

# Kenya's Royal Media seeks radio licence in Uganda

 By [Walter Wafula](#)

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Kenyan electronic media house Royal Media Services has applied for an FM broadcasting licence in Uganda. The company currently operates Citizen Television in Uganda although it has not started local programming. In Kenya, Royal Media Services operates Citizen TV - the most popular local station and Radio Citizen.



Godfrey Mutabazi, executive director of the Uganda Communications Commission (UCC), yesterday, 28 February 2011, called on the public in Uganda to provide any comments or opinion about the applicant within a period of two weeks, effective February 28, 2011, before it grants the company a licence.

"UCC shall grant the licence to the applicant if the commission, after the expiry of the above stated time, has received no opinion and / or comments in respect of the same," Mutabazi said in a media notice yesterday.

## Also TV broadcasting application

Royal Media has also applied for television broadcasting licences to operate in two of Uganda's largest municipalities including; Jinja in the eastern region and Mbarara in the western region of the country.

The country currently has 35 operational television stations out of the 50 TV frequencies that have been issued, according to the industry regulator UCC. And there are 192 stations on air out of the 222 FM radio frequencies that have been issued by the commission.

Uganda's liberalised broadcasting market and favourable regulatory environment has also attracted the participation of Wananchi Group, another Kenyan firm. On Friday, Kenya's *Business Daily* reported that Wananchi was set to enter Kenya's satellite pay-TV market in April. The company which is seen as a serious contender for MultiChoice Africa's DSTV service currently runs a cable TV branded Zuku TV, targeting high-end and middle-class customers in Nairobi.

## Wananchi ready to launch in April / May

A source at Wananchi Group, who does not speak for the company, said it is set to launch operations in Uganda before mid-year. "We are in the final process of getting our network ready and should be tentatively in April-May," she said.

The entry of Wananchi in the Uganda Market, will bring the number of operational pay-TV operators to six including; MultiChoice Uganda (DSTV), MoTV, Star Digital TV (Star Times), Pearl Digital TV, and Siti Cable. Smart TV, a service of Sweden's Next Generation Broadcasting, is also testing its signal before it can launch its pay-TV services in Uganda. Smart TV has already been launched in Ghana and Kenya at lower prices than DSTV.

The new entrants come at a time when Uganda like the rest of the world are migrating from analogue to digital broadcasting to beat the 2015 deadline that was set for nations by the International Telecommunications Union. Last year, the UCC said, it had stopped issuing analogue broadcasting license to investors seeking to operate in the country.

## ABOUT WALTER WAFULA

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