

## **Industry Access to Assignment Data. Update And Proposals For Wider Stakeholder Involvement**

### **1. Introduction.**

The purpose of this paper is to update MSC members as to progress on the Agency's Industry Access to Assignment Data initiative and to seek approval for widening stakeholder involvement in this initiative to non-mobile sector radio users.

The significant developments since July's meeting of this group were:

- *Disclosure Consultation* – The Government published its formal response to this consultation as part of its wider response to the Independent Review of Spectrum Management;
- *IT Project established* – IT feasibility study is underway and RA have developed proposals for a pilot system;
- *Wider stakeholder involvement* - MSC sub-group met and developed proposals for wider stakeholder involvement in the activity.

The paper outlines these developments in a little more detail and seeks the MSC's approval to widen stakeholder involvement in the initiative to encompass the mobile, fixed and satellite communities.

### **2. Disclosure Consultation.**

The Government's response to the Independent Review of Radio Spectrum Management (Cave) was published on the 15 October 2002. The Government decided to use this as the vehicle for issuing its formal response to the recent Consultation on disclosure of licensing and assignment information; Cave contained specific recommendations on the disclosure licensing information (rec. 5.2).

In sum, the Government's response agrees that it would be desirable to publish more information about frequency assignments, provided this can be done in a way that meets legitimate concerns about national security, law enforcement and commercial confidentiality. Powers to enable the publication of this information have been included in the Draft Communications Bill (May 2002). Further consultation is proposed on the mechanisms and safeguards for disclosure before new regulations are drafted.

### **3. Implementing Access**

As the last meeting of the MSC Sub-Group on Access to Assignment Data (3<sup>rd</sup> October 2002) the RA set out its approach to enabling better access to a range of information about spectrum use. The project which will take forward better industry access to assignment data is the (somewhat literally named) Industry Access to Assignment Data (IAAD) Project. A contract had now been

placed with our IT partner RSI, and the initial feasibility study for the project commenced on the 1<sup>st</sup> November 2002. This initial phase of work should run for around 3 months and culminate with the development of pilot system in early 2003. IAAD is part of a wider suite of projects dealing with spectrum data and data quality. The next key milestone for the project is the 'Requirement Workshop' which will held as part of the next meeting of the MSC sub-group on the 3 December 2002.

#### **4. Stakeholder Involvement.**

As perhaps would be expected, analysis of responses to the consultation demonstrated that all sectors of radio users (mobile, satellite and fixed) saw advantages in wider industry access to assignment data. RA would wish to involve all these stakeholders in the development of the IAAD project and this would necessitate widening involvement in our current consultative mechanism, which is currently primarily through a sub-group of the MSC.

To this end, RA seeks the MSC's approval to:

- invite fixed and satellite interests to participate in the MSC sub-group;
- involve mobile, fixed and satellite interests in 'design workshops' in support of IAAD;
- regularly report progress to satellite and fixed RA consultative groups.

#### **5. Pilot.**

The MSC Group believe a staged approach to disclosure might offer the best way to quickly accrue the potential benefits of disclosure whilst allowing the associated risks to be fully dimensioned and appropriate safeguards put in place. As the first element of this staged approach it was agreed that a pilot study should be undertaken in order to identify key issues, explore mechanisms for the delivery of assignment data, and to marshal industry involvement for the initiative.

Candidates for the pilot have been agreed (the 14.25-14.5 GHz Band, VHF High Band; and some site based information). However, as licensing information is currently held on a confidential basis by RA we are currently seeking legal advice to establish exactly what information is covered by this duty (and specifically does it cover all technical information). Consequently we are not yet able to specify exactly what form the pilot will take.