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## National Communications Authority

*- Press Release*

### NCA HOLDS STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT ON DIGITAL AUDIO BROADCASTING (DAB)

*“The NCA, being mindful of technological advancement within the broadcasting space, the limited spectrum at its disposal and the increasing interest in broadcasting, believes that latching onto DAB will be useful for us in Ghana” – Joe Anokye, Director General*

- 18 FM stations selected for initial six-month trial
  - Trial starts in August 2023
- FM stations involved in the trial will be heard simultaneously in Accra and Kumasi

**Accra, Monday, 24<sup>th</sup> July, 2023:** Following the announcement by the National Communications Authority (NCA) about the commencement of trials for Digital Audio Broadcasting (DAB) in Accra and Kumasi, the Authority has today (July 24<sup>th</sup>) engaged with selected stakeholders involved in the upcoming trials. The stakeholders included the selected 16 FM stations as well as KNET, the technical partners for the project.

Cataloging the various innovations the Authority has undertaken since 2017, the Director General of the NCA, Joe Anokye, referenced the re-farming of the FM Band in 2017 to create more room for the tall list of frequency requests the Authority has been receiving. He touched also on the formation of the Communication Monitoring Centre, the Network Monitoring System, Computer Emergency Response Team (NCA-CERT) and the opening of the expanded Broadcasting Monitoring Centre as evidence of the Authority’s desire to seek innovation that ultimately benefits the industry, consumers and investors in the telecommunications and broadcasting space.



- *Mr. Joe Anokye giving the welcome remarks*

Mr. Anokye said he was delighted that the Authority will be commencing the DAB trials. “My excitement, is not simply that we will be the first country within the ECOWAS sub-region to embrace DAB, but also, it clearly indicates that the NCA, being mindful of technological advancement within the broadcasting space, the limited spectrum at its disposal and the increasing interest in broadcasting, believes that latching onto DAB will be useful for us in Ghana”, Mr. Anokye said. He added that with the FM band of most cities in Ghana congested, the large number of outstanding FM Radio applications and large numbers of new applications received every week, the introduction of DAB is opportune for the industry.

Joe Anokye further added that, amidst the digital landscape, various positive developments are taking place, primarily concerning spectrum management and the government's digital transformation agenda. Recognizing that spectrum is finite and analogue options have been exhausted, the transition to digital platforms presents numerous opportunities. “In light of this, the NCA invested in researching how to ensure spectrum efficiency, leading to the creation of the DAB (Digital Audio Broadcasting). Currently, we are running the DAB for six months, granting stations cost-free access, which greatly contributes to advancing the digital transformation agenda. This exciting progress benefits all stakeholders, fostering new avenues for communication and content delivery”, he said.

The acting Director of Engineering at the NCA, Rev. Ing. Edmund Yirenkyi Fianko educated the stakeholders on the various technical aspects of the service. He emphasized that DAB has many benefits for broadcasters as well as the public. He explained that with DAB+, the version Ghana will be trialing; it offers good quality audio that also supports multiple radio channels leading to spectrum efficiency. The platform also allows for value added services among others.

Other benefits of DAB he touched on include the under listed:

1. **Overcoming Frequency Constraints:** With severe constraints on FM radio frequencies in major Ghanaian cities, DAB offers a solution to expand coverage and cater for the growing demand for sound broadcasting services.
2. **Improved Reception Quality:** DAB utilises digital signals, mitigating interference and delivering superior audio quality compared to traditional analogue FM radio.
3. **Efficient Spectrum Usage:** DAB allows more stations to share the same frequency channel and transmitter thereby enhancing energy and frequency efficiency. In this trial, 18 existing FM stations in Accra and Kumasi will share the same frequency channel to deliver DAB services.

4. **Enhanced Interactive Services:** In comparison to FM, DAB allows the transmission of metadata such as text and images for the following - service and programme information, emergency warnings, news, weather and traffic information.
5. **Ease of Selecting DAB stations to listen:** Consumers are able to select DAB stations by searching for the names of the stations instead of memorising their frequencies.

Speaking on behalf of the selected stations, Alhaji Dr. Abubakar Sidique of the University of Ghana's Radio Univers said he was happy to see that advancement of technology with radio broadcasting in Ghana. He recounted the beginning of FM broadcasting in Ghana and the various challenges that were faced as the nation's broadcasting industry started to grow. He was of the expectation that the trial will be successful to add value to Ghana's FM broadcasting space.



- **A group photograph of participants at the Broadcasting Monitoring Centre**

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**About NCA**

The National Communications Authority, (NCA), was established by an Act of Parliament, Act 524 in December 1996, which has been repealed and replaced by the National Communications Authority Act, 2008, Act 769.