

## Digital TV: Brazil to Adopt Anything But the American System

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The government is concluding its debates to select the most adequate system for Brazil's digital TV format. An interministerial meeting was held Tuesday, January 31, in the Planalto Palace to discuss this question.

In a public hearing in Congress, the minister of Communications, Hélio Costa, affirmed that the government has been "paring down" its choices.

According to Costa, two consortia that studied the matter indicated the Japanese system as the best choice for the country. In an interview with the press, however, the minister said that the choice is between the Japanese and the European format.

Costa emphasized that president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva will have the last word on which is the best format. "The minister's orientation need not be followed; we have to adopt common guidelines," he pointed out.

According to the minister, the decree that provides for the implantation of digital TV in the country determines that certain requirements be met, such as high definition, interactivity, portability, and mobility.

Costa believes that the model adopted in Brazil can serve as a "flagship" for digital TV in South America. "It is a moment in which all those interested in digital TV are competing for a Brazilian market that may show the path digital TV will follow in Latin America," he remarked.

Besides the Japanese and European models, there is the American system, which has not yet been completely ruled out. Expert opinion is divided over which is the best format for Brazil.

"The Americans said they could offer more innovations by July. The Europeans offered loans on the order of 300 million euros. The Japanese are also offering 300 million euros and tools from their system that can be developed in Brazil," Costa explained.

The initial forecast is for the government to define Brazil's digital TV format in February and for the first experimental broadcast to occur in June during the World Soccer Cup.

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