



**HM GOVERNMENT OF GIBRALTAR
PRESS OFFICE
No.6 Convent Place
Gibraltar
Tel:20070071; Fax: 20043057**

PRESS RELEASE

No. 290/2012

Date: 8th May 2012

Arqiva to build digital infrastructure in Gibraltar

The Gibraltar Regulatory Authority (GRA) has signed a contract, worth around £1M, with Arqiva in the United Kingdom to provide a digital broadcasting network in Gibraltar.

The network will comprise two digital television multiplexes and two digital radio multiplexes. On each television multiplex Gibraltar will be able to transmit up to 6 distinct programmes. Similarly with digital radio, each multiplex allows for 4 distinct programmes. This means that a greater choice of programmes can be made available and that additional broadcasters could be licensed by the Government.

In 2006, during a digital planning conference organised by the International Telecommunication Union, the GRA successfully co-ordinated with Spain, Morocco, Algeria and Portugal the use of channels 30 and 56 for digital television and channel blocks 12B and 12C for digital radio. This means that if the change-over to digital is not finalised by 31st December 2012, GBC will go off the air. Despite many public statements to the contrary, the previous administration had not made any investment for the change-over to digital and the new government is having to pull out all the stops to make digital transmission a reality by the cut-off date of 31st December 2012.

The transmitters will be located at a single site on the Upper Rock, thus minimising the environmental impact of the antenna and support structures which will replace the two television broadcasting sites of Signal Hill and O'Hara's Battery.

The digital broadcasting network will be operational by 31st December 2012, allowing Gibraltar to meet its international obligation to close down its analogue television transmissions by that date. Unlike the change-over to digital television, there are no plans to convert FM radio to digital.

The contractor, Arqiva, is the communications infrastructure and media services company at the forefront of network solutions and services in the digital world. Arqiva provides much of the infrastructure behind television, radio, satellite and wireless communications in the UK and has a significant presence in Ireland, mainland Europe and the USA. Customers include major broadcasters such as the BBC, ITV, BSkyB and the independent radio

groups, major telco providers including the UK's five mobile network operators, and the emergency services.

The Chief Minister, who has ministerial responsibility for Broadcasting said: "The quality of broadcasting in Gibraltar must improve and moving to a digital network is one of the many steps in the direction of the improvements necessary."