

Radio - Licensing Policy for VHF Band III, Sub-band 3

Consultation question

In light of the further evidence presented in this document, Ofcom proposes to allocate three blocks of spectrum in VHF Band III, sub-band 3 for local radio multiplexes under the licensing process set out in the Broadcasting Act 1996, with the aim of covering geographical areas that do not presently have local radio multiplexes. Ofcom also proposes to allocate one block of spectrum in the same sub-band for a national radio multiplex under the licensing process set out in the Broadcasting Act 1996. Do you agree that these proposals represent the optimal use of the spectrum?

Emap committed to, and invested heavily in, DAB from the outset. We therefore welcome Ofcom's proposal to allocate four blocks of Band III spectrum for broadcast use. We agree that three of these blocks should be used for extending the availability of local multiplexes and are pleased to note that Ofcom will amalgamate some of the smaller adjacent licence areas.

We urge Ofcom to use the fourth block of spectrum for the advertisement of a new national radio multiplex. Emap believes that the combination of a new national multiplex which will provide additional choice for listeners across the country, together with the roll out of further local multiplexes, will cement interest in the platform at a crucial time for the development of DAB. The addition of a new national multiplex may provide for the development of other applications to ensure that DAB appeals to audiences that increasingly take the benefits of multimedia environments for granted.

We firmly believe that the local and national multiplexes should be advertised and awarded under the licensing process set out in the Broadcasting Act 1996 and look forward to Ofcom's confirmation that it will proceed with its plans outlined in the VHF Band III Licensing Policy document.

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16 November 2005