

Question 1: How should Ofcom manage the process of taking advice from users, regulators and government on efficient apportionment of AIP fees in the maritime and aeronautical sectors? Are any new institutional arrangements needed?:

Question 2: If you consider that our proposals for pricing ground station users for any spectrum would be likely to have a detrimental impact on safety, please let us know. In order for us to understand your assessment fully, it would be helpful if you could outline the mechanisms whereby this might happen.?:

The RNLI is supported by voluntary contributions and costs to launch every boat/RIB/ despatch a Lifeguard to any potentially life-threatening situation. Volunteers work extremely hard to raise funds to maintain the fleet, train the crew and ensure that the service 'answers the call'.

How can any government backed organisation even consider that increasing the annual costs for using the radio spectrum by approximately 600% is going to help to keep lives safe around the coast - and inland at flood situation will help the RNLI to save lives.

The potential is that the service offered will diminish because it becomes impossible to raise the additional funds needed to cover this unwarranted cost. In these stringent times many costs - fuel, water, heating, lighting are soaring and we are battling to raise enough to meet these costs.

Question 3: Do you have any evidence which indicates that AIP charged to ground stations could have a material detrimental impact on UK competitiveness?:

Question 4: Taking into account the information available in this document, including that set out in Annex 5, our initial views on VHF radiocommunications licence fees and on the reference rates for bands in other uses, and any information you have about the organisations to whom we are proposing to charge fees, please provide any evidence that you think is relevant to us in considering the financial impact of the fees we intend to propose for VHF radiocommunications, or for other uses:

Question 5: Do you agree that there is little to be gained, in terms of economic efficiency, from charging AIP to WT Act licences for aircraft:

Question 6: Do you consider that we should discount fees for any particular user or type of user? Specifically, do you consider that there should be a discount for charities whose object is the safety of human life in an emergency:

The RNLI should be totally exempt and all other voluntary and not for profit organisations either saving life at sea or providing safety cover on inland water activities should also be exempt.

Question 7: Do you agree that Ofcom should apply AIP to ground stations? use of maritime and aeronautical VHF radiocommunications channels, to help manage growing congestion in current use and to ensure that the cost of denying access to this spectrum by potential alternative applications is faced by current users?:

Question 8: Do you agree with our initial view that it would be appropriate to apply a pricing system similar to that already existing for Business Radio licences to maritime and aeronautical VHF communications? If not, what are your reasons for proposing that we should develop a fee structure for maritime and aeronautical VHF channels which is distinct from that already established for Business Radio?:

Question 9: Are there any short term reasons specific to the sector(s) why it would be inappropriate to apply fees from April 2009?:

Imagine the British Isles without the safety cover of the RNLI - please ask yourselves how you will feel next time you go on a ferry or to sea without the comfort of knowing that the RNLI will answer the call if your transport gets into difficulty.

Is such a Stealth Tax worth your life - or anyone else's?

Question 10: Ofcom would welcome stakeholders? views on the factors which should be taken into account when apportioning fees between individual users of radars and racons:

Question 11: Do you agree with our initial view that a reference rate of £126k per 1 MHz of national spectrum for L band and S band radar spectrum would achieve an appropriate balance between providing incentives to ensure efficient use of spectrum while guarding against the risks of regulatory failure in setting the reference rate too high? If you consider a different rate would be more appropriate, please provide any evidence that you think we should take into account.:

Sounds a great deal of money

Question 12: Do you agree with our initial view that a reference rate of £25k per single MHz of national spectrum would be appropriate for deriving fees for licences to use X band radar?:

Question 13: Do you agree that, generally, spectrum used by aeronautical radionavigation aids is currently uncongested? Do you believe that this may change during the next few years and, if so, approximately when?:

Question 14: Do you agree with the basis on which Ofcom has arrived at its initial view on reference rates for aeronautical radionavigation aids?:

Comments:

Your questionnaire for consultation is clearly geared to 'professionals' but as a volunteer with the RNLI, I insensed at the potential impact that such cost increases might incur and the damage which could result.

Think again and don't bring in this stealtyh tax on charities and not for profit organisations.