Press release

BUSINESSES' DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

Vertical market connectivity: Arcep creates a window for allocating 2.6 GHz TDD[1] band frequencies

Paris, 9 May 2019

Arcep held a public consultation from 15 to 26 April 2019 of this year to obtain stakeholders' final feedback on its draft document regarding the allocation of 2.6 GHz TDD (2570 – 2620 MHz) band frequencies (1). Having concluded this consultation, today Arcep is publishing the final document and opening a single allocation window.

More powerful and more competitive professional mobile networks

Professional mobile radio (PMR) networks are local networks that satisfy the specific connectivity needs of certain companies and organisations that belong to what are called "vertical" markets – typically operating in infrastructure-centric sectors. These systems are generally designed to remain operational even during major emergencies, and can provide specific features such as the ability to make group calls. They can be deployed either to ensure a locale's security, or as a business tool for companies that want a bespoke communication tool, e.g. for managing passenger, water or energy transport networks or Internet of Things networks.

These networks are currently based on robust but low-speed (2G) technologies. Having access to superfast (4G, and later 5G) systems, thanks to the 2.6 GHz band, would make them significantly more powerful and competitive: it would enable real-time video transmission over PMR, for instance, which in turn would improve security (video surveillance) and open the way for new uses such as the ability to control autonomous shuttles remotely.

Players' expressions of interest in these frequencies will be made public, to enable each and every one to bring their project to fruition

All parties wanting to have access to 2.6 GHz TDD band frequencies can now submit their application to Arcep, and follow the procedure described in the application document.

No end date has yet been set for the window. The mechanism that Arcep designed also allows interested parties to obtain details on available frequencies and the other players that have expressed interest in obtaining spectrum in a given area. The aim is to enable everyone to bring their project to fruition, insofar as possible. After having obtained their spectrum authorisations, licence-holders will be required to deploy their network according to a set rollout timetable, with the first rollout obligation falling 18 months after the licence is issued.

Every expression of interest will be published for a period of two months, during which time all interested parties may also express their interest in that area, and prepare their frequency allocation application. Stakeholders are thus invited to visit the web page dedicated to the 2.6 GHz TDD band on a regular basis, for updates.

[1] 2.6 GHz TDD: technical name given to the 2570-2620 MHz frequency band

A new solution in entrepreneurs' and industry players' toolkit

By releasing this frequency band, Arcep is adding a new solution to the toolkit available to vertical market players wanting to have their own ultrafast network (see inset below) to develop innovative services and achieve a successful digital transformation, in addition to making France a European leader in opening up frequencies for building faster professional mobile networks.

The creation of this window is part of a set of measures that Arcep has taken to help French businesses be more competitive and more innovative:

- Release of the 915 – 921 MHz frequency band for **IoT networks** is currently underway, which will provide a harmonised frequency band for the Internet of Things with Asia and North America, and pave the way for economies of scale for global LPWAN smart object networks, along with the ability to move smart objects more easily from one continent to another.

- Providing enterprises wanting to test a technology or an innovative solution with a **regulatory sandbox,** allowing market players to test their innovation without necessarily having to comply with the entire regulatory framework that normally applies.

- Allocating frequencies for **experimental** purposes**,** for instance to test innovative 5G use cases (pilots).

- As announced by Secretary of State, Agnès Pannier-Runacher, vertical industry players' access to 5G will also be a consideration in upcoming 3.4 – 3.8 GHz band allocations.

Associated documents:

- **Allocation application document**
- **Web page on frequency availability**
- **Stakeholder's contributions to the public consultation**

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