

Press release

FREQUENCIES – FRENCH OVERSEAS MARKETS

Arcep launches five public consultations on the procedure for assigning frequencies in the 1800 MHz and 2.1 GHz bands in Guiana, in Guadeloupe, in Martinique, in Saint Barthélemy, in Saint Martin, in Réunion and in Mayotte, and in the 900 MHz band in Guiana, in Saint Barthélemy, in Saint Martin and in Mayotte

Paris, 5 March 2024

On 5 March 2024 Arcep launched five public consultations on five respective draft decisions on the following procedures for assigning frequencies:

- A draft decision regarding the 900 MHz, 1800 MHz and 2.1 GHz bands in Guiana;
- A draft decision regarding the 1800 MHz and 2.1 GHz bands in Guadeloupe and in Martinique;
- A draft decision regarding the 900 MHz, 1800 MHz and 2.1 GHz bands in Saint Barthélemy and in Saint Martin;
- A draft decision regarding the 1800 MHz and 2.1 GHz bands in Réunion;
- A draft decision regarding the 900 MHz, 1800 MHz and 2.1 GHz bands in Mayotte.

Stakeholders have until 9 April 2024 to submit their contributions.

Some of the frequency licences held by overseas operators in the 900 MHz, 1800 MHz and 2.1 GHz bands will expire on 30 April 2025. The draft decisions being published for consultation pertain to the assignment of these frequencies.

The planned assignment conditions and procedures align with the guidelines set forth by the Government in a letter written by Marie Guévenoux, Minister for Overseas France, and Marina Ferrari, Secretary of State for the Digital Affairs, dated 4 March 2024. These guidelines seek to promote regional digital development and to ensure fair and effective competition in Guiana, in Guadeloupe, in Martinique, in Saint Barthélemy, in Saint Martin, in Réunion and in Mayotte. In particular, these assignment conditions and procedures include a series of provisions designed to improve mobile coverage and connectivity in these territories, which were established in close collaboration with local authorities.

Contributions to public consultations will enable Arcep to finalise these assignment procedures. The Authority will then submit its final text to the Government, with a view to conducting the award procedures in the second half of 2024.

The media kit attached to this press release contains a summary of the main assignment and procedural stipulations.

Associated documents:

- [Public consultation on the draft annex to the Decision proposing the procedures for assigning frequencies in the **900 MHz, 1800 MHz and 2.1 GHz bands in Guiana**](#)
- [Public consultation on the draft annex to the Decision proposing the procedures for assigning frequencies in the **1800 MHz and 2.1 GHz bands in Guadeloupe and in Martinique**](#)
- [Public consultation on the draft annex to the Decision proposing the procedures for assigning frequencies in the **900 MHz, 1800 MHz and 2.1 GHz bands in Saint Barthélemy and in Saint Martin**](#)
- [Public consultation on the draft annex to the Decision proposing the procedures for assigning frequencies in the **1800 MHz and 2.1 GHz bands in Réunion**](#)
- [Public consultation on the draft annex to the Decision proposing the procedures for assigning frequencies in the **900 MHz, 1800 MHz and 2.1 GHz bands in Mayotte**](#)
- [Stakeholders' contributions to the public consultation that ran from 30 March 2023 to 1 June 2023 on the assignment of new frequencies for mobile networks in the 1800 MHz and 2.1 GHz bands in Guadeloupe, in Martinique, in Guiana, in Saint Barthélemy, in Saint Martin, in Réunion and in Mayotte, and in the 900 MHz band in Guiana, in Saint Barthélemy, in Saint Martin and in Mayotte](#)

Arcep at a glance

The Regulatory Authority for Electronic Communications, Postal Affairs and Print Media Distribution (Arcep), a neutral and expert arbitrator with the status of independent administrative authority (IAA), is the architect and guardian of internet, fixed and mobile communications and postal networks in France.

ANNEX – MEDIA KIT

Procedure and conditions for assigning frequencies in the 1800 MHz and 2.1 GHz bands in Guiana, in Guadeloupe, in Martinique, in Saint Barthélemy, in Saint Martin, in Réunion and in Mayotte, and in the 900 MHz band in Guiana, in Saint Barthélemy, in Saint Martin and in Mayotte: publication of the draft decisions for consultation

On 5 March, Arcep launched public consultations on the draft procedures and conditions for awarding licences to use frequencies in the 1800 MHz and 2.1 GHz bands in Guiana, in Guadeloupe, in Martinique, in Saint Barthélemy, in Saint Martin, in Réunion and in Mayotte, and in the 900 MHz band in Guiana, in Saint Barthélemy, in Saint Martin and in Mayotte. Contributions to the public consultations, which must be received by 9 April 2024, will enable Arcep to finalise these award procedures and conditions, and to submit its proposals to the Government in the coming weeks.

1 Assignment of frequencies in the 1800 MHz and 2.1 GHz bands in Guiana, in Guadeloupe, in Martinique, à Saint Barthélemy, in Saint Martin, in Réunion and in Mayotte, and in the 900 MHz band in Guiana, in Saint Barthélemy, in Saint Martin and in Mayotte

1.1 Assignment objectives

In a letter addressed to Arcep dated 5 March 2024, the Government informed the regulator of the goals that must underpin the specifications for the assignment of frequencies in the 900 MHz, 1800 MHz and 2.1 GHz bands in the abovementioned territories:

- **Regional development:** Guarantee of a minimum level of coverage for mobile telecommunications services by operators in each of the territories in questions; increased mobile coverage on-board vehicles on roadways classified 1 and 2¹ in Mayotte and in Saint Martin; and the coverage of priority areas identified by local authorities;
- **Competition:** safeguarding and stimulating competition in these markets.

The award procedure and planned obligations contained in the draft documents being published today for consultation satisfy these objectives set by the Government.

¹ As defined in the BD Carto 2022 reference database produced by the National Institute of Geographic and Forest Information (IGN)

1.2 Planned assignment procedures

1.2.1 In the 900 MHz band in Guiana, in Saint Barthélemy, in Saint Martin and in Mayotte

The draft procedures being published for consultation today for the assignment of 900 MHz band frequencies in the territories of Guiana, Saint-Barthélemy, Saint-Martin and Mayotte are being proposed for the following quantities of spectrum, which will become available and ready to use on 1 May 2025:

- **23.4 MHz pair of frequencies in Guiana;**
- **21 MHz pair of frequencies in Saint Martin;**
- **20 MHz pair of frequencies in Saint Barthélemy;**
- **35 MHz pair of frequencies in Mayotte.**

The purpose of this procedure is to determine the winning candidates, the amount of spectrum each one is awarded, and their specific frequency position. **Every winning candidate will be subject to a set of obligations.**

In each of the territories in question, Arcep is proposing a “frequency portfolio” mechanism for their assignment, which is described in section 1.2.1.a). The proposed selection mechanism is based on **financial bids**.

a) General principle: assignment of frequency portfolios

At the outcome of the principal auction phase set out below in sections 1.2.1 c) and d), every winning candidate will be assigned a portfolio of frequencies which defines the quantity of frequencies within the 900 MHz band that they could be assigned as of 1 May 2025, keeping in mind existing assignments in this band, where applicable.

The quantity of frequencies that will actually be assigned to each winning candidate via this procedure is thus less than or equal to the quantity of 900 MHz band frequencies contained in the obtained portfolio, minus the amount of spectrum that the winning candidate already holds in this band beyond 1 May 2025.

A qualified candidate may be assigned a quantity of frequencies via this procedure that is strictly below the quantity allowed by the portfolio they obtained if there is not enough spectrum in the 900 MHz band to fill all of the portfolios.

b) Determination of the size of the portfolios

The size of the frequency portfolio that a qualified candidate is likely to obtain in the 900 MHz band depends on the number of qualified candidates.

In Saint-Martin and in Saint Barthélemy, where only 2x25 MHz are available to use, in the case where the number of qualified candidates is equal to or more than four, each winning candidate in each of the territories will be assigned one of the four following portfolios (expressed in MHz pairs):

Portfolios	900 MHz band
Portfolio No. 1	10 MHz
Portfolio No. 2	5 MHz
Portfolio No. 3	5 MHz
Portfolio No. 4	5 MHz

Table 1 - Frequency portfolios in Saint Martin and in Saint Barthélemy (four winning candidates)

In the case where the number of qualified candidates is strictly less than four, each winning candidate in will be assigned one of the four following portfolios (expressed in MHz pairs):

Portfolios	900 MHz band
Portfolio No. 1	10 MHz
Portfolio No. 2	10 MHz
Portfolio No. 3	5 MHz

Table 2 - Frequency portfolios in Saint Martin and in Saint Barthélemy (three winning candidates)

Additionally, each portfolio is assigned an order of priority, by ascending number, which corresponds to the winning candidates' order of review at the outcome of the principal auction, in the case where there are not enough available frequencies to fill all of the portfolios obtained in Saint Martin and Sain-Barthélemy.

In Guiana and in Mayotte, where 2x 35 MHz are available to use, in the case where the number of qualified candidates is equal to or more than four, each winning candidate in each of the territories will be assigned one of the four following portfolios (expressed in MHz pairs):

Portfolios	900 MHz band
Portfolio No. 1	10 MHz
Portfolio No. 2	10 MHz
Portfolio No. 3	10 MHz
Portfolio No. 4	5 MHz

Table 3 - Frequency portfolios in Guiana and in Mayotte (four winning candidates)

In the case where the number of qualified candidates is strictly less than four, each winning candidate will be assigned one of the four following portfolios (expressed in MHz pairs):

Portfolios	900 MHz band
Portfolio No. 1	15 MHz
Portfolio No. 2	10 MHz
Portfolio No. 3	10 MHz

Table 4 - Frequency portfolios in Guiana and in Mayotte (three winning candidates)

c) Determination of the winning candidates of each portfolio as part of the principal auction

The principal auction will be a single-round sealed bid auction.

Only those candidates deemed qualified following the qualification stage can participate in this auction.

Arcep will begin by determining all of the possible allotments among the candidates for the frequency portfolios to be assigned as part of the principal auction, whose purpose is to assign the available frequencies and, for each candidate, in accordance with the rules detailed in Part 1.2.1.e).

A value is assigned to each of these allotments, corresponding to the amount that the candidates have bid for the frequency portfolios they obtain from among these allotments.

The allotment that obtains the highest bid will be the one chosen. In case of a tie between several allotments, there will be a draw to decide the winning one.

Each winning candidate will be assigned the portfolio that it holds in the chosen allotment.

d) Determination of the quantities of frequencies to assign to the winning candidates

First, the spectrum resources in the 900 MHz band that are available as of 1 May 2025 are assigned to the principal auction's winning candidates, who will hold less than 2 x 5 MHz in the band on 1 May 2025, up to a

maximum holding of a 2 x 5 MHz, within the limit of available frequencies and provided a sufficient quantity of frequencies is available on 1 May 2025.

If applicable, if additional spectrum in this band remains available on 1 May 2025, the first stage will be repeated in increments of 2 x 5 MHz (2 x 10 MHz then 2 x 15 MHz).

At each stage, the quantities of frequencies to be assigned are examined successively for each winning candidate according to their portfolio's order, established in accordance with the numbering of the portfolios as detailed in Section 1.2.1.b), starting with those to be assigned to the winning candidate for portfolio No. 1.

When examining the case of a given winning candidate, each step seeks to assign the greatest amount of spectrum possible:

- within the limit of the current increment;
- within the limit of the maximum quantity defined by the frequency portfolio the candidate has been assigned;
- taking into account its existing frequency holdings beyond 1 May 2025;
- and subject to the quantity of available frequencies that have not yet been assigned to the other winning candidates as part of the procedure.

e) **Capping the quantities of frequencies that the candidates can obtain**

In the public consultation, Arcep plans on capping the total amount of spectrum that each candidate acquires, in keeping with the Government's goal of stimulating competition, with a planned cap of 2 x 12.5 MHz in the 900 MHz band.

However, if this cap of a 12.5 MHz pair means that the maximum possible cumulated demand from all of the candidates makes it impossible to assign all of the frequencies described in Section 1.2.1.b), the authorised cap will be increased to 15 MHz.

1.2.2 In the 1800 MHz and 2.1 GHz bands in Guiana, in Guadeloupe, in Martinique, in Saint Barthélemy, in Saint Martin, in Réunion and in Mayotte

In the drafts being published today for consultation, the assignment procedures for the 1800 MHz and 2.1 GHz bands in the territories of Guiana, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Saint-Barthélemy, Saint-Martin, Réunion and Mayotte are being proposed for the following quantities of frequencies, which will be available and able to be used starting on 1 May 2025:

- In the **1800 MHz band**, the following quantities will be assigned:
 - o **30 MHz pair in Guiana;**
 - o **35 MHz pair in Guadeloupe;**
 - o **35 MHz pair in Martinique;**
 - o **29.2 MHz pair in Saint Martin;**
 - o **20 MHz pair in Saint Barthélemy;**
 - o **45.2 MHz pair in Réunion;**
 - o **33.6 MHz pair in Mayotte.**
- In the **2.1 GHz band**, the following quantities will be assigned:
 - o **20.8 MHz pair in Guiana;**
 - o **20.8 MHz pair in Guadeloupe;**
 - o **20.8 MHz pair in Martinique;**
 - o **25.4 MHz pair in Saint Martin;**
 - o **25.4 MHz pair in Saint Barthélemy;**

- **25.4 MHz pair in Réunion;**
- **10.8 MHz pair in Mayotte.**

The purpose of this procedure is to determine the winning candidates, the amount of spectrum each one is awarded, and their specific frequency position. **Every winning candidate will be subject to a set of obligations.**

In each of the territories in question, Arcep is proposing a “frequency portfolio” mechanism for their assignment, which is described in section 1.2.1.a). The proposed selection mechanism is based on **financial bids**.

a) General principle: frequency portfolio assignment

At the outcome of the principal auction phase set out below in sections 1.2.1 c) and d), every winning candidate will be associated with a portfolio of frequencies which defines, within the 1800 MHz and 2.1 GHz bands, the quantity of frequencies that they could be assigned as of 1 May 2025, keeping in mind existing assignments in this band, where applicable.

The quantity of frequencies that will actually be assigned to each winning candidate via this procedure is thus less than or equal to the quantity of 1800 MHz and 2.1 GHz band frequencies contained in the obtained portfolio, minus the amount of spectrum that the winning candidate already holds in this band beyond 1 May 2025.

A qualified candidate may be assigned a quantity of frequencies via this procedure this is strictly below the quantity allowed by the portfolio they obtained if there is not enough spectrum in the 1800 MHz and/or 2.1 GHz bands to fill all of the portfolios.

b) Determination of the size of the portfolios

The size of the frequency portfolio that a qualified candidate is likely to obtain in the 1800 MHz and 2.1 GHz bands depends on the number of qualified candidates.

In the case where the number of qualified candidates is equal to or more than four, each winning candidate in each of the territories will be assigned one of the four following portfolios (expressed in MHz pairs):

Portfolios	1800 MHz band	2.1 GHz band
Portfolio No. 1	20 MHz	15 MHz
Portfolio No. 2	20 MHz	15 MHz
Portfolio No. 3	20 MHz	15 MHz
Portfolio No. 4	15 MHz	15 MHz

Table 3 - Frequency portfolios (four winning candidates)

In the case where the number of qualified candidates is strictly less than four, each winning candidate will be assigned one of the four following portfolios (expressed in MHz pairs):

Portfolios	1800 MHz band	2.1 GHz band
Portfolio No. 1	25 MHz	20 MHz
Portfolio No. 2	25 MHz	20 MHz
Portfolio No. 3	25 MHz	20 MHz

Table 4 - Frequency portfolios (three winning candidates)

Additionally, each portfolio is assigned an order of priority, by ascending number, which corresponds to the winning candidates’ order of review at the outcome of the principal auction, in the case where available frequencies are not enough to fill all of the obtained portfolios.

c) Determination of the winning candidates of each portfolio as part of the principal auction

The principal auction will be a single-round sealed bid auction.

Only those candidates deemed qualified following the qualification stage can participate in this auction.

Arcep will begin by determining all of the possible allotments among the candidates for the frequency portfolios to be assigned as part of the principal auction, whose purpose is to assign the available frequencies and, for each candidate, in accordance with the rules detailed in Part 1.2.1.e).

A value is assigned to each of these allotments, corresponding to the amount that the candidates have bid for the frequency portfolios they obtain from among these allotments.

The allotment that obtains the highest bid will be the one chosen. In case of a tie between several allotments, there will be a draw to decide the winning one.

Each winning candidate will be assigned the portfolio that it holds in the chosen allotment.

d) Determination of the quantities of frequencies to assign to the winning candidates

First, the spectrum resources in the 1800 MHz and 2.1 GHz bands that are available as of 1 May 2025 are assigned to the principal auction's winning candidates, who will hold less than 2 x 5 MHz in the band on 1 May 2025, up to a holding of 2 x 5 MHz, within the limit of available frequencies and provided a sufficient quantity of frequencies is available on 1 May 2025.

If applicable, if additional spectrum in this band remains available on 1 May 2025, the first stage will be repeated in increments of 2 x 5 MHz (2 x 10 MHz then 2 x 15 MHz).

At each stage, the quantities of frequencies to be assigned are examined successively for each winning candidate according to their portfolio's order, established in accordance with the numbering of the portfolios as detailed in Section 1.2.1.b), starting with those to be assigned to the winning candidate of portfolio No. 1.

When examining the case of a given winning candidate, each step seeks to assign the greatest amount of spectrum possible:

- within the limit of the current increment;
- within the limit of the maximum quantity defined by the frequency portfolio the candidate has been assigned;
- taking into account its existing frequency holdings beyond 1 May 2025;
- and subject to the quantity of available frequencies that have not yet been assigned as part of the procedure to the other winning candidates.

e) Capping the quantities of frequencies that the candidates can obtain

In the public consultation, Arcep plans on capping the total amount of spectrum that each candidate acquires, in keeping with the Government's goal of stimulating competition:

In the **1800 MHz band**:

- a planned cap of 25 MHz;
- a planned cap of 15 MHz.

In the **2.1 GHz band**:

- a planned cap of 2 x 20 MHz;
- a planned cap of 2 x 15 MHz.

1.3 Obligations planned for the winning candidates for 900 MHz, 1800 GHz and 2.1 GHz band frequencies

The drafts being published today stipulate that all of the candidates that obtain frequencies in the 900 MHz, 1800 MHz and/or 2.1 GHz bands will be subject to coverage obligations:

- An obligation to provide an outdoor mobile telephone service, for devices equipped with a bandpass filter for attenuation of -10 dB;
 - to 95 % of the population of the territories of Guadeloupe, Martinique, Saint-Barthélemy, Saint-Martin, Réunion and Mayotte in 2030 then 99 % of the population of all of these territories in 2035;
 - To 80% of the population of the territory of Guiana in 2030 then to 85% of the population of this territory 2035.
- An obligation to provide superfast mobile access and mobile telephone services accessible on-board vehicles travelling on roadways classified 1 and 2 – as defined in the 2022 edition of the IGN BD CARTO® reference database – in Mayotte and in Saint Martin by 1 May 2028 at the latest;
- An obligation to cover certain pre-identified areas in Guiana, Martinique, Saint-Barthélemy, Réunion and Mayotte, based on needs identified by the territories. Depending on the area, operators will be either fully responsible for providing coverage or, for certain areas subject to specific restrictions, providing coverage will be contingent on the supply of infrastructures and, when applicable, to the granting of administrative authorisations.

1.4 Licence duration and rendez-vous clause

In the **900 MHz band**, frequencies are assigned up to 21 November 2036 in Guiana, in Saint Martin and in Saint Barthélemy, and up to 23 May 2037 in Mayotte, where a potential five-year extension is possible.

In the **1800 MHz and 2.1 GHz bands**, in all of the territories, frequencies are assigned up to 21 November 2036.

In addition, an interim review is set to occur before 2030 to verify operators' implementation of their obligations, and take stock of market requirements, notably in the areas of mobile network coverage and quality of service. Obligations could be revised based on the findings of these reviews, after having reached an agreement with the licence-holder.

2 Public consultation

These draft procedures are being submitted to a public consultation that will run until 9 April 2024. Any stakeholder that so desires can view these procedures on the Arcep website, and submit their contributions to the Authority.