Campaign Mark.
- x) Issue written warnings to those participating organisations that are not adhering to the terms of the agreement. Where the organisation is still in default after three warnings, the DSOC shall withdraw the DSO Mark and inform the public accordingly.