

Press release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

UK SPF work reveals new spectrum policy challenges and opportunities

- *Three new reports by UK Spectrum Policy Forum will help inform decisions made by the UK regulator and government in determining what the next decades of spectrum regulation should look like*

LONDON, 1 December, 2022: Three new studies commissioned by the UK Spectrum Policy Forum reveal a new range of opportunities as policy makers in Ofcom and the Government face complex spectrum policy challenges.

Twenty years ago, a revolutionary market approach appeared to simplify spectrum policy looked to be simple, but new technologies, evolving markets and trends in consumer habits have turned spectrum management into a far more intricate and puzzling realm.

Grasping the opportunities of UHF spectrum

Nothing reveals just how daunting current spectrum policy is than the future of the band 470-694 MHz, where the World Radio Conference in 2023 (WRC-23) will arbitrate between the competing demands of broadcasting, PMSE and others and mobile.

The first of the three UK SPF studies provided insight to Ofcom and the Government on the future of UHF spectrum in a world of rapid change in both the linear TV and mobile broadband markets.

The study proposes four potential scenarios:

- the “status quo” of broadcasting primacy,
- the co-primary scenario where mobile is restricted to downlink only,
- the band split scenario between broadcast and mobile services and finally,
- the transition to IPTV over mobile broadband.

6G opportunities in 7-24 GHz range

A second study examined the feasibility of accommodating future 6G services in the spectrum range 7 - 24 GHz. This would contend with the demand for fixed links, satellite services, military, maritime and radionavigation, and science services.

The study found no sufficiently large contiguous spectrum likely to be available for 6G services. This, however, presents a huge opportunity for UK stakeholders and the research community, to develop exciting new mechanisms and tools to leverage better spectrum efficiency and embrace more spectrum sharing.

Review of mobile spectrum

Third, a milestone independent review of mobile spectrum market mechanisms released today by the UK SPF shows there is a strong case to adapt and modernise all market mechanisms (including annual licence fees, spectrum auctions and spectrum trading) so that scarce mobile spectrum can drive wider economic growth across the UK. The review finds that charging annual fees to utilise radio spectrum is no longer necessary as an extra incentive to support economic or technical efficiency in usage of mobile spectrum.

Alternatively, it provides examples on how annual fees could be redirected to invest in the mobile industry, including:

- Accelerating the enhancement of rail and key transport routes with full 5G
- Resilience & sustainable power for the national mobile infrastructure

Matthew Evans, Director Markets, techUK, said:

“Access to radio spectrum is essential for new technology advances to materialise in the wireless sector.

“These reports highlight the breadth of new challenges and opportunities in the sector to inform the regulator and government as how to best navigate the future spectrum management regime to maximise the social and economic value of radio waves.”

Luigi Ardito, Steering Board Chair, UK SPF, said:

“We are delighted to see UK SPF releasing, for the first time, three reports simultaneously on future spectrum policy.

“We hope the outcome of this work will help policymakers to have a full picture of the most pressing questions in the current spectrum landscape, such as the future of the UHF band, licensing of public networks or potential spectrum considerations for 6G”

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Notes to Editors

The three reports can be [downloaded here](#).

About UK Spectrum Policy Forum



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Set up at the request of government and Ofcom the Spectrum Policy Forum (SPF) act as a pro-active industry-led 'sounding board' to UK Government and Ofcom on future policy and approaches on spectrum and a cross-industry 'agent' for promoting the role of spectrum in society and the maximisation of its economic and social value to the UK. We do this by exchanging news and views on developments in using spectrum, drawing on our industry expertise from around the world.

About techUK

techUK is the technology trade association that brings together people, companies and organisations to realise the positive outcomes of what digital technology can achieve.

With over 900 members (the majority of which are SMEs) across the UK, techUK creates a network for innovation and collaboration across business, government and stakeholders to provide a better future for people, society, the economy and the planet.

By providing expertise and insight, we support members, partners and stakeholders as they prepare the UK for what comes next in a constantly changing world.