

Your response

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<p>Question 1: Do you agree with the planning principles and methodologies that we will use in our work to refine the coverage area plan for small-scale DAB?</p>	<p>We agree with the planning methodologies proposed.</p> <p>As noted in paragraph 3.32, these multiplexes need to be financially viable across their licence period, and this viability is a complex function of operating cost and revenue.</p> <p>As noted in section 5.28, it may be appropriate for the applicant to propose a variation on the polygon planned by OFCOM, but compatible with the spectrum planning rules concerning outgoing interference to other spectrum users, and overall population covered.</p> <p>When considering these proposed changes, OFCOM should consider the impact on financial viability of the proposer multiplex operator, and the potential impact on viability of (a) future small-scale multiplex operator(s) in the adjacent polygon(s).</p>
<p>Question 2: Do you agree with our proposed approach to the required technical licence conditions for small-scale radio multiplex services, and the proposed amendments to the Digital Radio Technical Code?</p>	<p>We partially agree with the proposed approach.</p> <p>We agree with the proposal to apply 'reasonable standards' to small-scale multiplexes.</p> <p>We agree that allowing horizontal polarisation is not essential for effective coverage of small-scale multiplexes but welcome the offer to keep the position under review.</p> <p>We do not agree that all services on a multiplex must use DAB+ (HE-AAC) audio encoding.</p> <p>Whilst we agree that DAB+ is the most efficient use of spectrum, this ambition must be balanced against the financial viability of the multiplex. There may be service providers who are only prepared to broadcast in DAB (MPEG Layer II) because they may not want to disenfranchise any existing analogue listeners. If those service providers are barred from small-scale multiplexes, it potentially denies those multiplexes an important revenue</p>

	<p>stream, and one (taking into account that MPEG Layer II generally uses a larger proportion of the multiplex capacity) that is likely to contribute a disproportionately high percentage of the operating costs.</p> <p>For the allocation of C-DSP capacity, it seems to be in the multiplex operator's best interests to allocate this capacity using DAB+.</p> <p>Although not consulted on, we agree that OFCOM should keep the issue of critical and non-critical spectrum masks under active review. Technical regulation has a very significant impact on capital and operating costs, so should be as light as possible whilst protecting other spectrum users.</p>
<p>Question 3: Do you agree with Ofcom's proposed approach to setting the level of reserved capacity for C-DSP services on small-scale radio multiplex services?</p>	<p>We partially agree with the proposed approach.</p> <p>We agree that the multiplex operator must specify a minimum capacity reserved for C-DSP licence holders. However, we suggest that this is stated in the form of "services and capacity units", as in some environments it may be appropriate to use higher protection levels, which consume more capacity units.</p> <p>We agree that C-DSP services should be offered a minimum of 36 CUs (48kbit/s at EEP3A), but suggest that C-DSPs may be allowed to ask for fewer CUs in order to reduce their costs. This is appropriate for some programme material (for example, primarily speech led programming) where a higher capacity allocation would be inefficient.</p> <p>We believe that this encourages best use of spectrum. If a multiplex operator has a licence requirement for at least 3 C-DSP services, using at least 108CUs, then they may be able to accommodate more C-DSP services if each service agrees to using fewer CUs.</p> <p>Although not consulted on, we agree with OFCOM's proposal to require published rate cards for capacity but note that these rate cards may vary over time, and the actual carriage fee for each service provider will be subject to negotiation (for example, taking into account Service Level Agreements).</p>

	<p>We are concerned that some service providers may not want the commercial details of their carriage made public, and that an allowance should be made for this where requested by the service provider. In the case of most C-DSP operators, the amount paid for digital carriage is likely to be declared as part of their own financial reporting.</p>
<p>Question 4: Do you agree with the factors we are proposing to take into account of in deciding the order and timescale in which Ofcom will advertise small-scale radio multiplex licences?</p>	<p>We agree with the proposed approach for licensing small-scale multiplexes.</p> <p>As a party in the existing Bristol trial, we note that any new licensee is likely to propose and implement different transmission sites from the current trial, and that this transition will take time. A reasonable time window, which we would suggest as 18 months, should be provided for the existing triallists to adapt to their new licence conditions without a break in service for listeners.</p>
<p>Question 5: Do you agree with our proposed approach for assessing the technical plans submitted in small-scale radio multiplex licence applications?</p>	<p>We agree with the proposed approach for assessing the technical plans.</p>
<p>Question 6: Do you agree with our proposed approach for assessing the ability of applicants to establish their proposed small-scale radio multiplex service?</p>	<p>We agree with the proposed approach for assessing the ability of applicants to establish their proposed service.</p>
<p>Question 7: Should Ofcom require that the studio of a C-DSP licensee be located within the coverage area of the small-scale radio multiplex service it plans to broadcast on? Please explain the reasons for your view.</p>	<p>We do not agree that the studio of a C-DSP must be located within the small-scale multiplex coverage area.</p> <p>In some cases, a city may be covered by more than one small-scale multiplex. In that case, it seems unreasonable to disqualify a service that would be relevant for a community group in that city simply because of a sub-division in small-scale multiplexes.</p> <p>Secondly, the nature of C-DSP licencing requires the licensee to state their community and how they intend to serve it. This is a more effective form of regulation than physical location of the studio, which in some cases is not necessarily an identifiable physical location at all.</p>
<p>Question 8: We propose that holders of</p>	<p>We partially agree with this approach.</p>

corresponding analogue community radio and DSP licences apportion their income equally across their licences, unless there are compelling reasons why a different apportionment is reasonable. Do you agree with our suggested approach?

It is unclear what happens when the C-DSP (or DSP) licence is used to broadcast the service across more multiplexes than just the small-scale multiplex that corresponds with their analogue coverage area, and if this constitutes a “compelling reason” to make a case for a different apportionment.

Question 9: Do you agree with our proposal that a prospective C-DSP service provider will be able to apply for a C-DSP licence once we have invited applications for the small-scale radio multiplex licence upon which their proposed C-DSP service is intended to be provided?

We agree with the proposal for C-DSP licence allocations.

A small-scale multiplex operator should be able to give an agreement-in-principle to carry a prospective C-DSP licence holder. This allows the applicant to apply for their C-DSP after the small-scale multiplex licence has been awarded, but with carriage already secured.