

Your response

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Question 1: Do you have any views on the options for managing the 2 GHz MSS band after 13 May 2027? Are there any options that Ofcom has overlooked?	Confidential? – No techUK supports Ofcom’s framing of the three policy options. The key consideration in choosing between them is that as a scarce resource, there is a risk of leaving valuable spectrum unused or underutilised during a period of significant commercial and regulatory development worldwide.
Question 2: Do you agree with our proposal for a short-term transition period, which authorises Viasat and EchoStar? Please set out your reasoning.	Confidential? – No Within the frame of the present consultation, techUK supports a transition period for Viasat and EchoStar as the most pragmatic means of ensuring spectrum continuity and protecting existing services. Members support Ofcom’s preferred approach to extend the existing 2GHz MSS licences for a transitional period while a future framework for the band is developed. This provides the right balance between maintaining regulatory certainty in the near term and allowing sufficient time for market, technology and policy developments to mature before any enduring licensing decisions are made.
Proposal for interim transition period	
Question 3: Do you agree with our preferred option for the duration of the proposed interim authorisation to be a three-year fixed period? Please set out your reasoning.	Confidential? – No Some techUK members support Ofcom’s proposal for a shorter transition period of three years. These members note that a three-year period could be extended later if circumstances warrant it, while avoiding an initial commitment by Ofcom to a longer timeframe. Given the pace of development in non-terrestrial network (NTN), direct-to-device (D2D) and satellite communications markets, a fixed period is needed to provide certainty over satellite deployment timelines, the maturing international regulatory framework and the practical realities of device availability, also accounting for the long-term investment cycles for the satellite industry. It is important that potential award recipients have certainty to enable such commitments to be made.

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	Under this lens, other members support extending the existing licences for a period of five years, reflecting current uncertainties including market dynamics and existing services being deployed, together with greater flexibility for other parties to access the spectrum where this would not be expected to cause interference to incumbent services. Some members believe a longer transition also reflects the state of the wider ecosystem. The European Commission's own long-term framework is not expected to be ready in the near term, and EU Member States are understood to be amenable to a transition of around five years. Prospective competitors will typically need certainty over spectrum access before they can secure funding and then build and launch satellites. A three-year period therefore risks granting authorisations at a point when no operator is realistically able to deploy a new service. More broadly, techUK is not aware of any comprehensive coexistence analysis of complementary ground component (CGC) operations alongside GEO and LEO satellite systems serving moving platforms such as aircraft, ships and vehicles. The resulting interference environment is not yet well understood, and the authorisation framework should be informed by that analysis.
Question 4: Do you agree that our proposed approach to authorise continued use of the spectrum during the interim authorisation period through a CGC licence, licence exemption, and Aircraft Radio licence? If not, please set out your reasoning and alternative suggestions.	Confidential? – No techUK agrees the proposed regulatory approach could be suitable. techUK notes the importance of ensuring that the proposed amendments to the 2016 Exemption Regulations are implemented in a timely manner ahead of the May 2027 expiry to avoid any regulatory gap.
Question 5: Do you have any comments on the alternative approach we have considered, of licensing the satellite operators to use 2 GHz MSS during the interim authorisation period? If you have a preference for this approach, please set out your reasoning.	Confidential? – No Given the range of well-considered perspectives among members, techUK has not adopted a single consensus position on these questions, and members will submit their own views individually.

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Question 6: What are your views on the approach Ofcom should take to fees for the interim authorisation period? Please set out your reasoning and provide evidence where appropriate.	Confidential? – No techUK recognises the complexity of fee-setting in a period of significant uncertainty about the opportunity cost of the spectrum ahead of WRC-27. As the SPF's 2022 market mechanisms report notes,¹ setting ALFs at an uncertain opportunity cost carries an asymmetric risk. Fees set too high, risk spectrum being returned to the regulator or discouraging productive use, whereas fees set too low create no material inefficiency where the current users are the optimal users. Although the report was built around the reality of the mobile ecosystem, which carries different complexities, the growing demand for satellite communications justifies absorbing the lessons from other markets. For the interim authorisations there are mixed views as to whether fees should be waived or whether the current AIP based fees that were previously set to reflect opportunity cost of terrestrial mobile should continue. If a fee waiver for a defined, short-term period is introduced Ofcom should make clear that the waiver is transitional. Some members note that we cannot prejudge how any long-term award process will operate, and therefore the basis for any long-term licence fees cannot be determined at this stage. For the longer term use it is not just CGCs that should be subject to fees but also the satellite network use of the spectrum given the significant opportunity costs of such use. The fee may depend on whether financial payments for part of the selection procedure for the network operators that are authorised to use the 2GHz MSS band. That said, some techUK members caution against treating continued access to the spectrum as a form of payment in kind. Permitting use of the band in place of fees does not fully reflect the underlying value of 2GHz MSS spectrum, particularly as it becomes relevant to IMT. Any relief should be clearly time-limited and should not enable ad hoc or test-based access outside a proper authorisation framework. On balance, retaining a fee regime, with appropriate transitional relief, would better reflect the reality of MSS spectrum use.

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Question 7: Do you agree with our proposals to enable additional users to access the spectrum during the interim period? If yes, do you have a preference for how we should enable other users during the short-term extension period? Please set out your reasoning.	Confidential? – No Allowing access for research, development, and trials, will help maintain commercial momentum, support the UK’s innovation ecosystem, and reduce the risk that the transition period simply delays the development of future services. On the mechanism, direct licensing by Ofcom for specified time periods is likely to provide greater certainty for prospective users than amending the exemption regulations, particularly for those wishing to operate commercial or near-commercial services with some interference protection. We encourage Ofcom to move quickly on this so that the framework for additional access is in place from the start of the transition period. Such use should not prejudice future selection of operators. In enabling any additional access during the interim period, Ofcom should ensure that it accounts for interference, including protection of incumbent users and other entities holding ITU priority in the band. Any such use, including testing and trials, must be consistent with ITU rules, under which coordination with the most senior filing must be completed before operations commence. techUK notes, however, that sharing the 2GHz MSS band with additional users in specific locations is technically difficult. The incumbent’s complementary ground component network comprises some 26 sites covering the whole of the UK, and expectations that further terrestrial use can readily be accommodated within that footprint should be treated with caution. Nor would it be proportionate to expect an operator to design and launch a satellite solely for UK use. Experience with the European Aviation Network, where trials between airports could not be conducted because of high air traffic, illustrates these practical constraints.
Question 8: Do you have any other views on the details of our proposal to authorise Viasat and EchoStar during the interim period?	Confidential? – No Given the range of well-considered perspectives among members, techUK has not adopted a single consensus position on these questions, and members will submit their own views individually.

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Proposals for deciding on our longer-term approach to 2GHz MSS	
Question 9: Do you have any comments on the technical and operational implications of the four approaches to long term authorisation we have set out?	Confidential? – No Given the range of well-considered perspectives among members, techUK has not adopted a single consensus position on these questions, and members will submit their own views individually.
Question 10: Which would you consider is the optimal approach to take for long-term authorisation? Are there any alternative approaches we have not considered? If so, please outline them.	Confidential? – No At this stage, techUK’s preliminary view is that some degree of alignment with international approaches, where consistent with ITU priority, can offer benefits for UK consumers and the satellite industry. The extent of alignment varies between different members and some members contend that the extension must be subject to key conditions including non-transference of licences. Looking beyond the transition period, the competitive landscape is expected to evolve significantly. Existing MSS operators are investing in 5G NTN capabilities, while new entrants continue to develop D2D and IoT-focused services. This is a critical point and harmonisation decisions should not come at the cost of allowing the spectrum to sit unused or underutilised in the interim. Harmonisation is a means to an end for high-quality, widely available services for UK consumers. Ofcom should not treat alignment with the EU as justification for deferring productive use of this band. It is worth acknowledging that the outcomes of WRC-27 Agenda Items 1.12, 1.13 and 1.14 will have a material bearing on the longer-term global framework for MSS spectrum, and Ofcom’s long-term authorisation decisions should be designed with sufficient flexibility to accommodate changes arising from those discussions. Future decisions on the band should also be informed by the maturity of NTN, D2D and IoT ecosystems, demonstrated market demand, spectrum efficiency, competition considerations and the broader UK connectivity strategy.

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Question 11: Do you have any further comments on factors we should consider when determining our approach to the longer-term UK authorisation of the 2 GHz MSS band?	Confidential? – No Given the range of well-considered perspectives among members, techUK has not adopted a single consensus position on these questions, and members will submit their own views individually.
Question 12: Do you have any comments on the Impact Assessments?	Confidential? – No techUK notes that the impact assessments are broadly proportionate to the scope of the proposals being consulted on. Some members would however flag that the assessment of the risk of underutilisation of the spectrum during the transitional period should acknowledge more explicitly the indirect costs of delayed service development, including impacts on the device ecosystem and on investment timelines.