

**RADIO SPECTRUM AND TECHNICAL STANDARDS ADVISORY
COMMITTEE**

Proposed Spectrum Release Plan for 2017-19

Introduction

This paper proposes updates on the spectrum release plan (“SRP”) for its coming release that covers 2017 – 2019.

Background

2. An SRP is published by the Communications Authority (“CA”) annually to inform the industry about the potential supply of spectrum through an open, competitive bidding or tendering process in the following three years. The SRP is updated every year on a rolling basis or as required taking into account the latest developments. The last SRP was published in March 2016 that covered the potential supply of spectrum for 2016 – 2018.

3. To update the SRP in a timely manner, the Office of the Communications Authority (“OFCA”) monitors the availability of spectrum for assignment for non-government use, having regard to international development on spectrum allocation, regional spectrum allocation decisions, technology and equipment availability and proposals from the industry. The recent findings of OFCA are given below.

Trend of Spectrum Allocations

1.4 GHz Band

4. The World Radiocommunication Conference 2015 (“WRC-15”) of the International Telecommunication Union (“ITU”) has identified the 1427 – 1518 MHz band for use, on a worldwide basis, by administrations wishing to implement International Mobile Telecommunications (“IMT”) with effect from 1 January 2017.¹ However, whether this band can be allocated to the mobile service in Hong Kong is subject to further study by ITU and hinged on the

¹ See SSAC Paper 1/2016 entitled “World Radiocommunication Conference 2015 Decisions” - http://www.ofca.gov.hk/filemanager/ofca/en/content_751/SSAC_Paper_1_2016.pdf

availability of harmonised band plans for IMT as well as the associated equipment support. OFCA will keep in view the development to see whether this band can be made available for allocation to the mobile service for IMT in Hong Kong and provide the relevant information in the future SRP update.

2 GHz Band

5. The Telecommunications (Telecommunications Apparatus) (Exemption from Licensing) Order (Cap 106Z) (the “Exemption Order”) was amended in May 2013 to remove the licence exemption of the use of PHS equipment operating in the 1895 – 1906.1 MHz band after a three-year grace period. As a result, from May 2016, the 1895 – 1906.1 MHz band is no longer a licence-exempted band for PHS equipment. On the other hand, the licence exemption for DECT equipment operating in the 1880 – 1900 MHz band under the Exemption Order remains unchanged. In addition, the unpaired band 1904.9 – 1919.9 MHz, which was previously assigned to the relevant operators for the provision of 3G services, was put back to reserve after the re-assignment of the paired 3G bands in 2015 which came into effect in October 2016. On the basis of the above, the 1900 – 1919.9 MHz band (19.9 MHz bandwidth) is now available for public mobile communications services.

6. The 2019.7 – 2024.7 MHz band, previously assigned to an operator for the provision of 3G services, was also put back to reserve after the said re-assignment of the paired 3G bands as mentioned in the preceding paragraph. Together with the 2010 – 2019.7 MHz band released in 2011 for auction but not acquired by any bidders, the 2010 – 2024.7 MHz band (14.7 MHz bandwidth) is also available for public mobile communications services.

7. OFCA has not received any expression of interest from the industry in respect of the use of the abovementioned frequency bands, i.e. 1900 – 1919.9 MHz and 2010 – 2024.7 MHz (totally 34.6 MHz bandwidth) for the provision of public mobile communications services and hence these frequency bands are not yet suitable for release by market means in the mean time.

Way Forward

8. A draft of the updated SRP (with changes compared with the last version highlighted in red colour) is given at the Annex. Same as the SRP for 2016-2018, there is no spectrum available for release as per the updated SRP for 2017-2019.

9. The updated SRP is scheduled to be released in early 2017.

Advice Sought

10. Members are invited to offer comments on the draft SRP at the Annex.

Office of the Communications Authority
November 2016

Spectrum Release Plan for 2017 – 2019

Introduction

As part of the implementation of the Radio Spectrum Policy Framework announced by the Government in April 2007, the Communications Authority (“CA”) will publish a spectrum release plan (“SRP”) to inform the industry of the potential supply of radio spectrum through an open bidding or tendering process for the following three years. The SRP is updated every year on a rolling basis, or as required, taking into account the latest developments.

Spectrum Release Plan for 2017 – 2019

Frequency Band (MHz)	Allocation	Earliest Release Date²	Target Consultation Date	Remarks
No spectrum available for release				

² Earliest release date refers to the earliest date when the spectrum concerned is expected to be available for release to the market for auction or tendering, subject to the outcome of consultation and passing of the relevant subsidiary legislation. It does not however necessarily refer to the actual date when the auction or tendering will take place.

Spectrum included in previous versions of Spectrum Release Plan

Frequency Band (MHz)	Allocation	Remarks
216 – 223	Broadcasting Fixed Mobile	Channel 11A (216.160 – 217.696 MHz), Channel 11B (217.872 – 219.408 MHz) and Channel 11D (221.296 – 222.832 MHz) may be used for new digital broadcasting and telecommunications services, including broadcast-type mobile TV and digital audio broadcasting (“DAB”) services. Channel 11C (219.584 – 221.120 MHz) has been assigned for DAB services.
678 – 686 (UHF TV Channel No. 47)	Broadcasting Mobile	This band was assigned through the auction of radio spectrum in the UHF band held in June 2010 for the provision of broadcast-type mobile TV services.
832.5 – 837.5 877.5 – 882.5	Mobile	These bands were assigned through the auction of radio spectrum in the 850 MHz, 900 MHz and 2 GHz Bands held in February/March 2011 for the provision of public mobile telecommunications services.
885 – 890 930 – 935	Mobile	These bands were assigned through the auction of radio spectrum in the 850 MHz, 900 MHz and 2 GHz Bands held in February/March 2011 for the provision of public mobile telecommunications services.
1466 – 1480	Broadcasting Mobile	This band may be used for new digital broadcasting and telecommunications services, including broadcast-type mobile TV and DAB services. As a result of the second consultation on the development of mobile TV services which took place in January 2008, this band has been reserved subject to further development of the worldwide market.
1780.1 – 1785 1875.1 – 1880	Mobile	These bands were assigned through the auction held in June 2009.

Frequency Band (MHz)	Allocation	Remarks
1904.9 – 1919.9 2019.7 – 2024.7	Fixed Mobile	These bands are currently were previously assigned to mobile network operators for the provision of 3G mobile services. The assignments will expired on 21 October 2016. In accordance with the decision of the CA announced on 15 November 2013, ² these bands will be were put back to reserve upon expiry of the existing-relevant assignments in October 2016.
1930.2 – 1940.0 1960.0 – 1969.8 2120.2 – 2130.0 2150.0 – 2159.8	Fixed Mobile	In accordance with the decision of the CA announced on 15 November 2013, ³ these bands were planned to be released for auction towards end 2014 and were therefore included in previous SRP. Following the decision of the CA announced on 2 May 2014, ⁴ the bands released for auction were revised to 1920.3 – 1935.1 MHz, 1960.0 – 1969.8 MHz, 2110.3 – 2125.1 MHz and 2150.0 – 2159.8 MHz instead. These revised bands were assigned through the auction held in December 2014 for the provision of public mobile telecommunications services.
2010 – 2019.7	Fixed Mobile	This band was listed for the auction of radio spectrum in the 850 MHz, 900 MHz and 2 GHz Bands held in February/March 2011 for the provision of public mobile telecommunications services but was not acquired by any bidder in the auction. The CA will review the demand for this band.
2300 – 2390	Fixed Mobile	This band was assigned through the auction of spectrum for broadband wireless access service held in February 2012.
2500 – 2515 2620 – 2635	Fixed Mobile	These bands were assigned through the auction of spectrum for broadband wireless access service held in January 2009.
2515 – 2540 2635 – 2660	Fixed Mobile	These bands were assigned through the auction of spectrum for broadband wireless access service held in March 2013.

³ See http://www.coms-auth.hk/filemanager/statement/en/upload/237/ca_statements20131115_en.pdf.

⁴ See http://www.coms-auth.hk/filemanager/statement/en/upload/270/decision_20140502_e.pdf.

Frequency Band (MHz)	Allocation	Remarks
2540 – 2570 2660 – 2690	Fixed Mobile	These bands were assigned through the auction of spectrum for broadband wireless access service held in January 2009.

This SRP is for information by the industry and public. Publication of the SRP does not constitute any allocation or assignment of the spectrum. The SRP does not bind the CA in exercise of its discretion in the actual spectrum allocation and assignment. The CA will conduct separate consultation exercises before exercising its powers under sections 32H(2)(a) and (b) and 32I(1) of the Telecommunications Ordinance (Cap 106) as is reasonable in all the circumstances of the case. In making a decision on spectrum allocation and/or assignment, the CA will also take into account all relevant matters of the case. The CA is entitled to depart or deviate from the SRP where the circumstances so warrant. The SRP is therefore not legally binding on the CA and is subject to annual review and may from time to time be amended, as and when it is considered necessary in the light of latest developments.

Office of the Communications Authority
[day] [month] 2017