



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

URCA Opens New Spectrum Bands – 700MHz, 11GHz, 12GHz and 42GHz

The Utilities Regulation and Competition Authority (URCA) has today opened the 700MHz, 11GHz, 12GHz and 42GHz spectrum bands. In support of these openings, URCA has also today issued the policies which govern URCA's administration of these bandwidths, including the terms and conditions by which licenses will be awarded (URCA document reference ECS 09/2012).

The 700 MHz spectrum band, ranging from 698 MHz to 806 MHz, is expected to draw significant industry interest. The range offers broad coverage and high capacity making it especially suited to the latest generation of mobile and fixed data technologies. Globally, it is the dominant band for the 4th Generation mobile technology, LTE, or Long Term Evolution, which is the technology used by the most advanced mobile networks in the United States and other major economies.

The amount of 700 MHz spectrum being made available for licensing at this time comprises 72 MHz, of the 108 MHz available. Of the remaining spectrum within the band, URCA has reserved 12 MHz for public health and safety use. 24 MHz will be available for a second mobile operator, upon the expiration of BTC's statutory exclusivity as the sole provider of mobile services, in April 2014.

The 700 MHz band, which may be used to provide fixed and mobile electronic communications services, has been packaged by URCA into channels of 6MHz each. An operator may apply for a maximum of four of these 6 MHz channels, or 24 MHz of spectrum. Details of the packaging of the band are set out in the Policy.

Earlier in the year on January 16, 2012, URCA published a draft policy document for public consultation, inviting comments from industry participants and the public at large, through to February 20, 2012. The final policy issued today follows URCA's analysis of the feedback received during this consultation. URCA's Statement of Results from the consultation (ECS 08/2012) was also released today.

Given the anticipated high demand for the 700 MHz spectrum band, URCA today also issued a Request for Applications (RFA). The RFA comprises an invitation to interested parties to apply

for blocks of the spectrum. Applicants will be assessed according to criteria of capability and means to deliver high quality services, to ensure that priority is given to those with the best capacity to deliver services that will serve the best interests of the public. Successful applicants will be subject to strict roll-out timeframes, including extension of their networks to multiple islands in The Bahamas. The band will attract spectrum fees of \$6,000 per MHz per year (mobile use prohibited) and \$8,000 per MHz per year (for unrestricted use), and will be licensed for fifteen (15) years consistent with URCA's licensing guidelines.

The RFA stipulates a May 4, 2012, deadline for applications. Applications **must be strictly compliant with the RFA to receive consideration from URCA.**

Much softer demand is expected for the other bands also being opened today by URCA:

- 11 GHz – Opened for point-to-point use, licensing on a first-come, first-served basis.
- 12 GHz – Opened for point-to-point or point-to-multipoint use, licensing on a first-come, first-served basis.
- 42 GHz – Opened for point to multipoint use, licensing on a first-come, first-served basis.

Applications for these bands may be submitted as per URCA's usual spectrum licensing process. All three referenced documents are available on the URCA website www.urcabahamas.bs:

- ECS 08/2012: Statement of Results – Consultation on Policy for New Spectrum Bands – 700MHz, 11GHz, 12GHz and 42GHz
- ECS 09/2012: Policy for New Spectrum Bands – 700 MHz, 11GHz, 12GHz and 42 GHz
- ECS 10/2012: Request for Applications for 700 MHz Spectrum

URCA expresses thanks to all that participated in the consultative phase of this exercise.

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