

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.?:

The UK Land SAR Band Plan provides dedicated channels used by both professional and volunteer rescue organisations. These channels allow for uniform UK wide communications for search and rescue. Land based rescue teams throughout the UK rely on the channels in the SAR Band Plan for team communications. Use of these channels is critical for the safety of rescue team volunteers and for the safety of the casualties they assist. Land based rescue teams do not hold the licences for these channels. If AIP were to increase the cost of the licence, the licence holders may give up the licences. Rescue teams could then be left without radio communications.

Glencoe Mountain Rescue Team does not dedicate itself solely to the rescue of mountaineers and hill walkers. Our volunteers also assist in road accidents, medical emergencies and missing person searches where our additional resources including radio communications are a valuable asset to remote communities.

Other communications technologies e.g. TETRA (Airwave) or mobile phones are not suitable in the remote areas where Glencoe Mountain Rescue Team operates.

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

The current SAR band plan uses ~ 500 KHz of spectrum. How would applying AIP for this small amount of spectrum increase 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:

It is unclear exactly what AIP fees would apply if this proposal is carried through. The more paid in AIP fees means less to spend on other lifesaving equipment and training.

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:

Charitable lifesaving organisations should be exempt from AIP. A fee to cover administration costs should be applied in order to protect the channels used.

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?:

It is unclear the level of fees that would apply. If the current licence holders decided not to pay the AIP fees, rescue charities would have less than 6 months to find an as yet unknown sum of money. Failure to do so could mean loss of radio channels. This would result in re-applying for licences and renewal or modification of radio equipment at extra cost.

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: