

Consultation Paper No. 14/ 2022

**Consultation Paper on Data Communication Services Between Aircraft
and Ground Stations Provided by Organizations Other Than Airports
Authority of India**

Comments by ISpA

1. At the outset, we thank the TRAI for the opportunity to provide comments on “**Consultation Paper on Data Communication Services Between Aircraft and Ground Stations Provided by Organizations Other Than Airports Authority of India**”.
2. A Unified Licensing framework is needed for such Data Communication Services as a separate authorization under the UL. This is also consistent with approach taken in case of Captive Non-Public Networks (CNPN) licensing.
3. Spectrum assignment to be continued on administrative basis. Internationally too this spectrum is learnt to be allocated administratively. Recover the associated cost of administering the spectrum license.
4. The spectrum should not be used for providing services of any sort to customers onboard the flight or any access services to customers by using VHF spectrum.

Issue for consultation:

Q1. Whether there is a need to bring data communication services between aircraft and ground stations provided by organizations other than Airport Authority of India under service licensing regime? Kindly provide a detailed response with justification.

5. Yes, data communication services between aircraft and ground stations provided by organization other than AAI should be under Unified

License. This is a critical communication being used for commercial services, hence should be licensed with suitable technical, security and operational conditions. The service should be restricted to communication inside cockpit and crew.

Q2. In case your answer to Q1 is in the affirmative, should the providers of data communication services between aircraft and ground stations be licensed through –

- (a) an authorization under Unified License; or**
- (b) a separate service license.**

Kindly provide a detailed response with justification.

6. A separate service authorization under UL.

Q3. What should be the broad terms and conditions of the licensing framework for data communication services between aircraft and ground stations, such as

- (a) licensed service area,**
- (b) validity period of the license**
- (c) scope of the license,**
- (d) technical conditions,**
- (e) operating conditions,**
- (f) security conditions, and**
- (g) financial conditions (such as application processing fee, entry fee, license fee, bank guarantees, etc.)?**

7. National **Licensed service area**, Validity - 20 years.

Scope—to establish, install and/or use radio transmitting and/or receiving stations and/or radio apparatus/Radio equipment onboard Aircraft. Usage of frequencies assigned in the band 117.975 to 137 MHz should be restricted within the cockpit of the Aircraft and restricted to only Flight Crew Members. In no-case spectrum should be used to provide services of any sort to customers onboard the flight.

Technical, operating, security and financial conditions be in line with the international practices.

Q4. What should be the methodology for assignment of the spectrum in frequency range 117.975-137 MHz to the providers of data communication services between aircraft and ground stations? Should the spectrum be assigned administratively, or through auction, or through any other method? Kindly provide a detailed response with justification.

Q5. In case administrative assignment is to be followed, what should be the mechanism for charging the VHF spectrum in the frequency range 117.975-137 MHz to be assigned to the providers of data communication services between aircraft and ground? Whether the auction determined prices for other frequency bands can be accounted for estimating the value of VHF spectrum in the frequency range 117.975-137 MHz? Kindly provide a detailed response with justification.

8. Administrative assignment.

9. NFAP has allocated band 117.975-137 MHz for Aeronautical Mobile (R) service on shared basis. Since multiple flights cross paths over sky (of specific countries) as well as same flights travel to different foreign countries it is critical to have harmony in frequency bands with international countries to facilitate flight operators with same frequency bands in different countries over different make and models of airplanes. For example, frequency 121.5 MHz is meant only for Aeronautical emergency situation across the globe for all Aircrafts. Hence, spectrum in 117.975-137 MHz to the providers of data communication services between aircraft and ground stations should continue to be on administrative basis. The administrative cost recovery should be ensured - in a fair, objective and transparent manner.
