



DIGITAL AUDIO BROADCASTING (DAB) SERVICES ARRIVE IN SINGAPORE

DAB is now available to the public, thanks to the launch of RCS' Smart Radio in November 1999. Smart Radio offers five channels of DAB programmes and services. This makes Singapore the first in the region start commercial DAB services and it marks the beginning of a dynamic era for Digital Radio in the region.

During 1999, SBA also facilitated the start of DAB trial services by non-traditional broadcast players such as Plexus Multimedia. The participation of non-traditional broadcast players was encouraging as it helped bring in expertise and new business ventures for DAB.

At the same time, the industry-led Singapore DAB Forum headed by Mdm Chua Foo Yong, Chief Executive Officer of RCS to advise SBA on the implementation of DAB in Singapore, spearheaded various projects to facilitate the growth of DAB in Singapore.

In 1999, the three subcommittees of the Singapore DAB Forum – namely the Technical and Equipment Forum, the Content Development Forum and the Promotion and Education Forum – injected new initiatives for DAB development with projects to address issues of safety for DAB car receiver users; Quality of Standard (QoS) of DAB services and equipment; and promotional and publicity events.

Singapore's position as a centre for the development of DAB was further reaffirmed at the Fifth Annual World DAB Forum General Assembly held in Rome in October 1999. The event, which was attended by about 100 people from member organisations, saw SBA being elected a member of the World DAB Forum Steering Board for a two-year term. Membership on the Board will provide SBA with a crucial link to the actual workings and discussions of the World DAB Forum.

In recognition of SBA's leading role in introducing DAB into Asia, the World DAB Forum (based in Geneva) also invited SBA to set up the Asia DAB Committee after SBA successfully co-hosted the Fourth International DAB Symposium in Singapore. The purpose was to have someone from the region initiate and lead a DAB Forum for the Asian region, to bring other countries forward in DAB developments as part of a global effort.

Discussion on the formation of the Asia DAB Committee has reached an advanced stage. The Asia DAB Committee was inaugurated in June 2000 during BroadcastAsia2000. The event was formalised during an MOU signing ceremony by SBA's CEO, Mr Lim Hock Chuan and World DAB Forum's President, Mr Michael McEwan on 7 June.

The Committee would be a non-profit association working hand-in-hand with the World DAB Forum to promote, facilitate, support and harmonise the implementation of DAB projects and services in Asia. It would focus on facilitating the smooth implementation of DAB in Asia and encourage co-operation and sharing of experiences on DAB matters.

The Committee would also be a valuable platform for major industry players and regulators in the DAB marketplace to share strategic thoughts and information. With this initiative, SBA hopes to play its role in bringing DAB to greater heights in Asia.