

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?:

Ofcom should give the highest levels of consideration to those sectors which are DIRECTLY affected, particularly with regard to safety both is the sectors consulted and those who may be adversely affected by their unsafe operation.

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 pricing proposals will have a direct and immediate negative impact on the safety of aircraft, particularly those operating in the General Aviation , flight training industries and light charter sectors. A very high proportion of smaller airfields used by these sectors will be unable to afford to maintain radio frequencies with consequent risk to aircraft using those airfields and to the general public in their environs sd the risk of aerial collision increases.

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 training of commercial pilots, an industry which is under massive pressure in UK through fuel cost and over-regulation required training in radio usage and with that facility rendered unaffordable at all but major airports (which are too busy to allow tyraining) the business will migrate overseas. Further the lack of radio and associated radio navigation aids will cause many, perhaps a majority to cease flying for leisure and mixed business/leisure use

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:

The majority of small airfields in UK are operating on the very margins of profitability, and the costs envisaged will cause most to cease using the facility. It is only necessary to research this fact to confirm this. Further, the charges proosed between .25 and 8.33 demonstrate a total fdailure of Ofcom to understand the use of these frequencies.

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:

All users of frequencies which are safety related should be discounted or not charged at all. This includes the spectrum used by airfields, Air traffic units, radar services and emergency services. To be clear, the primary reason for aviation using radio is SAFETY.

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?:

There is no evidence that I have seen that suggests that there is any potential "spare" capacity in the spectrum. If there was why would it be necessary in the near future to expand the spectrum by moving to 8.33 at an ENORMOUS cost to owners and operators of aircraft.

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?:

I do NOT agree. "Business radio" is used by companies and organisations to generate PROFIT. The aviation spectrum is employed for the safe operation of flight and there is therefore no parallel.

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

The consultation period for this proposal is far too short. The immediate effect will be that the majority of the aerodromes in UK will cease to use radio immediately, reversing the progress of 50+ years in convincing pilots of the safety benefits of using it.

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:

There can be no benefit from imposing a scale of charges which are unaffordable by the sector or industry which is presently using the spectrum and then seeking an alternative market. This is particularly so in times of recession!

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.:

The general aviation industry is presently having to absorb / defray the multi million £ cost of equipping aircraft with Mode S. Additional costs for their use will ensure that this equipment is never used, as there is no legal requirement to do so. This will in turn negate the safety benefits which the fitment of the equipment is aimed at providing FOR COMMERCIAL AIR TRAFFIC which is not meeting the costs of this equipment in GA

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?:

NO

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?:

No! If it was indeed uncongested it would not be necessary to mandate the (very costly) move to equipping with new radios for 8.33 - this to expand the system

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

NO! It has been clearly demonstrated that Ofcom has failed entirely to understand the safety case and implications regarding aviation. Further there appears to have been no risk / benefit assessment made for the general aviation sector, nor a detailed inquiry into the views of other major stakeholders - eg NATS, CAA, Commercial Air Transport operators etc.

Comments: