

**Industry Access to Assignment Data:  
Progress Report**

**MAY 2003**

**1. Introduction.**

The purpose of this paper is to provide MSC members with a brief update as to progress on the Agency's Industry Access to Assignment Data initiative and developments within the MSC sub-group on disclosure issues. The MSC sub-group last met on the 27<sup>th</sup> March, the two major items of discussion were:

- i) The implications on initiative of Ofcom;
- ii) Completion of IT feasibility work.

Each is discussed in a little more detail below.

**2. Implications of Ofcom.**

Current management and financial approval arrangements under RA control are likely to cease with the formation of Ofcom in the later part of this year. New arrangements for both project staffing and financial approval under Ofcom are currently unknown and current RA investment decisions will need to be informed by this change in circumstances. Consequently we are unable to specify, at this time, when the next stages of this 'industry access' work will begin. Nonetheless, the provision of information about the radio spectrum resource to spectrum users, spectrum managers and the general public might be assumed to be an essential prerequisite for the Government's plans for the future management of the radio spectrum. Information provision will underpin the introduction of spectrum trading and other measures set out in the Government's response to the 'Cave' review designed to empower spectrum users to take a more significant role in the management of the radio spectrum and aid transparency. Thus, RA is proceeding on the basis that these initiatives will continue but we must stress that the final decision will be a matter for Ofcom to make.

**3. Industry Access to Assignment Data (IAAD)**

In October 2002 RA commissioned our IT partner Radio Spectrum International (RSI) to carry out a detailed 'feasibility study' of the IAAD project. The 'feasibility' label is something of a misnomer as this work includes some fairly detailed system design work and planning. The draft report was presented to the MSC sub-group, and has now been provided to members for detailed comment. A number of possible development paths were set out to the group, initial reaction was to favour an option involving some kind of off-line trial before development of a full on-line solution. Detailed technical proposals have been developed for the next stage of this work. Unfortunately, plans for an early start have been delayed due to uncertainties relating to Ofcom, although it should be noted that proposals under consideration for the 5GHz Band C light-licensing regime may include provisions for the disclosure of licence information from the outset.

Work on developing an 'allocation' level information resource (known as the Spectrum Information System or SIS) and improving the quality and coherence of the assignment records kept by RA has also progressed. We believe that this work should be taken forward with IAAD as part of a coherent and joined up approach towards the storage and access to 'spectrum information' in general (i.e. allocation and assignment data). We are currently reinforcing existing project coordination arrangements to ensure that such a coherent solution is delivered.

Once the feasibility study has been fully digested by sub-group members, another meeting will be arranged to crystallise the group's thinking on the way forward for this initiative.

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