

Public consultation on mobile TV

The Government today (January 26) issued a consultation paper on the introduction and regulation of mobile television in Hong Kong.

The consultation aims to seek the views of the community in the following four areas:

(a) Spectrum availability - whether the frequency spectrum available in Band III (174MHz - 230MHz) and L Band (1466MHz - 1480MHz), as well as the two single frequency network multiplexes in the UHF Band (470MHz - 806MHz) originally reserved under the current policy framework of digital terrestrial television (DTT), should be made available for mobile TV services or other digital broadcasting services;

(b) Spectrum allocation - whether a service-neutral approach should be adopted by allowing spectrum users to decide on their own which digital broadcasting services should be launched, a conventional approach by allocating frequencies to specific uses of DTT, digital audio broadcasting and mobile TV respectively, or a pro-mobile TV approach by allocating frequencies primarily for mobile TV purpose but also allowing other services to run as ancillary services;

(c) Spectrum assignment - whether a market-led approach should be adopted where the available frequencies should be assigned by auction with appropriate rollout obligations, and whether a spectrum utilisation fee should be charged for such uses; and

(d) Licensing arrangements - whether mobile TV programme services should be licensed and regulated under the Broadcasting Ordinance (Chapter 562 of the Laws of Hong Kong).

A spokesman for the Commerce, Industry and Technology Bureau said that mobile TV generally referred to the wireless transmission of video for reception on the move by mobile or portable devices. These services have already been commercially launched in some overseas jurisdictions such as the UK and South Korea, and trial services are planned or have been launched in many parts of the world.

"We need to facilitate the launch of mobile TV services in Hong Kong so as to promote investment, innovation and competition for the benefits of the consumers and the further development of Hong Kong's communications market, and we are now seeking views from the public and industry on the introduction and regulation of mobile TV services," the spokesman said.

Subject to the outcome of this consultation, the Government will work out a draft implementation framework for introducing mobile TV for a second round of consultation.

The consultation lasts for three months. The consultation document is available for download from the website of Commerce, Industry and Technology Bureau (CITB): www.citb.gov.hk/ctb. All views and comments should be sent to the Communications and Technology Branch of CITB by post to 2/F, Murray Building, Garden Road, Hong Kong; by fax to 2511 1458 or by email to wwchong@citb.gov.hk by April 25, 2007.

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