

Question 1: How should Ofcom manage the process of taking advice from users, regulators and government on efficient apportionment of AIP fees in the maritime and aeronautical sectors? Are any new institutional arrangements needed?:

Question 2: If you consider that our proposals for pricing ground station users for any spectrum would be likely to have a detrimental impact on safety, please let us know. In order for us to understand your assessment fully, it would be helpful if you could outline the mechanisms whereby this might happen.?:

Question 3: Do you have any evidence which indicates that AIP charged to ground stations could have a material detrimental impact on UK competitiveness?:

Question 4: Taking into account the information available in this document, including that set out in Annex 5, our initial views on VHF radiocommunications licence fees and on the reference rates for bands in other uses, and any information you have about the organisations to whom we are proposing to charge fees, please provide any evidence that you think is relevant to us in considering the financial impact of the fees we intend to propose for VHF radiocommunications, or for other uses:

Question 5: Do you agree that there is little to be gained, in terms of economic efficiency, from charging AIP to WT Act licences for aircraft:

Question 6: Do you consider that we should discount fees for any particular user or type of user? Specifically, do you consider that there should be a discount for charities whose object is the safety of human life in an emergency:

This is the section which I have strong opinions about. Organisations such as the RNLI and the various mountain rescue (in particular civilian) teams should be given a large discount if this scheme goes ahead, ideally in my opinion they should not be charge at all as they are vital, life saving services - not commercial enterprises. The publicly funded nature of these organisations makes it particularly gauling to think that our donations are not going to front line service or equipment but to vastly increased administartaion costs which they have no option but to pay.

I cannont agree that in this situation charging more for the resource will make organisations use it more efficently - MRT and RNLI are hardly so flush with money that they can affod to waste in bandwidth they don't need afterall!

The very idea that MRT and RNLI teams may be forced to choose between life saving equipment or life saving communications because the rates have been vastly increased is, to me, absolutely disgusting. The issue of increasing charges to these types of organisation should never even have reared its head.

I hope that you see sense on this issue, not every resource needs to be thrown in its entirety to the wolves of the open market.

Question 7: Do you agree that Ofcom should apply AIP to ground stations? use of maritime and aeronautical VHF radiocommunications channels, to help manage growing congestion in current use and to ensure that the cost of denying access to this spectrum by potential alternative applications is faced by current users?:

Question 8: Do you agree with our initial view that it would be appropriate to apply a pricing system similar to that already existing for Business Radio licences to maritime and aeronautical VHF communications? If not, what are your reasons for proposing that we should develop a fee structure for maritime and aeronautical VHF channels which is distinct from that already established for Business Radio?:

Question 9: Are there any short term reasons specific to the sector(s) why it would be inappropriate to apply fees from April 2009?:

Question 10: Ofcom would welcome stakeholders' views on the factors which should be taken into account when apportioning fees between individual users of radars and racons:

Question 11: Do you agree with our initial view that a reference rate of £126k per 1 MHz of national spectrum for L band and S band radar spectrum would achieve an appropriate balance between providing incentives to ensure efficient use of spectrum while guarding against the risks of regulatory failure in setting the reference rate too high? If you consider a different rate would be more appropriate, please provide any evidence that you think we should take into account.:

Question 12: Do you agree with our initial view that a reference rate of £25k per single MHz of national spectrum would be appropriate for deriving fees for licences to use X band radar?:

Question 13: Do you agree that, generally, spectrum used by aeronautical radionavigation aids is currently uncongested? Do you believe that this may change during the next few years and, if so, approximately when?:

Question 14: Do you agree with the basis on which Ofcom has arrived at its initial view on reference rates for aeronautical radionavigation aids?:

Comments:

Whilst I agree that any resource has to be managed, I believe that the open market is not always the best option. Emergency services, especially those who are charities, should not have to pay commercial rates, or any rates, for the small section of bandwidth they use. I hope that you see sense on this issue and don't endanger lives by forcing rescue teams to pay vastly greater admin costs.

Stuart