



SPECTRUM MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

Addendum to the public consultation 2017

Consultation Document

Consultation

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31 October 2017

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Addendum to the public consultation

Context

The recent hurricanes Irma and Maria have had a devastating impact on the Virgin Islands. This includes, amongst others, the destruction of most fixed and mobile communications network infrastructure across the Territory. Since then, the service providers, Government and the Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (Commission) have been working together to ensure that networks and services can be restored as quickly as possible to consumers and businesses across the Territory.

As part of this process, the Commission has received applications for additional spectrum authorisations from service providers. These requests cover both (i) spectrum to provide fixed wireless access services (i.e. spectrum in the 2.3GHz, 2.5 GHz and 3.5 GHz frequency bands) and (ii) spectrum to provide microwave links (i.e., in the supra 10GHz frequency bands).

The fixed wireless access related bands are covered by the spectrum release plan in the draft Spectrum Management Framework (SMF), upon which the Commission is currently conducting a public consultation.

The Commission has considered the damage sustained to the networks as indicated in meetings with the service providers and in their submitted reports, their requests for additional spectrum and the need for building resilience into networks to guard against network failures presently experienced. Communication services have been identified by the Government as a fundamental priority for restoration of the Territory to provide essential communications both nationally and internationally to residents, citizens, visitors and businesses.

Having considered all of these factors above, the Commission has determined the need to issue an addendum to the SMF consultation to seek the industry's views on the merits of expediting certain spectrum assignments to take place in early 2018. The Commission expects the principles set out in the draft SMF for governing such assignments would also apply to this initial emergency award process. Further details on the format and rules of the award will be consulted on at a later stage.

Below, the Commission has set out additional consultation questions relating to the proposed early spectrum release plan in the draft SMF. Interested parties are invited to submit their responses as part of their submission on the draft SMF consultation (i.e., by 24 November 2017). The Commission reserves the right not to consider any responses submitted after this date.

Comments should be submitted in line with the instructions for submitting a response to the draft SMF consultation (i.e., pages 6-7 of the consultation document),

Additional consultation questions

1. Taking into account your current service offerings and network restoration plan, please clearly identify the areas (in terms of network deployment and/or service delivery) where more spectrum would be required or desirable.

As part of your response, please set out clearly and specifically any incremental benefits to you and consumers in terms of, for example, expedited network deployment and/or wider network coverage resulting from an expedited spectrum release.

2. Taking into account your current spectrum holdings and the spectrum release plan set out in the draft SMF, please specify which spectrum bands, if any, should form part of an expedited release to facilitate the restoration of your communications services in the Virgin Islands.

Based upon recent requests, the Commissions understands that service providers see a particular need for an expedited spectrum release especially in the 2.3GHz, 2.5GHz and 3.5 GHz bands to facilitate the provisioning of telecommunications services. Do you agree? If not, please explain why not and which alternative bands should be covered in any expedited spectrum release.

As part of your response please expressly comment on (including supporting evidence, where available):

- a. whether you see, in general, a need for any additional spectrum and expedited release thereof to restore the services currently provided in Virgin Islands; and if so
 - i. whether any expedited spectrum release should focus on the 2.3GHz, 2.5GHz and 3.5GHz bands;
 - ii. the minimum amount of spectrum to be made available to as part of an expedited spectrum release;
 - iii. the need for contiguous spectrum holdings within the bands to be awarded as part of an expedited spectrum release; and
 - iv. your preference, if any, for specific locations of the spectrum blocks to be made available within any bands to be released.
3. Taking into account your responses to Question 1 and 2 above, please indicate:
 - a. whether you would be interesting in participating in any expedited award for spectrum authorisations in the frequency bands covered by the spectrum release plan;
 - b. the anticipated timing and geographic coverage of your fixed wireless network roll-out and service provisioning once the spectrum authorisation has been awarded; and
 - c. where relevant, the impact from any expedited spectrum release on your current or planned roll-out of fixed (or other) networks across the Virgin Islands. In particular, please clearly set out and evidence:
 - i. The expected incremental benefits from being awarded any additional spectrum as part of an expedited spectrum release (i.e. in terms of any time difference between the roll-out of your fixed wireless network and any of your other networks and whether the planned fixed wireless network coverage would exceed that of the current or planned fixed (or other) network coverage).
 - ii. The expected impact on the scope of your fixed (or other) network roll-out and timing thereof.

- iii. Whether you will plan to continue operating the fixed wireless network once your fixed (or other) network roll-out is complete.
- d. any potential concerns of an expedited spectrum release, in terms of the competitive dynamics in the communications sector going forward.