



Broadcasting Public Notice CRTC 2004-94

Ottawa, 3 December 2004

Introduction to Broadcasting Decisions CRTC 2004-530 to 2004-540 renewing the licences of 21 French-language television stations

In the decisions issued today, the Commission renews the broadcasting licences of 21 regional French-language television stations and sets their expiry dates to coincide with those of the originating stations and of the networks with which the applicant stations are affiliated.

This notice discusses the broader issues raised during the licence renewal process. Details regarding each applicant's specific proposals for the new licence term, as well as the conditions of licence and the Commission's other expectations concerning each service, are set out in the individual renewal decisions that accompany this notice.

Overview

1. At the 16 February 2004 Public Hearing in Québec, the Commission considered 21 licence renewal applications for French-language regional television programming undertakings. The names of the licensees, the station call signs, their affiliation, and the numbers of the licence renewal decisions issued today are listed in the appendix to this notice. The individual decisions list the transmitters for these stations.
2. The renewal applications for these licences have been examined in the context of *Building on success – A policy framework for Canadian television*, Public Notice CRTC 1999-97, 11 June 1999 (the television policy). Among other things, the television policy specifies that the renewal of all the conventional television licences held or controlled by a group generally will be considered by the Commission at the same time.
3. Although stations CKTM-TV Trois-Rivières, CKSH-TV Sherbrooke, CKTV-TV Saguenay, CKRT-TV, CIMT-TV and CFTF-TV Rivière-du-Loup, CHAU-TV Carleton, CHOT-TV and CFGS-TV Gatineau, CFEM-TV and CKRN-TV Rouyn-Noranda, as well as CFVS-TV Val d'Or are neither held nor controlled by a group as it is understood in the television policy, the Commission considered it appropriate to renew their licences so that the date of their next licence renewal coincides with that of the originating stations and the networks with which the applicant stations are affiliated.

4. In 2000, the Commission renewed the licences for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's (the CBC's) French-language television and radio services until 31 August 2007.¹ In 2000 and 2001, the Commission also renewed the licences of Télévision Quatre Saisons's (TQS's) and TVA's French-language television networks and originating stations until 31 August 2008.² The current licence renewals until 2007 or 2008 are therefore an intermediate step intended to harmonize the forthcoming renewal schedule for all French-language television stations that retransmit programming from the CBC, TVA or TQS French-language television networks.
5. In Broadcasting Notice of Public Hearing CRTC 2003-11, 18 December 2003 (Notice of Public Hearing 2003-11), the Commission stated that while the licences of the CBC, TVA and TQS television networks' originating stations were not currently being considered for renewal, the Commission intended to discuss a number of issues with the network representatives within the framework of the Québec public hearing. These issues, along with certain general issues relating to regional stations, are discussed below.

The future of conventional television

6. The representatives of the three networks expressed their concerns relating to the future of conventional television in light of the increased competition that it is facing. According to TVA, issues in this regional station licence renewal process include audience fragmentation as a result of the significant viewership increase for pay and specialty television as well as the greater market penetration of direct-to-home (DTH) satellite distribution, which limits the number of regional stations that are distributed.
7. In particular, the network licensees emphasized the problems caused by the fact that some of the regional stations are distributed by DTH undertakings and others are not, which leads to a loss of viewing hours and consequently of advertising revenue. TVA pointed out that none of the local stations in the Trois-Rivières market is distributed by Bell ExpressVu or Star Choice. TQS stated that the lack of DTH distribution made its regional stations less profitable. For its part, the CBC reiterated its request that its regional television stations be made available through DTH distribution across the country.
8. The Commission notes that it has already taken steps to make it possible for the signals of certain small market, independently owned television stations not owned by larger broadcast groups to be distributed by DTH undertakings and to ensure the equitable distribution of television stations owned by larger private broadcast groups.

¹ See *Licences for CBC French-language television and radio renewed for a seven-year term*, Decision CRTC 2000-2, 6 January 2000.

² See *Renewal of the licences of the Quatre Saisons television network, of CFJP-TV Montréal and its transmitter CJPC-TV Rimouski, as well as of CFAP-TV Québec*, Decision CRTC 2000-418, 27 October 2000 and *Licence renewals for the French-language national television network TVA and for the French-language television programming undertaking CFTM-TV Montréal*, Decision CRTC 2001-385, 5 July 2001.

9. In *Licence amendment for ExpressVu – relief from requirements for simultaneous and non-simultaneous program deletion*, Broadcasting Decision CRTC 2003-257, 16 July 2003 and in *Licence amendment for Star Choice – relief from requirements for simultaneous and non-simultaneous program deletion*, Broadcasting Decision CRTC 2003-258, 16 July 2003, the Commission approved the applications of the two DTH licensees relieving them from their general requirements concerning program deletion. The licensees were relieved of these condition-of-licence obligations until 12 August 2006 so long as they fulfil the alternative measures set out in the decisions.
10. One of these alternatives provides for the distribution of the signals of certain small-market, independently owned television stations.³ Another requires each of them to contribute, in each broadcast year, not less than 0.4% of their gross revenues derived from broadcasting activities to a new, independently administered fund to assist small market, independently owned broadcasters in meeting their commitments to local programming (the small market fund). The third alternative concerns the equitable distribution of television stations owned by larger private broadcast groups.⁴
11. Furthermore, in *Star Choice – Licence renewal*, Broadcasting Decision CRTC 2004-130, 31 March 2004, the Commission notes the licensee's statements that equitable distribution of the signals of the larger groups could apply only after the commercial deployment of the new Anik F2 satellite that was to be launched in August 2004.
12. In view of the foregoing, the Commission considers that it is still too early to assess the repercussions of these decisions on the revenues of conventional television stations or the impact of the small market fund on local production. In any event, current financial data do not support the scenarios depicted by the licensees: the revenues of private French-language television have continued to grow in the past few years, from \$253 million in 1999 to \$378 million in 2002.⁵
13. The Commission will monitor these issues very closely and plans to discuss them with the licensees at the time of their next licence renewal.

Network operations and programming

14. With respect to programming, the hearing revealed that since the last regional television station renewals, the Canadian French-language television environment has changed a great deal, in terms of new technology, competition and new forms of programming. These developments, as well as the television policy, have shaped the regional stations' relationships with the networks that feed them programming.

³ The independently owned television stations identified in these decisions are those belonging to Jim Pattison Industries Ltd., Mid West Television Ltd., Norcom Telecommunications Limited, Radio Nord Communications inc., Télé Inter-Rives Itée, Standard Radio Inc. and Thunder Bay Electronics Limited.

⁴ The larger broadcast groups identified in these decisions are Bell Globemedia Inc. (CTV), CanWest Media Inc. (Global), CHUM Limited, Cogeco Radio-Télévision inc. (TQS), Quebecor Media Inc. (TVA), Craig Media Inc., Corus Entertainment Inc. and Rogers Media Inc.

⁵ Broadcasting Policy Monitoring Report 2003, CRTC.

15. The Commission notes that, as a result of equipment digitization, virtually all the technical aspects of broadcasting for all the network affiliates that are not separately owned stations are now handled in Montréal. The Commission noted the licensees' explanations concerning the benefits of this development, particularly the significant savings it permits.
16. Under the affiliation agreements that they negotiate with network representatives, regional stations are obliged to accept the full package of network programming, including the advertisements. A degree of flexibility is allowed, however, as regards the addition of local programming to the schedules of the regional stations in specific cases. Thus, TVA, TQS and the CBC indicated that specific situations may require changes at the request of a particular station, when a specific event occurs in a given market, in order to enable local stations to fulfil their mandate.
17. The Commission notes, however, that the marginal revenues obtained from local programming are hardly adequate to offset the loss of network revenues. This does not encourage regional stations to replace network programming, especially in peak viewing hours.
18. With regard to the influence of the increased power of the originating stations on the broadcasting of programming, the Commission considers that it should concern itself mainly with the amount of local production made available to viewers in each market. The Commission notes that the technological advances that have made it easier to feed network programming to the regional stations do not seem to have had any adverse impact in this regard, since the majority of the stations have undertaken to maintain their current commitments to local programming for the next licence term.

Independent production in the regions

Interventions

19. During the public hearing, interveners from the independent production community and groups representing the various production crafts called on the Commission to impose conditions of licence or various measures requiring broadcasters to invest a percentage of their local advertising revenues in regional independent production.
20. These interventions came mainly from the Association des producteurs de films et de télévision du Québec (APFTQ), the Fédération nationale des communications (FNC), the Union des artistes (UDA), the Mouvement des artistes de la scène de la Capitale (MASC), the Forum de l'industrie de la télévision, du cinéma et du multimédia (Forum), Vélocité International, Productions des Années lumières and 10^e ave Productions.
21. Many of these interveners tied this issue to an increase in local production in the regions and to their potential contribution to it. According to the APFTQ, if the stations affiliated with the three big conventional French-language television networks offered more local programming to their regional viewers, they might be less likely to be deserted by these viewers. The FNC believed that the broadcasters may be primarily responsible for the

breakthrough of DTH broadcasting. By gradually withdrawing from the production of original local and regional content, broadcasters have made the lack of local services broadcast by DTH undertakings pass almost unnoticed. The FNC was also of the view that conventional broadcasters should invest in enhancing local and regional content to withstand competitive pressure and increase demand for their services.

22. The UDA, the MASC, the Forum, Vélocité International and Productions des Années lumières emphasized the importance of increasing local production in Québec in order for the city to become a second production centre for network priority programming. In their view, imposing appropriate conditions of licence would persuade broadcasters to take a new look at the way they do business and build partnerships with local independent producers.

Response to the interventions

23. TVA stated that it is a loyal ally and partner of the independent production community in Quebec. It noted that 90% of its expenditures on priority programming this year will go to independent production and that over 95% of the tangible benefits on-screen invested in priority programming will also be allocated to projects submitted by independent producers following the *Transfer of effective control of TVA to Quebecor Média inc.*, Decision CRTC 2001-384, 5 July 2001.
24. TVA considered that its proposal to keep the lines of communication open is the best solution in the circumstances. The licensee proposed to meet with Quebec's independent producers once a year to promote better understanding of the TVA network's needs. According to TVA, the imposition of quotas would not solve anything and would not be consistent with regulatory trends.
25. TQS stated that it frequently called on independent producers in the Québec region. TQS noted that it is required to invest \$40 million in independent production and that the interveners' requests would contravene the television policy's objective of reducing the regulatory burden on regional stations.
26. With regard to the licence renewal application by CBVT Québec, the CBC indicated that many independent producers stressed the importance of CBVT in disseminating regional news and as an indispensable partner in the region's cultural and economic growth. The CBC stated that, during the period from 1997 to 2004, CBVT partnered in television and movie projects carrying a total production budget of nearly \$34 million. It added that, by committing to broadcast certain television productions, CBVT played a role in triggering funds to assist production. The total value of such projects in production was multiplied by four over a period of seven years, reaching \$6.3 million in 2003-2004.

The Commission's analysis

27. In its television policy, the Commission states that all licensees will be required to demonstrate, in their licence renewal applications, how they will meet the demands and reflect the particular concerns of their local audiences. As in the past, should the Commission determine that licensees have failed to respond to legitimate community needs, it will take appropriate action, which could include imposing specific conditions of licence. In principle, however, regulation would be required where the goals of the *Broadcasting Act* (the Act) cannot be met by other means.
28. In the television policy, the Commission promotes a financially strong television system, whose principles and structure facilitate flexibility, diversity and choice. The Commission notes, in particular, the considerable success enjoyed by the Canadian independent production sector, confirming the efficacy of public policies in promoting Canadian independent production.
29. The Commission notes that the French-language television broadcasting industry already contributes significantly to the independent production sector. At the time of its last licence renewal application, TVA undertook to spend a total of over \$120 million on independent production over the seven-year period ending 31 August 2008. TQS, whose licence will also expire on 31 August 2008, is subject to a condition requiring the licensee to allocate at least \$4 million a year of its total programming budget and at least \$40 million over a seven-year period to programming produced by unaffiliated Canadian independent producers.
30. In view of the provisions of the television policy, the licensees' achievements to date and the commitments they have made, the Commission considers that no additional requirements with regard to regional independent production are necessary at this time. The Commission encourages licensees to consider regional independent production capabilities, as well as the interest expressed many times by independent producers who wish to participate to a fuller extent in production for all the regions served by their stations. The Commission plans to revisit this issue at the next licence renewal of the conventional French-language television networks.
31. The issue of local production and the contribution of independent producers, particularly in Québec, is discussed in greater detail in the decisions renewing the licences of stations CFCM-TV (Broadcasting Decision CRTC 2004-530) and CBVT Québec (Broadcasting Decision CRTC 2004-531).

Program logs and apparent non-compliance

32. In Notice of Public Hearing 2003-11, the Commission noted that the television broadcasters' performance evaluations were based on the program logs they submitted and that the program logs show that certain licensees did not appear to meet their commitments with respect to local programming or fully comply with Canadian content

and program log regulatory obligations. Because the program logs contained a number of discrepancies, the Commission stated that the accuracy of the statistics generated from them may be unreliable, and therefore the licensees were authorized to further correct their program logs.

33. Following its review of the corrected program logs, the Commission notes that the majority still contain errors and raise a number of interpretation difficulties. Although most of the stations seem to be in compliance with their commitments, certain instances of apparent non-compliance persist in other cases.
34. In the case of the CBC station CBVT Québec, the findings indicate errors in the program logs and apparent non-compliance with the commitments regarding local news programming and closed captioning. The findings for stations CFKM-TV Trois-Rivières, CFKS-TV Sherbrooke and CFRS-TV Saguenay, owned by TQS, also indicate errors in the program logs and apparent non-compliance regarding Canadian content in certain broadcasting years, while CKTV-TV Saguenay, also owned by TQS, shows errors in the program logs and apparent non-compliance with the commitments related to local news programming. The findings for stations CFVS-TV Val d'Or and CKRN-TV Rouyn-Noranda also indicate errors in the program logs and apparent non-compliance with Radio Nord's commitments regarding local news.
35. The Commission notes the licensees' explanations about their problems with the keeping of their program logs. Apparently, errors slipped in during data exchanges between the affiliate stations and the networks.
36. The Commission reminds the licensees of the importance of keeping their program logs current, as stipulated in section 10 of the *Television Broadcasting Regulations, 1987*. In this regard, the Commission notes that in *Program log reporting requirements for conventional television stations – Call for comments*, Broadcasting Public Notice CRTC 2004-12, 9 March 2004, it launched a proceeding to streamline program log reporting and updating requirements. The Commission will re-examine the accuracy of the licensees' program logs and their compliance with their commitments and with their regulatory obligations at their next licence renewal.

Reflection of Canada's cultural diversity

37. All broadcasting licensees have a responsibility to contribute to the reflection and portrayal of Canada's cultural diversity in furtherance of the policy objectives contained in section 3(1)(d) of the Act. Specifically, broadcasters share responsibility for assisting in the development of a broadcasting system that accurately reflects Canada's ethno-cultural minorities and Aboriginal peoples. Broadcasters must therefore ensure that the portrayal of such groups, through their presence and participation on-screen, is accurate, fair and non-stereotypical.

38. The Commission is not satisfied with TVA's performance as regards implementing its corporate cultural diversity plan. Although the initial plan was filed in September 2002 and the annual report was submitted in January 2004, the Commission notes that TVA has not yet undertaken concrete initiatives to implement its corporate cultural diversity plan.
39. During the question period at the hearing, TVA stated that [translation] "it did not live up to what was expected and it would do whatever was necessary to fix what was left undone." While certain concerns were cleared up during the hearing, several others were left unresolved. The Commission requires the licensee to show clear evidence in its next annual diversity report of the effort it has made and the concrete measures it has adopted to correct deficiencies in its corporate cultural diversity plan.
40. As regards TQS, the Commission notes that, following a request at the hearing, the licensee has filed a situation report on how cultural diversity is reflected in TQS broadcasts. However, TQS has not yet submitted its corporate cultural diversity plan to the Commission. Since the implementation of the corporate cultural diversity plans, the Commission asked to have these plans filed with the renewal applications of either the licensees' parent companies or the stations owned by them. The Commission is of the view that as a major conventional television broadcaster, it is essential for TQS to have a corporate plan designed specifically for its television undertakings.
41. Accordingly, the Commission requires TQS to file its corporate on-screen cultural diversity plan within three months from the date of this notice. Corporate plans must include detailed, specific initiatives relating to each of the three areas of corporate accountability, reflection of diversity in programming, and community involvement, as described in *Introduction to Broadcasting Decisions CRTC 2004-6 to 2004-27 renewing the licences of 22 specialty services*, Broadcasting Public Notice CRTC 2004-2, 21 January 2004 (Public Notice 2004-2). Corporate plans must also specify how progress will be assessed with respect to the initiatives in each of these areas.
42. The Commission also advised TQS that, no later than 31 December of each year, beginning in 2005, it must file an annual report with the Commission, detailing the actions it has taken and the progress it has achieved towards attaining the objectives of its corporate plan.
43. As stated in Public Notice 2004-2, the Commission considers that the presence, portrayal and participation of persons with disabilities are also important matters for all licensees. The Commission notes that the Canadian Association of Broadcasters (CAB) is developing an action plan for examining issues concerning the presence, portrayal and participation of persons with disabilities in television programming. The Commission considers that initiatives to make programming more reflective and inclusive of Canada's cultural diversity can, in many cases, be extended or adapted to ensure fair, balanced and inclusive reflection and portrayal of persons with disabilities. Accordingly, the Commission expects the licensees to include persons with disabilities in their corporate cultural diversity plans.

Violence in television programming

44. The 2002-2003 annual report of the Canadian Broadcast Standards Council (CBSC) revealed that one of Canadians' major sources of concern during this period was programming "intended for adult audiences," which should be reserved for those audiences because of its coarse language, or violent or sexually explicit content.
45. A petition containing 65,000 signatures tabled in the House of Commons in spring 2003 also revealed Francophone viewers' dissatisfaction with increasing violence on television and the times at which programming containing scenes of violence is aired. The petition called for a review of broadcast regulations on this subject.
46. The Commission raised the issue of violence with the licensees at the hearing and notes the efforts made by the CBC to reduce the number of films containing scenes of violence that are broadcast on television.
47. As regards TVA and TQS, the Commission wishes to reiterate the guidelines set out in the CAB's *Voluntary code regarding violence in television programming* (the CAB's Code on violence), which it approved, concerning the classification of films and compliance with the watershed hour of 9 p.m.
48. According to the CAB's Code on violence, programming that contains scenes of violence and that is intended for adult audiences should not be aired before the watershed hour of 9 p.m. The CBSC has also established that it is not acceptable to begin airing such programs before the watershed hour of 9 p.m., even if the scenes intended for adult audiences are broadcast after 9 p.m. The purpose of the watershed hour is to define very specifically the type of programming that can be broadcast before that hour.
49. In *Policy on violence in television programming*, Public Notice CRTC 1996-36, 14 March 1996 (the policy on violence), and in *Classification System for Violence in Television Programming*, Public Notice CRTC 1997-80, 18 June 1997, the Commission names the classification systems to be used in determining the level of violence for programs shown on television. These classification systems address nudity, sex and coarse language in addition to violence.
50. According to the policy on violence, the licensees of individual programming undertakings are responsible for determining the type of programming they broadcast. With respect to French-language broadcasters, they should be using the rating system developed by the Régie du cinéma du Québec (the Régie) for such purposes.

51. However, the Commission wishes to emphasize that broadcasters must not be content simply to adopt the rating assigned by a provincial film rating board for theatrical viewing, such as the Régie. Given that, in accordance with section 3(1) of the Act, broadcasters are responsible for the programming they air, broadcasters have a responsibility to select a type of programming that is appropriate for a television audience based on the system assigned by the film rating board.
52. More specifically, French-language broadcasters must rate their own programming using, among others, the tools developed by the Régie. They cannot simply assume that the rating assigned to a particular film by the Régie for theatrical viewing necessarily applies equally well to a television audience.
53. Recently, the Commission had occasion to clarify these points in a letter to TQS, dated 4 August 2004, concerning the interpretation of a CBSC decision on the broadcasting on TQS of the film entitled *L’Affaire Thomas Crown* at 7 p.m. on 10 March 2002.
54. The Commission expects TQS in particular to be more rigorous in rating and scheduling films for broadcasting. It requires TQS to take appropriate action to ensure that violent films intended for an adult audience are not broadcast before the watershed hour of 9 p.m. To allow the Commission to be in a position to more clearly monitor the licensee’s progress and performance in this respect, TQS must submit to the Commission, within three months from the date of this notice, a list of the criteria it uses to classify its programs, including programs intended for an adult audience, as well as criteria for broadcasting films before the watershed hour of 9 p.m.
55. The Commission plans to monitor TQS’ progress in this respect and to re-examine this issue during the renewal process for the TVA and TQS network licences, which expire on 31 August 2008.

Service to persons who are deaf or hard of hearing

56. Given that regional stations broadcast the integral version of the closed captioning provided by the networks, the latter are responsible for ensuring the quality of the closed captioning before broadcasting the program. The quality of French-language closed captioning continues to elicit much criticism. Notwithstanding the special problems raised by creating closed captioning in French, the Commission has consistently encouraged the licensees to improve the quality of the closed captioning they broadcast.

Intervention by the Regroupement québécois pour le sous-titrage inc.

57. In its intervention, the Regroupement québécois pour le sous-titrage inc. (RQST) harshly criticized the quality of the closed captioning offered by TQS and the CBC. The intervener recommended that TQS should be monitored more closely and be required to report regularly on the quantity and quality of the closed captioning it broadcasts. As for the CBC, the RQST requested that the CBC replace its outmoded system with a system adapted to today’s technology, that it make an investment in research and development, and that it be closely monitored.

The licensees' response

58. TQS did not respond to the RQST's comments concerning closed captioning quality. The CBC indicated that it uses stenotypy (machine shorthand) as a captioning method, pointing out that improvements are difficult to make because of the limitations of the existing software but that results are equivalent to those obtained in the past.

The Commission's analysis

59. The Commission reiterates the importance of building the quality of the closed captioning provided by the networks, and it expects licensees to find and implement methods for improving closed captioning quality before the next renewal of their licences. The Commission reminds them that conditions of licence and current closed captioning requirements pertaining to the networks will be re-examined when each network's licence comes up for renewal.
60. In view of the concerns raised in the RQST intervention, the Commission requires that the CBC, TVA and TQS report annually to the Commission, no later than 31 December of each year, beginning in 2005, on the progress made toward improving the quality and increasing the quantity of closed captioning originating with the networks between now and the next licence renewal in 2007 or 2008, as is the case for each licensee. The Commission also requires TVA and TQS to provide to the Commission, within six months from the date of this notice, their internal standards on caption quality, and to work with the CAB to develop standards and procedures respecting closed captioning for French-language television broadcasters.
61. The Commission notes that when Quebecor Media Inc. acquired TVA in 2001,⁶ an amount of \$500,000 was set aside from the tangible benefits of the transaction for the development of voice recognition software for the purpose of close captioning programs. The initial trials of the software were to be conducted in spring 2004 and the software was to be rolled out thereafter, possibly this fall.
62. Given that the voice recognition technology is still in the early stages of development, the Commission considers that it would be premature to impose a closed captioning requirement as a condition of licence for private stations. The Commission encourages TQS and the CBC to collaborate on the development of this voice recognition software with TVA and the Centre de recherche informatique de Montréal inc.
63. The Commission emphasizes the importance for each of the regional stations to close caption the entirety of their news broadcasts, whenever possible. The Commission expects the licensees to close caption at least 90% of their local news broadcasts. In addition, the Commission will review the possibility of imposing as a condition of licence the requirement to close caption at least 90% of all programming at the time of the next licence renewal.

⁶ See *Transfer of effective control of TVA to Quebecor Média inc.*, Decision CRTC 2001-384, 5 July 2001.

64. With regard to CBVT, the Commission notes that this station is presently subject to a condition of licence concerning the closed captioning of local programming. At the public hearing, the CBC proposed as an alternative a commitment to close caption 100% of local news programming and 90% of all local and regional programming. The Commission considers that the CBC has not sufficiently explained its reasons for replacing the current condition of licence with a commitment. Consequently, this commitment on the part of the CBC will be the subject of a condition of licence, as mentioned in the renewal decision for CBVT's licence.

Service to persons who are blind or whose vision is impaired

65. Section 3(1)(p) of the Act states that, as part of the broadcasting policy for Canada, "programming accessible by disabled persons should be provided within the Canadian broadcasting system as resources become available for the purpose." Accordingly, the Commission expects all broadcasters to work toward improving the accessibility of their programming for persons who are blind or whose vision is impaired.
66. Greater programming accessibility can be achieved through the provision of audio description⁷ and/or of video description.⁸ All broadcasters can, and should, provide audio description. Therefore, the Commission requires the networks to ensure that they obtain audio description wherever its use is appropriate.
67. The discussions at the hearing on the subject of video description revealed that Canadian broadcasters' main concerns around the implementation of this type of service are technical or financial. In particular, the CBC pointed out that digital broadcasting will be more easily able to integrate video description.
68. The Commission considers that it is too early to impose new video description requirements, but it expects licensees to purchase and broadcast versions of programs that integrate description whenever possible. It also expects licensees to take appropriate action to ensure that their services take into account the needs of persons who are blind or whose vision is impaired. The Commission advises the licensees that these concerns will be analyzed in greater depth at the time of the networks' licence renewals.

⁷ Audio description consists of basic voice-over recitations or descriptions of the text or graphic information that is displayed on the screen. Although a measure of sensitivity and creativity on the part of a broadcaster is necessary to ensure the quality and effectiveness of audio description, no special equipment is required.

⁸ Video description, or described video, takes the form of a narrative description of a program's key visual elements which permits the audience to create a mental image of what is on the screen. It is generally provided using the secondary audio program (SAP) channel.

69. With regard to TVA, the Commission expects the licensee to comply with the timeframes proposed at the hearing with a view to implementing video description in Montréal in 2005, in Québec in spring 2006, and in the other markets in fall 2006.

Secretary General

This document is available in alternative format upon request and may also be examined at the following Internet site: <http://www.crtc.gc.ca>

Appendix to Broadcasting Public Notice CRTC 2004-94

Licensee	Station	Affiliation	Broadcasting Decision Number
Canadian Broadcasting Corporation	CBVT Québec	CBC	CRTC 2004-531
TVA Group Inc.	CFCM-TV Québec CHEM-TV Trois-Rivières CHLT-TV Sherbrooke CFER-TV Rimouski CJPM-TV Saguenay	TVA	CRTC 2004-530
TQS inc.	CFKM-TV Trois-Rivières CFKS-TV Sherbrooke CFRS-TV Saguenay	TQS	CRTC 2004-532
TQS inc.	CKTM-TV Trois-Rivières CKSH-TV Sherbrooke CKTV-TV Saguenay	CBC	CRTC 2004-533
CKRT-TV ltée	CKRT-TV Rivière-du-Loup	CBC	CRTC 2004-539
CHAU-TV Communications ltée	CHAU-TV Carleton	TVA	CRTC 2004-540
Télé Inter-Rives ltée	CIMT-TV Rivière-du-Loup	TVA	CRTC 2004-537
Télévision MBS inc.	CFTF-TV Rivière-du-Loup	TQS	CRTC 2004-538
Radio Nord Communications inc.	CHOT-TV Gatineau CFEM-TV Rouyn-Noranda	TVA	CRTC 2004-534
Radio Nord Communications inc.	CFGS-TV Gatineau CFVS-TV Val d'Or	TQS	CRTC 2004-535
Radio Nord Communications inc.	CKRN-TV Rouyn-Noranda	CBC	CRTC 2004-536