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Electronic Communications Networks and Services

Radio Spectrum Policy Group

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RADIO SPECTRUM POLICY GROUP

4th Progress Report of the RSPG Working Group

on Efficient Awards and Spectrum Use

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The RSPG Working Group on Efficient Awards and Spectrum Use (WG Awards) met for the 5th time on the 6th May 2015. The meeting, held in London, was well attended with representatives from many Member States.

The Group has been tasked with, inter alia;

- Providing views and best practices 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 potentially future EU harmonised bands for ECS with a focus on usage rights conditions to meet spectrum requirements of future WBB systems

This piece of work has a very large scope looking both at efficient awards and efficient use – indeed it could almost be looked at as two separate reports. Despite this, the Group is grappling well with the task and the Report is taking shape. It has become clear through the Group's work that **there are many different views on these issues across the EU and, while that makes for an extremely interesting and engaging piece of work, it has meant that the Report is taking slightly longer to pull together than originally envisaged.**

The report is current divided into the following chapters;

1. Executive Summary

This will be finalised once the Report is nearing completion.

2. Introduction

A short synopsis of the outline of the Report

3. Suitability of current and future needs

The discussion in this section notes that a strategic approach to spectrum management is a complex balance between many factors (technology, policy, standards) and all must be considered. It also includes a brief exploration of a number of different issues ranging from the mix of spectrum to the timing of availability of new spectrum bands.

4. Awards

An initial overview of the various awards mechanisms including; first come first serve; beauty contests; hybrids; and auctions. There is also an initial look at award objectives.

5. **Perspective on spectrum auctions**

A thorough examination of spectrum auctions including; benefits; formats; challenges; an assessment of the formats; and development of the formats.

6. **Promoting efficient use of spectrum, competition and coverage**

A lengthy chapter covering; licence duration; licence renewal; spectrum fees; refarming; revenue from awards; implementing technology and service neutrality; promoting competition; coverage obligations; wholesale access obligations and national roaming; standardisation; trading and leasing; and management of underutilised spectrum.

7. **What role for sharing and polling in awards**

A brief look at the benefits of sharing, competition issues arising and taking sharing into account in award design.

8. **Key findings**

This chapter has yet to be developed but there is agreement in the working group that the primary message is that **‘one size does not fit all’** when awarding spectrum.

Annexes

There are presently four annexes;

- i. Planning and Implementation process chart
- ii. Spectrum Awards – analytical framework
- iii. Member State case studies
- iv. Auction mechanics

We consider that **the Annexes have the potential to be a very useful tool for Member States**, not least annex (ii) which contains a significant amount of information and guidance. Plenary should note that the annexes require further work, which will be undertaken at the upcoming working group meetings, in order to ensure they are as robust as the rest of the report and to take into account comments already received from some Member States for amendments.

Public Consultation

Plenary has previously discussed the issue of publication and it seemed favourable. While it is unusual for the RSPG to consult on a report, we believe that in this instance **public consultation would be a particularly worthwhile exercise**. It would be especially valuable to seek the views of stakeholders who have experience from the perspective of a participant in spectrum awards (we met with selected MNOs about 6 months ago during the development of the report and at the time indicated that we intended to consult more widely in due course).

Next steps

While we note the original timescale indicated adoption of the Report by Plenary at the October meeting, we now proposed a slightly amended timetable;

10 th June	Next meeting of Working Group
11 th June	Plenary to consider draft report
30 th June	Working Group meeting
September	Working Group meeting

15th October Plenary to consider approving draft Report for public consultation
Late October Public consultation opens
December Public consultation closes
January 2016 Working Group meeting to incorporate findings of public consultation
February Plenary to consider adoption of Report