

## **National Grid Wireless Response to:**

### **'Consultation Paper on Data Limits and Data Services on Radio Multiplexes'**

24 April 2006

#### **Introduction**

National Grid Wireless welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the DCMS Consultation on Radio Multiplexes of 24 April 2006.

With more than eighty years of broadcast engineering experience, and over twenty years of wireless telecommunications infrastructure experience, National Grid Wireless is an acknowledged leader in the design, deployment, ownership and operation of advanced communications and broadcast networks.

The company built and operates the BBC National DAB network of nearly 100 transmitters, and provides multiplexing services and transmission for a number of local and regional multiplexes. Furthermore, National Grid Wireless also operates and owns two digital television multiplexes within the DTT platform.

National Grid Wireless has also been at the forefront of mobile data technology development. In 2001 in conjunction with O2 it operated the first UK interactive trial using DAB on the Isle of Man. More recently its mobile data team has been instrumental in the design and deployment of a commercial DVB-H network in the US.

We note that the changes proposed are particularly relevant to enabling the successful launch of BT Movio's commercial service following the technical developments and trials to date and we welcome the greater flexibility that this move affords to the development of converged service platforms in the UK market particularly in light of National Grid Wireless's position as a DTT multiplex operator.

#### **Question1**

**Do respondents agree that DCMS should introduce an order which would allow TV services to be carried on a radio multiplex without the need for the radio multiplex to be reclassified as a TV multiplex?**

National Grid Wireless agrees that the proposed order should be introduced.

We also consider that it is appropriate to regulate each individual television service on a radio multiplex as a TLCS, since this will match the expectations of the consumer.

We consider that it would not be beneficial to reclassify the radio multiplex as a TV multiplex, and that for the time being it is most practical to continue to regulate TV and radio multiplexes under separate frameworks. This will help to maintain the choice of services for the citizen-consumer established by the existing licensing arrangements

However, our view is that transmission networks will develop to provide carriage services for a range of mobile services including television, radio and broadband. This will reflect the increasing capability of the technology, typically IP based, to carry diverse services, and the demands from industry for the appropriate flexibility to make most effective use of the infrastructure in which it has invested. This may lead to a more uniform regulatory requirement in the future.

## **Question 2**

### **Do respondents agree that the data limits on radio multiplexes should be increased to 30%?**

National Grid Wireless views the implementation of mobile television services on radio multiplexes as a logical step in the ongoing convergence of media technologies referred to in our response to Question 1 and considers that both the broadcast industry and consumers will benefit from the enhanced flexibility created by increasing the data limit to 30%. Furthermore, we would encourage this matter to be settled as early as practicable, to enable applicants for the proposed second National Commercial DAB licence to develop their business plans with confidence.