

Questionnaire on Long-term vision for the upper 6 GHz band

In Bulgaria, the 6425-7125 MHz band is currently allocated for electronic communications networks of the fixed radio service, with a significant number of radio relay links deployed. Additionally, this band is allocated for the fixed-satellite radio service, with assigned spectrum supporting a geostationary satellite system.

The future demand for MFCN and WAS/RLAN in the upper 6 GHz band remains a topic of debate among stakeholders. One mobile operator advocates for fully releasing the spectrum for IMT (5G/6G) in the long term, considering that this band is crucial for establishing wide-area, nationwide broadband cellular connectivity. Upper 6GHz is the only mid-band left which can provide 700MHz contiguous spectrum that could support the growth of 5G services by offering a balance of coverage and capacity.

Conversely, another mobile operator has indicated that, at this stage, there is no identified demand for MFCN and WAS/RLAN services in this band. As their strategic planning does not extend beyond 2030, no detailed analysis has been conducted for that period. Bearing in mind the relative high-bandwidth available (700MHz) the band can potentially provide a high-capacity layer for future MFCN services such as FWA. At this time, it is not possible to provide information related to any potential deployment scenarios, neither as number of base stations, nor as timeframe.

While the introduction of 5G and future 6G networks in this band could drive significant socio-economic benefits, such as enhanced digital connectivity and economic growth, it is crucial to balance these with the needs of incumbent services. The socio-economic benefits of the existing services, particularly in broadcasting and satellite communications, should not be overlooked.

The upper 6 GHz band is a valuable resource with the potential to significantly contribute to Europe's digital connectivity goals. However, its future use must be carefully managed to balance the demand for MFCN and WAS/RLAN with the needs of incumbent services. Furthermore, ongoing coordination and dialogue between stakeholders will be crucial to developing solutions that allow new technologies to coexist with existing services. A balanced and sustainable approach will ensure that this spectrum continues to support both existing and future applications effectively.