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Guidelines for Use of Hilltop Radio Site Resources

Office of the Communications Authority

(July 2018)

Introduction

The Office of the Communications Authority (“OFCA”) is the Government department responsible for the coordination of requirements for the use of hilltop radio sites and associated facilities, such as equipment space, antenna tower and power supply etc., for radio communications. It attempts to ensure that such sites and facilities, which are scarce resources for radio communications purposes, are used efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of the community for telecommunications, utilities and other public services. As such, OFCA adopts stringent criteria for granting of the right of use of hilltop radio site resources for radio communications.

Background

2. Owing to the hilly terrain of Hong Kong, many telecommunications users consider it ideal to set up radio relay stations at hilltop radio sites to relay their signals from one location to the other or to their control/dispatch centres, or to provide better and larger radio coverage to their intended areas. Demands for hilltop radio sites resources are therefore tremendous.

3. However, supply of hilltop radio sites and associated facilities is very limited. For environmental and air traffic safety reasons, not all hilltops in Hong Kong are suitable for developing into a radio site. Besides, setting up a radio site at hilltops at remote locations with access problems is both time-consuming and costly.

4. In view of the fact that the current supply of hilltop radio sites and associated facilities is not enough to meet the demands from all interested parties, OFCA will assess individual applications before any right of use of Hong Kong’s hilltop radio site resources is granted. This ensures an optimal use of such scarce resources.

Criteria for granting the right of use of hilltop radio site resources

5. Hilltop radio site resources are usually reserved for use by the following six types of organisations -

- A) Government departments;
- B) Military and defence units;
- C) Television and sound broadcasters;
- D) Telecommunications operators offering services to the public;
- E) Public utilities organisations; and
- F) Non-profit making organisations.

6. In general, type A and type B organisations have higher priority in using the hilltop radio site resources, while organisations classified as types C, D, E and F must provide sound justifications for their use of such resources to OFCA, who will evaluate the applications case-by-case before granting any right of use of such resources. In the evaluation process, OFCA assess the applications against the following criteria -

- 1) The required hilltop radio site resources must be readily available;
- 2) The need for hilltop radio site resources must be proved to be absolutely necessary and there are no other alternative means to achieve the applicant's intended goal;
- 3) The intended use must be for serving the general public or large public communities or directly related to public interest;
- 4) The space to be occupied must be small and insignificant such that problems would not be caused to the existing co-site users; and
- 5) The application must meet the electromagnetic compatibility principles (i.e. users of new radio communications installations must ensure that their equipment will not generate harmful interference to radio communications equipment already in existence, unless mitigation measures satisfactory to all parties concerned are identified).

Enquiries

7. For any enquiries concerning use of hilltop radio site resources, please contact Telecommunications Engineer (Regulatory 12) at 2961 6387.