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भारतीय विमानपत्तन प्राधिकरण  
AIRPORTS AUTHORITY OF INDIA

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Date: 13.01.2023

To,

Shri Akhilesh Kumar Trivedi,

Advisor (Networks, Spectrum and Licensing)

Telecom Regulatory Authority of India

New Delhi

**Subject: Response to TRAI Consultation paper on Data Communication Services Between Aircraft and Ground Stations Provided by Organizations Other Than Airports Authority of India.**

Sir,

The response /reply to the questions under chapter IV of TRAI consultation paper on the above subject is as follows:

**Q1. Whether there is a need to bring data communication services between aircraft and ground stations provided by organizations other than Airport Authority of India under service licensing regime? Kindly provide a detailed response with justification.**

**AAI Response:** Data communication services between aircraft and ground stations is already under service licensing regime to maintain discipline and interference free operation. This is being maintained through WPC Licences.

**Q2. In case your answer to Q1 is in the affirmative, should the providers of data communication services between aircraft and ground stations be licensed through –**

(a) an authorization under Unified License; or

(b) a separate service license.

**Kindly provide a detailed response with justification.**

**AAI Response:** Data communication services between aircraft and ground stations should be licensed through a separate service license. Further licence should be lighter licence regime.

The above service is used for specific domain in Aeronautical field and is intended for safety, surveillance and communication requirement of flight operations. Only Service providers providing services for Aeronautical Purposes can be authorized to take Licences for Data Communication in the band.

Above services have been provisioned under Annex 10 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation and the Standards and Recommended Practices of the ICAO and DGCA air safety Circular 04 of 2014 dated 5<sup>th</sup> May 2014.

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**Q3. What should be the broad terms and conditions of the licensing framework for data communication services between aircraft and ground stations, such as –**

- (a) licensed service area,**
- (b) validity period of the license,**
- (c) scope of the license,**
- (d) technical conditions,**
- (e) operating conditions,**
- (f) security conditions, and**
- (g) financial conditions (such as application processing fee, entry fee, license fee, bank guarantees, etc.)**

**AAI Response:** Broad terms and conditions of the licensing framework mentioned above are appropriate. The existing terms and conditions of WPC are sufficient.

**Q4. What should be the methodology for assignment of the spectrum in frequency range 117.975-137 MHz to the providers of data communication services between aircraft and ground stations? Should the spectrum be assigned administratively, or through auction, or through any other method? Kindly provide a detailed response with justification.**

**AAI response:** Use of frequency spots within Aeronautical frequency band 117.975-137 MHz is governed by ICAO Annex 10. Further data communication services between aircraft and ground stations may be assigned administratively as per the current practice for timely allotment of frequency spot. Auction of this spectrum is not appropriate as the service is used for specific domain and is mandatory requirement by state regulator for safety of passenger /aircraft. Globally countries have adopted administration assignment based on fixed charges.

In view of the above, auction may not be an appropriate strategy and above spectrum may be assigned administratively.

**Q5. In case administrative assignment is to be followed, what should be the mechanism for charging the VHF spectrum in the frequency range 117.975-137 MHz to be assigned to the providers of data communication services between aircraft and ground? Whether the auction determined prices for other frequency bands can be accounted for estimating the value of VHF spectrum in the frequency range 117.975-137 MHz? Kindly provide a detailed response with justification.**

**AAI Response:** Mechanism of charging should not be complex, and the charges should be kept at moderate level comparable with other countries as the higher charges may be a burden for aviation industry user.



**Q6. If auction methodology is to be followed, whether the valuation of VHF spectrum in frequency range 117.975-137 MHz assigned to the providers of data communication services between aircraft and ground stations should be derived by relating it to the valuation of other frequency bands by using technical efficiency factor? If yes, with which frequency band, should these frequencies be related to and what efficiency factor or formula should be used for estimating the value of VHF spectrum in frequency range 117.975-137 MHz? Kindly justify your suggestions.**

**AAI Response:** AAI has no experience in determining auction methodology.

**Q7. What are the prevalent international practices being followed in other countries for assignment and charging (including other applicable charges and fees) of spectrum in the frequency range 117.975-137 MHz, which is used for providing data communication services between aircraft and ground stations? Please provide a detailed response.**

**AAI Response:** Globally administrative assignment and fixed charges are being followed.

**Q8. Whether the valuation of VHF spectrum assigned to the providers of data communication services between aircraft and ground stations be derived using the methodologies used internationally in this regard? If yes, which of the methodologies can be followed? Please provide a detailed response.**

**AAI Response:** Yes, valuation may be done following the fixed charge methodologies.

**Q9. Apart from the approaches highlighted above, which other valuation approaches should be adopted for valuation of the VHF spectrum in the frequency range 117.975-137 MHz? Kindly support your suggestions with detailed methodologies, related assumptions, and other relevant factors.**

**AAI Response:** AAI have no experience in valuation. No comments from AAI.

**Q10. Whether there are any other issues/ suggestions relevant to the subject? The same may be submitted with proper explanation and justification.**

**AAI Response:** NIL

Thanking you,

Yours sincerely



(G.S.Rao)

Executive Director (CNS-OM)