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RADIO SPECTRUM POLICY GROUP

2nd Progress Report of the RSPG Working Group on Efficient Awards and Spectrum Use

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On Efficient Awards and Spectrum Use

The RSPG Working Group on Efficient Awards and Spectrum Use (WG Awards) met for the 2nd time on the 7th October 2014. The meeting, held in London, was attended by representatives from; Sweden, Italy, France, Norway, Denmark, Austria, Ireland, Portugal, the UK and the Commission.

The Group has been tasked with, inter alia;

- Providing views and best practice on spectrum award approaches and related conditions of use with a view to promoting efficient use of spectrum and meeting the spectrum requirements of future WBB systems.
- Assessing the suitability of the current and potential future EU harmonised bands for ECS to meet spectrum requirements of future WBB systems

The Group has made good progress and the structure of the Report is beginning to take shape, it is currently divided into 5 sections;

- **Section 1: Suitability of current and future spectrum bands to meet future needs for mobile broadband**

The discussion in this section will note that a strategic approach to spectrum management is a complex balance between many factors (technology, policy, standards). It will explain that more spectrum alone is not the only answer to meeting the future needs of wireless broadband. The report will also build on previous RSPG Reports and Opinions across a range of issues including the mix of spectrum, appropriate ranges or amount of spectrum to meet coverage requirements, the timing of availability of new spectrum bands and the evolution of networks and technology.

- **Section 2: Best Practice for Spectrum Awards**

This section will attempt to map some of the risks and challenges of spectrum awards and address issues that Member States may have faced when designing and conducting awards. The report will aim to build on this common experience in an attempt to pull together some 'guidelines' for future award planning. Included in this section will be consideration of the following;

- Common award objectives – what are the overarching objectives that Member States are seeking to achieve?
- Risks and challenges – what are the risks or challenges that might undermine a successful award, resulting in a sub-optimal outcome?
- Formats – what are the different formats that Member States have used over recent years to award spectrum?
- Multi band awards – what has been Member State experience of undertaking multi-band awards (pros and cons)?
- Award criteria – including timing of awards, the benefits or disbenefits of European co-ordination, and the need to meet national policy objectives (eg coverage). How might such issues need to evolve for future awards?

- **Section 3: Promoting efficient use of spectrum, competition and coverage**
This section will consider various tools and mechanisms aimed at promoting efficient spectrum use. This will include:
 - issues around trading and leasing of spectrum rights,
 - spectrum pricing, incentive auctions and incentive fees,
 - licence duration and licence renewal,
 - implementation of technology and service neutrality – note that a separate questionnaire has been issued on this topic,
 - spectrum caps, floors and set asides,
 - coverage obligations,
 - wholesale access obligations,
 - national roaming requirements,
 - standardisation and minimum performance standards.

- **Section 4: What role for spectrum sharing / pooling?**
The WG will draw upon previous work on spectrum sharing which has been undertaken by RSPG. However, we will also consider areas where thinking may have moved on or where new ideas are gaining momentum. For example, this section will consider the pros and cons of sharing / pooling and consider future network evolution and what that might mean for sharing and the implications for future spectrum awards. The focus will be on generic concepts but any relevant band specific analysis or experience from Member States will be included.

- **Section 5: Management of under-utilised spectrum**
Again, the Group notes that some RSPG work has already been undertaken on this issue in the RSPG Opinion on Wireless Broadband. However, it is worth revisiting this, specifically in terms of the question as to what level we should seek to harmonise spectrum availability across the EU and how to deal with significant variations in demand. This section will also consider mechanisms, such as use it or lose it obligations or a successful spectrum trading environment, to address inefficient award outcomes.

Joint RSPG – BEREC Workshop

This is planned for the 11th November. BEREC and RSPG representatives have been working together to construct a varied agenda with speakers from a number of Member States, academia, consultants and the Commission. The WG will feed the findings from this workshop into its work and report back to RSPG on any key outcomes.

Stakeholder engagement

The WG Chairman has been approached by industry stakeholders keen to input into the work of the Group. Given the valuable insights stakeholders can offer in terms of actually participating in an awards process, the Group is planning to organise a meeting with a small number of stakeholders who have actively participated in recent awards. This is in addition to the planned public consultation and will take place during the next meeting of the WG.

Next steps

The WG will meet again on December 15th and 16th in London. Following that, a draft Report will be presented to the February RSPG Plenary with a view to publishing a public consultation after the June 2015 Plenary.