

PR 6/15

PRESS RELEASE

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Commission Commences Public Consultation on Spectrum Award 2015

30 June, 2015 – The Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (*Commission*) has today published a public consultation [[Consultation Document for VI 2015](#) and [Draft Invitation to Apply for Spectrum in 700 MHz, 1900 MHz, and AWS-1 Frequency Bands](#)] on the possible award of spectrum in the 450 MHz, 700 MHz, 1900 MHz, 1800MHz/2100 MHz/AWS-1 and 2500 MHz bands. Of particular importance are the 700 MHz, 1900 MHz and AWS-1 bands which are the main bands for 4G services in the Americas and Caribbean regions.

The Spectrum Award 2015 project began on 6 May 2015. Notice of the Consultation was first published on Saturday, 13 June 2015 [[Public Consultation Notice](#)].

The aim of the Spectrum Award is to provide the three mobile operators with frequencies they can use to deliver high speed mobile broadband services using LTE technology. The Commission believes this Spectrum Award 2015 will provide citizens, consumers, enterprises and visitors to the Virgin Islands with better quality broadband services in line with developments in North America, Europe and being implemented elsewhere in the Caribbean. The Commission is confident that the release and implementation of services will be of substantial benefit to the entire economy and particularly valuable to the financial services and tourism sectors.

The Commission expects there to be competition for this valuable spectrum. In line with the Commission's objectives to promote the economy, orderly and efficient use of spectrum, ensure fair competition, promote the public interest and implement and enforce the provisions of the Telecommunications Act; the Commission will allocate the relevant spectrum to operators who qualify to apply for the Spectrum Award through a competitive process. Applications will be ranked by competitive evaluation against clear criteria. The Commission believes this approach best meets its objective to promote the public interest by awarding spectrum to those operators that offer the most attractive services.

Responses to the Consultation on the Spectrum Award 2015 will be due on [28 July 2015]. The Commission expects to issue the formal Invitation to Apply and draft Frequency Authorisation in late August 2015, with Applications due by the end of September. Following and in accordance with the comparative evaluation, the Commission expects to grant relevant licences at the end of October 2015.

The new Board of Directors of the Commission (appointed in February 2015) is very pleased to announce the launch of this Consultation that promotes the public interest and makes proposals to maintain a competitive mobile market in the VI. Each operator will be given the opportunity to demonstrate how they would use the offered spectrum to deliver enhanced services to citizens, consumers and businesses in the Virgin Islands, as well as to international visitors

Guy Lester Malone, Chief Executive Officer of the Commission, said: “The release of this consultation represents the significant progress that is being made in moving forward the delivery of competitive 4G LTE services across the Virgin Islands during the first half of 2016. The award process we are undertaking with the mobile industry is tremendous news for all consumers of communications services who will soon have access to enhanced mobile broadband services.”

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

1. The Commission is the independent regulator with responsibility for regulating the telecommunications sector of the Virgin Islands, protecting interests of users of telecommunications services, ensuring fair competition among operators of telecommunications networks and providers of telecommunications services, promoting the development of telecommunications throughout the Virgin Islands and advising the Minister of Communications and Works on telecommunications policies.
2. Spectrum is a key input to meeting rapid demand for mobile data and voice services and supporting the provision of efficient, resilient and widely available communications services and infrastructure in the Virgin Islands.
3. The Commission’s consistent objective has been to ensure that the offered spectrum is made available as soon as possible, in accordance with its objectives and duties and on a competitive basis – allowing choice and promoting quality of service.