Digital Radio Mondiale South Africa

ORAL REPRESENTATION ON THE PROPOSED NEXT GENERATION RADIO FREQUENCY SPECTRUM FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

23 JANUARY 2023

INTRODUCTION

- The DRM consortium supports the development of a National Radio Frequency Spectrum Policy with the aim of using spectrum as a finite natural resource to promote the long-term benefit of socio-economic development.

- The DRM Consortium hereby makes this oral representation in support of this very important policy.

- We would like to thank the Department of Communications and Digital Technologies for affording us the opportunity to contribute to this process and we look forward to further contributions and inputs, if needed, in finalising this policy.

Who are we?

- **Founded in 1998**
  by international organisations to promote
  the adoption of the DRM standard worldwide

- **Not-for-profit organisation**

- **Around 100 international members**
  Broadcasters, manufacturers, network operators,
  regulators, research institutes, etc…

- **Experts and technologists**
  Ready to give expert and objective advice on the technology

- **Open to all**
  Companies, organisations, associations and individuals can
   join at any time. **DRM SA Group relaunched in 2021.**

SA GROUP OBJECTIVES

Advocate the use of DRM as the preferred standard for digital sound broadcasting in South Africa

Create **Awareness** of DRM with the general public, stakeholders, suppliers, manufacturers, retailers and all government entities

Influence industry and stakeholders on the use of DRM

Be the credible **Authority** on the DRM standard in South Africa (the knowledge hub for everything DRM related)

For joining the DRM group, write to:
info@drmsa.org

DRM - THE DIGITAL RADIO STANDARD FOR ALL

- We note that South Africa is ahead of many countries in the world to have adopted both DRM and DAB+ transmission standards in its Digital Sound Broadcasting (DSB) regulations.

- We commend South Africa for taking this leading role in the global DSB stage.

- DRM is the universal, openly standardised digital broadcasting system for all broadcasting frequencies, including the AM bands (LW, MW, SW), as well as VHF Bands I, II – (FM band) and III (including the 214 - 240 MHz).

- DRM also supports and provides a fully integrated disaster and early warning service called Emergency Warning Functionality (EWF).

- DRM can also be used for distance learning.

DRM - THE DIGITAL RADIO STANDARD FOR ALL

- DRM broadcast equipment is more cost effective than FM, with DRM costing 16% of the capex costs compared to FM for one program.

- DRM is more energy efficient than analogue sound broadcasting. The DRM Energy Efficiency Calculator is a user-friendly tool that allows you to calculate how much energy can be saved by switching transmitters from analogue to digital DRM - https://www.drm.org/energy-efficiency-calculator/

- When implementing DRM, there is no need for national multiplexes, which means broadcasters can easily self provide & operate their digital radio station within their current licensed coverage areas. This leads the effective use of spectrum and can be implemented within the current regulatory framework for sound broadcasting i.e; The digital coverage can be equivalent to analogue coverage – licensee don't need to change their coverage conditions as is the case with DAB+.

DRM – SUPPORTS THE OBJECTIVES OF THE SPECTRUM POLICY

- DRM as a technology is a solution to the problem statements in S3 of the draft policy.

1) *S3(a) Shortage and limitations on availability of spectrum such that in certain spectrum bands, demand for spectrum exceeds supply.*

   - DRM can be implemented immediately in the FM band (in between existing FM services) to deal with the current demand for more radio services in the high congested metropoles.

2) *S3(b) Deployment of capital-intensive electronic communications network with a resultant to increase cost to communicate.*

   - DRM is more cost effective than analogue broadcast systems with a Capex cost of 16% compared to an FM system for one program.

   - There is also no need to deploy a national multiplex for DSB with DRM. DRM is implemented as a single transmitter carrying 3 programs. This also preserves the broadcaster's current licensed coverage area. So, there is no need to amend the coverage of the licensee when they convert to digital, and the licensee can save on their transmission costs by not having to be carried on a national (or regional) multiplex.

DRM – SUPPORTS THE OBJECTIVES OF THE SPECTRUM POLICY

3. *S3(c) Connectivity divide, with a resultant to perpetuate exclusion of rural, remote and underserved communities.*

- We understand that this problem statement refers to broadband connectivity, however, DRM can be utilised by National Government to provide communication to underserved areas by using DRM transmitters where it is not economically viable to rollout telecoms infrastructure.

- In disaster events, a DRM signal can easily be transmitted into the disaster area. In a disaster area the telecom towers are normally without power and may only operate for a limited time on batteries. Emergency warning information can be transmitted from a DRM transmitter into these areas as sound and text, received by citizens on a standard DRM receiver.

- DRM can also be used to provide distance learning where no internet connectivity exists, the learning material and live lessons can be transmitted using a radio signal.

DRM – SUPPORTS THE OBJECTIVES OF THE SPECTRUM POLICY

3. *S3(d) Exclusion of Small, Medium, and Micro-enterprises (SMMEs) and new entrants in sector.*

    - The introduction of more sound broadcasting services into the market, creates more opportunities for more programs to be produced, more creative talent will be needed, technical production crews, IT staff, opportunity for more advertising to be created and sold, etc.

- The DRM consortium acknowledges that the policy's main focus is on spectrum for broadband services to enable socio-economic development. However, selecting DRM as the transmission standard for digital sound broadcasting enables the achievement of the objectives of this policy, therefore it is important for the DRM consortium to mention this in a written & oral submission.

- We thank for the Department of Communications and Digital Technologies for the opportunity to participate in this policy process.

More Information on DRM

www.drm.org

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newsletter.drm.radio

Dedicated India page
india.drm.radio

For any inquiries or comments, please write to:
projectoffice@drm.org

Thank You!