

Dear Sir / Ms,

Future Projects would like to place on record the following response to the above consultation:

General Comment:

Whilst we do not believe that DAB is currently a replacement technology for analogue (FM) broadcasting, we do however believe that it can be a useful complementary technology, which can provide additional flexibility for community radio and other small scale radio broadcasters.

Small low-power DAB multiplexes should focus on the provision of local services and services of relevance to local audiences. The importance of localism should be recognised in the licensing process and ownership should be limited to a single multiplex per body corporate, similar to the approach taken in relation to community radio licensing.

Question 1:

Do you agree that we have identified the objectives which the small scale DAB multiplex trial should seek to achieve?

Yes.

Question 2:

Are there any other questions or issues which the small scale DAB multiplex trial should seek to address?

Within the trial as proposed there are no apparent additional questions or issues to address. However, in parallel, other issues, such as the importance of local content carriage and the ownership of the proposed new multiplexes also need to be considered.

Question 3:

Do you agree with our proposed technical licence conditions?

Given that the 11A frequency block is allocated for future use by the second national commercial radio licence holder, where possible trial operations should be licensed on frequencies which can be used in the longer-term.

Question 4:

Do you agree with our approach to non-technical licence conditions and requirements?

Trial licences should include the provision for an extension of operations beyond nine months, as per sections 5.9 to 5.11.

Question 5:

Do you agree with our proposed approach to awarding trial licences?

Although Future Projects has sought professional advice about which of the three trials might be appropriate for the Norwich area, we are not convinced that all potential applicants wishing to take part in this trial have the technical capacity to make this decision on an informed basis. We believe

that Ofcom is best placed to make the final decision about which type of transmission structure should be installed in any given trial area.

Question 6:

Do you agree with our proposals set out in this section in relation to final reporting obligations, the recovery of the equipment and the extension of trial licence duration?

Yes.

I look forward to hearing further from you.

Yours faithfully,

Michael Stonard
Chair of Board of Trustees, Future Projects.