

Your response

Question	Your response
<p>Question 1: Do you have any comments on Ofcom's proposed Work Plan for 2026/27?</p>	<p>Bristol Digital Radio has operated a Small Scale DAB multiplex in Bristol since November 2022, following a trial that started in 2015.</p> <p>We would encourage Ofcom to allocate time and resource to review the regulations and policies that govern Small Scale DAB licensees, taking into account experienced gathered from the first three years of operation.</p> <p>There are some specific issues where we believe the current policies need review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * The constraint on population coverage, and the setting of field strength thresholds that define coverage – these two parameters are interlinked, and can lead to degraded reception quality for some listeners. Bristol is a dense urban area, where a field strength of >70dBµV/m would be an appropriate target value for good quality coverage (in line with Ofcom’s Technical Guidance Policy for DAB multiplex licensees, section 5.6). Consistently achieving this field strength whilst remaining within the 40% coverage constraint measured at 63dBµV/m is disproportionately/prohibitively expensive. * The licensing of C-DSP services – the current restriction that a C-DSP licence may only be used on a single multiplex is often unhelpful. We broadcast several analogue community radio services who’s existing coverage spans our multiplex and the neighbouring multiplexes operated by Severnside Digital Radio CIC or Bath Digital Radio CIC. To replicate their analogue coverage, they need to be on two multiplexes, and so either have to hold a DSP, or double their costs by holding a C-DSP and a DSP licence. * Allocation of Capacity for C-DSP services – it was indicated that a review of reserved capacity for C-DSP licences would be possible at the third anniversary of a

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	<p>Small Scale DAB licence going on-air. As those anniversaries are now falling, clarification of the process for re-assessment would be helpful.</p> <p>* Amendments to the technical plan – Small Scale DAB should benefit from being nimble and responsive to local conditions. We would support development of the policy that allows Small Scale multiplex operators to make changes to their technical plan without unduly demanding consultation and review processes.</p> <p>* Extension and variance of coverage areas – now that the final scheduled round of licences is due to be completed, there are areas that could benefit from Small Scale DAB but either fell outside the originally advertised areas, or were not covered by launch technical plans. We would support development of a policy that allows existing licensees to propose variations and extensions to their current coverage to fill white space.</p> <p>Policy development in these areas would support continuing development of, and investment in, a sustainable broadcast platform that is accessible to a wide range of radio services and by a large number of listeners.</p>

Please complete this form in full and return to planofwork@ofcom.org.uk