

Date: 17/08/2023

To,
Shri Akhilesh Kumar Trivedi,
Advisor (Networks, Spectrum and Licensing)
Telecom Regulatory Authority of India
New Delhi - 110 002

Sub: Response to TRAI Supplementary Consultation paper on Data Communication Services Between Aircraft and Ground Stations Provided by Organizations Other Than Airports Authority of India dated 03/08/2023

Dear Sir,

With reference to TRAI's Supplementary Consultation paper on Data Communication Services between Aircraft and ground stations provided by organizations other than AAI dated 03/08/2023, please find enclosed our (Infotel Bizcon Private Limited) response for your kind consideration.

Thanking you,

Yours sincerely

For Infotel Bizcon Pvt Ltd

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VARGHESE
THOMAS

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Director
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SQ1. In case it is decided to bring data communication services between aircraft and ground stations provided by organizations other than Airports Authority of India under service licensing regime, what should be the eligibility conditions for obtaining service licence for data communication services between aircraft and ground stations? Please provide a detailed response with justifications.

Infotel's response

This data communication is within an exclusive group and the information is sensitive to the both concerned parties. Infotel suggest that it should be under WPC's license conditions which are manifold stricter than the Service License conditions.

The advantages of WPC Wireless Operating License are as follows.

- ❖ The frequency is allocated to a specific location after internal coordination with AAI and in turn ICAO. This amounts to a global coordination.
- ❖ WPC permits with specif number of radios, frequency spots, Emission Bandwidth and EIRP.
- ❖ Even the Import of Radio is separately controlled.
- ❖ SACFA site clearance is mandated.
- ❖ WOL is with radio serial number and advance spectrum charges are collected.
- ❖ Any change of radio is even regulated individually.
- ❖ Periodical inspection is conducted.

In the time of "ease of doing business" any additional License would be against this government declared policy and a clear burden on the licensees.

Even if an auction is considered, the eligibility should be global experience with minimum 10 years without any break in service considering the safety and security of passengers. Globally, there are only two agencies giving this service means there are no much takers for this. In short this is a VHF data communication given to Aviation sector for its safe and smooth operations.

As per the available data, to be on the higher side, India has close to 40 commercial airlines, including cargo and others, operating and about 125 commercially operated airports (Open Source). Out of which, 28 and 4 airports (total 32 airports) respectively SITA and BCS have frequency to operate. Another 15 and 10 applications are pending for SITA and BCS (Source Annexure-1) These two Agencies, SITA and BCS, is reusing the same frequency spot at all their licensed Airports. The total number of 3 frequencies spots with maximum of 13 KHz emission bandwidth is the requirement for these agencies to support the entire industry.

To consider this VHF band of 117.975 - 137 MHz for an auction, the customer base is 40 airlines and the required frequencies are just three spots in VHF in our opinion, the auction is not economically feasible. This frequency has global application as global coordination is required.

The main users of this frequency in India are AAI, Commercial Airlines, HAL, ONGC, Aviation training institutes, and some other private aircraft owners. These allocated frequencies are to be protected. There may not be any or a very limited number of frequency spots left with the WPC now in the frequency band of 117.975 -137 MHz.

Similarly, the marine frequency is also administratively allocated and has global application which is also in VHF band.

SQ2: In case it is decided to auction the spectrum in the frequency range 117.975-137 MHz for Data Communication Services Between Aircraft and Ground Stations, -

- (a) What should be the eligibility conditions for participating in auction?**
- (b) Whether the entire available spectrum in 117.975 - 137 MHz band at each airport/ ground station should be put to auction?**
- (c) What should be the block size of spectrum and minimum bid quantity in terms of number of blocks?**
- (d) What should be the spectrum cap for each airport/ ground station?**
- (e) What should be the roll-out obligations associated with the assignment of spectrum at each airport/ ground station?**
- (f) What should be the period of assignment of spectrum?**
- (g) What should be the minimum period beyond which the spectrum acquired through auction may be permitted to be surrendered?**
- (h) What should be the process and associated terms and conditions for permitting surrender of spectrum through auction?**

Kindly provide a detailed response with justification in respect of each of the above. Since TRAI has asked to give response here it is.

Infotel's Response

- (a) Since this data communication does not limit within the country borders, a global experience is required for the parties in the same area with minimum of 10 years without break.
- (b) We sincerely feel that entire 117.975 - 137 MHz band is not possible as maximum is already occupied.
- (c) The requirement is 25 KHz only.
- (d) 100 KHz
- (e) Maximum one year. (that is the time given by WPC to procure WOL)
- (f) One year. It can be renewed as per requirement or surrender.
- (g) Three months, considering the disposal of radio and other WOL surrender procedures.
- (h) The existing surrender policy on the administrative allocation is the best and may continue with.

SQ3. In case of auction based and/or administrative assignment of spectrum, what should the payment terms and associated conditions for the assignment of spectrum for Data Communication Services between Aircraft and ground Stations relating to:

- (i) Upfront payment,**
- (ii) Moratorium period,**
- (iii) Total number of installments to recover deferred payments, and**
- (iv) Rate of discount in respect of deferred payment and prepayment?**

Please support your answer with detailed justification.

Infotel's Response.

We do not support the auction, however we would like to present the below point.

The present charging system adopted by WPC on this VHF data communication is at the highest rate. This data communication with the parameters of one spot frequency, Emission bandwidth of 13 KHz, and EIRP 20 W is charged at the last Category (Category 7). This is the maximum spectrum charges that can be levied on any VHF for a single frequency considering the range above 500 KM.

Infotel's suggestion for the Charging Mechanism on this data communication of single spot frequency is as follows.

- ◆ The frequency should be administratively allocated.
- ◆ Should be charged in the same highest category (Cat 7)
- ◆ Every airport should be charged with the same fee considering it as an additional station.

SQ4. Whether there are any other issues/ suggestions relevant to the subject? The same may be submitted with proper explanation and justification.

Infotel's response

The latest National Telecommunication Policy Vision is, **"To Provide Secure, Reliable, Affordable and High Quality Coverage to Telecommunication Anytime, Anywhere for an accelerated inclusive, Socioeconomic Development"**. The revenue is supposed to be a secondary one.