THE NATIONAL SPECTRUM PLAN

(2019 – 2022)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is radio frequency spectrum and what is it used for?

Radio frequency spectrum is a limited resource/asset owned by the Country. It consists of all the electromagnetic frequencies between 3 kilohertz (kHz) to 3,000 gigahertz (GHz).

Radio frequency spectrum is used for all types of wireless communications, including fixed and mobile communications, sound and television broadcasting services, data, voice and video services, aeronautical and maritime services, public safety and emergency services, medical electronics, remote control and monitoring devices, satellite and earth stations.

What is spectrum management?

Spectrum Management is the process of managing the use of the radio frequency spectrum in order to minimize interference between wireless communication systems and ensure radio spectrum is used in a manner that is efficient and benefits the public.

What is the National Spectrum Plan?

The National Spectrum Plan (NSP) is a set of guidelines that inform the sector and the Bahamian public how URCA will address various imperatives for radio frequency spectrum management, such as spectrum allocation, band planning, spectrum pricing, spectrum authorization, and compliance monitoring and enforcement.

What is the purpose of the National Spectrum Plan?

The purpose of the National Spectrum Plan (NSP) is to set out the policy objectives for spectrum management and spectrum utilization, and to align the international objectives and obligations of The Bahamas with the national legislation.

What are the key changes in this NSP?

In the previous NSPs, URCA concentrated on developing a plan to meet the requirements for existing technologies. In this NSP (2019 – 2022):

- URCA focuses on the facilitation of new technological innovations defined under the umbrella of International Mobile Telecommunications 2020 (IMT-2020 and beyond). According to the ITU, IMT-2020 and beyond is a standard that will underpin the next generations of mobile broadband, including, among other things, Internet of Things (IoT), 5G and other "Smart Cities" technologies.

- To further the facilitation of IMT-2020, on 18 April 2018 URCA made a Final Determination URCA's Proposal to Open the Standard Spectrum Bands Currently Specified as 'Closed' in the National Spectrum Plan 2014-2017. URCA is of the view that the opening of spectrum bands will serve as an enabler for The Bahamas to take advantage of opportunities that could lead to economic and social growth by developing the country's communications infrastructure and ecosystem.

- This NSP also sets the framework for URCA's work on FM Broadcasting Technical Standards, ICTs for Disaster Management Regulations, ICTs for Disabled Citizens and the Digital Switchover Policy.

How will the NSP advance the national objective of spectrum management?

The National Spectrum Plan takes a progressive approach to develop the framework and strategies for the effective use and management of spectrum to aid in the continued expansion of the Electronic Communications Sector in The Bahamas. The Plan builds on the strategies employed in previous NSPs and addresses the current realities of spectrum management in a global context, cognizant of our sovereign obligations and our regional co-existence.

How will the NSP advance the international objective of spectrum management?

The NSP gives effect to the recommendations of the International Telecommunications Union Radio Regulations (ITU-RR). The Radiocommunications Sector of International Telecommunications Union (ITU-R) produces update instruments for spectrum management through the meetings of the World Radio-communication Conferences (WRC). The principal output of the WRC is the Radio Regulations (RR). These RR form an integral part of the administrative framework for spectrum management policy and regulations, globally.

Should you have further questions or concerns, please contact URCA's office.