EASTERN CARIBBEAN TELECOMMUNICATIONS AUTHORITY (ECTEL)

Review of Annual Spectrum Fees in ECTEL Member States

Consultation Response Form

This response form accompanies the ECTEL public consultation *Review of Annual Spectrum Fees in ECTEL Member States*. Please read the consultation document before completing this form. The questions below are reproduced from Appendix C of that document.

Closing date for responses	16th October 2026
Return completed forms on	16th October 2026

How to use this form

- Complete Section A (about you) and Section B (publication and confidentiality).
- In Section C, answer the questions relevant to you. You do not need to answer every question.
- For each closed question, indicate your view by typing an X in the relevant box, for example [X]. Then set out your reasons and any supporting evidence in the response area. The reasons matter more than the box, so please explain your view.
- Please keep your answers under the question numbers used here (Q1 to Q15). If you prefer to attach a separate document, please still answer by reference to these numbers so that responses can be compared.
- Return the completed form by the closing date shown above to the consultation email address (or by post).

Section A: About you

Please tell us who is responding. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, give the organisation's name.

Name of respondent or organisation	Digicel (SVG) Limited Wireless Ventures (St. Kitts-Nevis) Limited Caribbean Cable Communications (Nevis) Limited Digicel Grenada Limited Digicel Grenada Cable Company Limited Digicel (Dominica) Limited SAT Telecommunications Limited
Type of respondent (mark all that apply)	[X] Mobile network operator [ ] Fixed wireless or microwave link user [ ] Broadcaster [ ] Satellite or NTN service provider [ ] Other spectrum user [ ] Consumer representative [ ] Government department or NTRC [ ] Member of the public [ ] Other (please specify)
Contact name	Joel Wallace
Position or role	Chief Executive Officer – SWI Region
Email address	Joel.wallace@digicelgroup.com
Telephone (optional)	
Postal address (optional)	
Member State(s) most relevant to your response (mark all that apply)	[] Dominica [ ] Grenada [ ] St Kitts and Nevis [ ] Saint Lucia [ ] St Vincent and the Grenadines [ ] All five Member States [x] Not specific to one state
Date of submission	

Section B: Publication and confidentiality

ECTEL intends to publish responses to this consultation. If your response contains material you consider confidential, please provide a non-confidential version suitable for publication and explain why the material is confidential. ECTEL may not be able to accept blanket claims of confidentiality over an entire response and cannot promise confidentiality beyond what its disclosure obligations allow.

Publication preference (mark one):

[x] I am content for this response to be published in full.

[ ] This response may be published except for the confidential material identified below. A non-confidential version is provided.

[ ] This response is submitted in confidence. A non-confidential version suitable for publication is provided below or attached.

If you have indicated confidential material, please identify it here and explain why it is confidential:

Section C: Your responses to the consultation questions

Please respond to the questions relevant to you. For each closed question, type an X in the box that best reflects your view, then set out your reasons and any supporting evidence in the response area. You do not need to answer every question.

IMT spectrum fees (Section 5 of the consultation)

Question 1
Do you agree that annual IMT spectrum fees should be differentiated by band group, at XCD0.14/MHz/Pop for sub-1 GHz spectrum, XCD0.10/MHz/Pop for lower mid-band spectrum, and XCD0.03/MHz/Pop for upper mid-band spectrum? Please give reasons and any supporting evidence.
Your view: [ ] Agree [ ] Disagree [X] Partially agree [ ] No view
Your response (please give reasons and any supporting evidence):
1. Summary of position. Digicel supports the principle of differentiating International Mobile Telecommunications (IMT) Spectrum fees by band group and the introduction of a low, pro-investment tier for upper mid-band spectrum. However, Digicel does not support the proposed rates for sub-1 GHz and lower mid-band spectrum, which cannot be reconciled with ECTEL's own affordability objective. Digicel proposes: sub-1 GHz at no more than XCD0.12/MHz/Pop; lower mid-band at XCD0.08/MHz/Pop; and upper mid-band at XCD0.02/MHz/Pop, introduced in phases (paragraphs 9 and 10). **2. Principle of differentiation.** Digicel agrees that propagation and scarcity justify different rates by band group, and that the current single rate is a blunt instrument (Section 5.2). The direction of the hierarchy (sub-1 GHz above lower mid-band above upper mid-band) is

consistent with the regional schedules cited in Section 5.6.2 (e.g. Bahamas, Table 4; Bermuda; Belize; Suriname).

3. Inconsistency with ECTEL's stated objectives. ECTEL states that fees should "primarily recover administrative costs, reflecting opportunity cost only where demand exceeds supply" (Section 3.4, objective 3) and that it "has no mandate to raise significant revenue through annual administrative fees" (Section 4.1). It is difficult for operators to validate the stated objectives when ECTEL has not published its accounts and revenue on the basis that it is deemed to be confidential. Additionally, the consultation prices IMT spectrum on the basis of auction-derived market value, without showing that demand exceeds supply for the spectrum already assigned to incumbent operators, and without disclosing the cost gap said to justify the change (Sections 3.2 and 10 state that ECTEL's costs and revenues are confidential).

ITU guidance is consistent with this approach, ITU-R Report SM.2012-7 distinguishes administrative fees, which are limited to the cost of the service, from spectrum fees (s. 2.2.2(b)-(c), p. 8). A charge presented as administrative should therefore be justified on cost. Where a fee is meant to reflect the value of spectrum, the report defines opportunity cost by reference to the best alternative use (s. 2.3.4, p. 14; s. 2.3.4.4, p. 16). Its steps for setting spectrum fees include a demand assessment, to test for excess demand, and a cost assessment (s. 4.3.2-4.3.3, p. 40). It also notes that some administrations audit the cost base so that fees remain justifiable (s. 2.3.4.1, pp. 15-16).1

Digicel requests that ECTEL publish, at least in summary form, the cost base and revenue shortfall on which the increase relies; and set out the demand assessment conducted to demonstrate where demand outstrips supply.

4. Sub-1 GHz (proposed XCD0.14): the increase is 43%, above inflation. Applying the Appendix A.1 conversion (XCD142,972 per paired MHz across the five states, against XCD100,000 today), the proposal raises the fee for sub-1 GHz spectrum by about 43%. That exceeds the 37.8% cumulative inflation that ECTEL itself relies on (Section 5.3), so the statement that the increase is "below inflation" is true only in aggregate and not for the bands that carry the greatest increase. ECTEL also treats the inflation-adjusted 2006 fee of 0.14 as support for its point estimate (Section 5.6.4), yet rejects the same logic for lower mid-band on the basis that "a straight inflation adjustment may risk over-pricing" (Section 5.6.5). The approach should be applied consistently. Inflation since 2006 measures the change in prices, not the change in the value of spectrum, which the consultation itself says has trended downwards internationally.

5. Sub-1 GHz: the benchmark evidence supports 0.12 or less, not 0.14. (a) ECTEL's own evidence sets the floor of its range at the all-sample PPP median of 0.12, and states the FX median as 0.11 (Table 7); the CARICOM median is 0.12 (Section 5.6.2). A point estimate of 0.14 sits above every central measure of the evidence. (b) ECTEL places less weight on awards in the last five years for sub-1 GHz on the basis that recent price falls reflect increased supply "not relevant" to ECTEL states (Section 4.2). That is an assertion, not evidence, and the effect is to

[1] International Telecommunication Union, Radiocommunication Sector (ITU-R), *Report ITU-R SM.2012-7: Economic approaches to spectrum management* (SM Series: Spectrum management; Question ITU-R 240/1), Geneva, June 2025. Available at https://www.itu.int/pub/R-REP-SM.2012

bias the estimate upwards. (c) The CARICOM median in Table 6 is driven by very small territories with fee formulas that do not scale with population (Anguilla 1.347, Bermuda 0.559, Turks and Caicos 0.170), and it omits Jamaica, the closest regional comparator, whose Table 5 fees per MHz/Pop are 0.065 (700 MHz), 0.035 (850 MHz) and 0.032 (900 MHz). On our arithmetic, adding Jamaica to Table 6 reduces the sub-1 GHz median to approximately 0.08 to 0.09. Barbados (0.012), Suriname (0.023) and Belize (0.032) are also well below the proposal.

6. Lower mid-band (proposed XCD0.10, described as "neutral"): should be lower. (a) At 2024 populations, 0.10 equates to XCD102,123 per paired MHz against XCD100,000 today, which supports the proposition for a reduction. (b) ECTEL's preferred range is 0.05 to 0.14 (Section 5.6.5); its own SIDS median is 0.05 and the full-dataset FX median is about 0.08 (Table 9). The proposal is set at the PPP median and above the SIDS evidence, which is the sample ECTEL describes as most similar to Member States (Section 4.2), and ECTEL puts "less weight" on the SIDS benchmark only because it falls at the lower end of the range, which is circular reasoning. (c) On the same basis as paragraph 5(c), adding Jamaica (0.027 to 0.046) to Table 6 reduces the lower mid-band median from 0.12 to approximately 0.08. (d) The Bahamas schedule (Table 4) prices 960 MHz to 2.2 GHz at half of the sub-1 GHz rate; applying that relativity to a sub-1 GHz rate of 0.12 gives approximately 0.06. On the evidence as a whole, 0.08 is a reasonable and defensible rate.

7. Quality of the benchmark methodology. The benchmarks are one-off, competitive award prices converted into annual equivalents through an NPV and annuity calculation at a 12% WACC (Section 5.6.3), and then applied as recurring administrative fees on incumbent spectrum holders who have already committed to network investment and coverage. Auction prices include the value of expected scarcity and competition, and are not like-for-like with an annual administrative fee. In addition: (i) the SIDS sample includes French overseas departments and territories (La Reunion, Mayotte, Martinique, Guadeloupe, French Guiana) whose income levels, regulatory framework and cost of capital differ substantially from ECTEL states; (ii) footnotes 16 to 19 show that awards at trivial or zero cost were excluded from that sample, which biases the sample upwards and is not reflected in the analysis; and (iii) the annualization formula, its inputs and the underlying data are not published. Digicel requests that ECTEL publish the benchmark dataset and workings so that respondents can test them, and that the comment-on-comments period (26 October to 6 November 2026) be extended, if this is not done in good time.

8. Affordability and cumulative impact. The proposal raises total IMT fees by 25 to 29% and raises IMT fees from 3.0% to almost 4.0% of industry revenues, a rise of about one third in the share of revenue (Section 5.7). The 7 to 8% "international norm" is drawn from European sources (footnote 23), which include upfront auction costs and relate to markets with far higher revenue density than small, dispersed island markets that carry high per-subscriber network costs. It is not a suitable basis for concluding that ECTEL Member States can bear higher fees. The illustration that fees could reach 7% of revenues on future assignments (Section 5.7) also signals that the structure will increase materially again. Higher spectrum costs reduce the capacity of operators to invest in network quality and coverage, which is the outcome ECTEL states it wants to avoid for upper mid-band.

9. Upper mid-band (proposed XCD0.03): agree with the tier, but 0.02 with phase-in. Digicel supports a low rate for spectrum not yet assigned. ECTEL's preferred estimate is 0.02 to 0.03, with a SIDS median of 0.02 (Section 5.6.6). Given the risk ECTEL identifies of leaving

spectrum unassigned, 0.02 is the more appropriate rate. Digicel further proposes that (i) no fee be payable until spectrum is available for commercial use; and (ii) the fee for new upper mid-band assignments be phased in over the first three years of the assignment, to reflect roll-out and 5G ecosystem development.

10. Phased transition. Whatever rates are ultimately adopted, Digicel proposes that increases be introduced in equal steps over at least three years from the date of adoption, with no retrospective application and with due regard to the terms of existing licences and assignments.

11. Clarity of the fee basis and band definitions. (a) The rate is expressed per MHz per head of population. Table 3 and Appendix A.1 show that ECTEL applies it to total assigned bandwidth, i.e. counting a paired (duplex) block such as 2x10 MHz as 20 MHz (for example, 0.14 x 510,615 x 2 = XCD142,972 per paired MHz). This should be stated expressly in the fee schedule, and ECTEL should confirm that the award benchmarks were normalized on the same basis, since applying a fee derived from a per-paired-MHz benchmark to total MHz would double the fee. (b) Table 2 is inconsistent with Appendix A.1: it shows XCD150,000, XCD105,000 and XCD30,000 per MHz, whereas the Appendix shows XCD142,972, XCD102,123 and XCD30,637 per paired MHz (and a rounding to the nearest XCD5,000 would give XCD145,000 and XCD100,000). The column headings also differ ("per paired MHz" for current fees and "per MHz" for proposed fees). ECTEL should correct the table and confirm that the XCD/MHz/Pop rate is the operative parameter. (c) Band boundaries in Appendix A.1 need precise frequency ranges. The 2100 MHz and AWS bands straddle 2.1 GHz, and bands between 900 MHz and 1 GHz and near 1.4 GHz are not addressed. Digicel proposes that any assignment straddling a boundary be charged at the lower rate, and that unlisted bands be dealt with expressly.

12. How the fee responds when population changes. Appendix A (Table 65) makes the XCD/MHz/Pop rate the operative parameter for IMT fees and describes the amounts per paired MHz as illustrative conversions at 2024 populations. The consultation does not say which nation's population figures will be used, from what source, whether they will be updated, or what happens to the fee when they change. Utilizing the formula XCD/MHz/Pop, the fee is directly proportional to population of the respective ECTEL member state, every change in the population figure changes the fee in the same proportion, even where the licensee's spectrum holdings, ECTEL's costs and the value of the spectrum to the licensee have not changed. This has the following consequences: **(a) Fees would rise without a review.** If the population figure is updated annually or after each census, a licensee's fee would rise each time the figure rises, without any fee review, public consultation or decision of the Council of Ministers. That would be inconsistent with ECTEL's statement that it has no mandate to raise significant revenue through annual administrative fees (Section 4.1). The paper is silent on how often reviews will be undertaken by ECTEL) and with the predictability that operators need for investment planning (Section 3.3);

The ITU-R Report SM.2012-7 supports the viewpoint expressed in this sub-section, noting that fees and rules should be simple and relatively stable over time (s2.2.1 (f)-(g), pp.7-8)

(b) Small populations magnify revisions. Member State populations range from 46,843 to 179,744 (Table 3), so a revision of a few thousand people changes a state's figure by several per cent. For example, a revision of 5,000 in St Kitts and Nevis would change the fee there under the

population basis by about 11%, or about XCD700 per MHz per year at the proposed sub-1 GHz rate (0.14 x 5,000). Population estimates between censuses in small states are often revised, and a new census can move the figure materially in one step.

(c) Population can fall suddenly. Major hurricanes and migration can reduce a Member State's population sharply. ECTEL's premise is that the value of a licence scales with the population covered (Section 5.2). If that is correct, a fall in population reduces the value of the licence, and the fee should fall with it. The schedule should provide for this possibility, rather than leaving licensees paying on outdated, higher figures.

(d) Under equal fifths, one state's population would move every state's fee. Under equal fifths each state's fee is one fifth of the five-state total, which is calculated on the combined population (Section 5.3). If the population figures are updated, growth in one state's population would raise the fee in every other state. For example, an increase of 5,000 in Saint Lucia's population would raise the sub-1 GHz fee in each Member State by about XCD140 per MHz (0.14 x 5,000 / 5), although nothing has changed in the other four states. That is a further reason to fix the amounts as proposed below (see also Question 2, paragraph 5). Equally, smaller states would be unfairly burdened with higher fees, regardless of population size and GDP.

(e) Proposal. Digicel asks that ECTEL (i) state in the legal schedule fixed XCD amounts per MHz for each band group and Member State, calculated once from a named official population source and year (2024, as used in the consultation), rather than a rate that moves with population; (ii) re-base population only at a periodic full fee review following public consultation, and not more often than every five years; (iii) cap any increase arising from re-basing at cumulative CPI since the last review, and phase it in; and (iv) allow licensees to apply for an interim downward re-basing where official figures show a material fall (for example [5%] or more) in a Member State's population.

13. Conclusion. Digicel therefore agrees with band differentiation in principle but requests that ECTEL (i) adopt rates of no more than 0.12 (sub-1 GHz), 0.08 (lower mid-band) and 0.02 (upper mid-band) per MHz/Pop; (ii) publish its cost base and benchmark workings; (iii) phase in any increase; (iv) correct and clarify the matters in paragraph 11 before finalising the schedule; and (v) fix the population basis of the fee as proposed in paragraph 12.

Question 2

The five-state fee total can be allocated across Member States either in proportion to each state's population or in equal fifths, preserving a uniform fee per MHz in every state as now. Which basis do you favour, and why?

Your view: [ ] Population basis [X] Equal fifths [ ] No preference [ ] Other

Reasons for your preference (and any supporting evidence):

1. Preference. Digicel favours equal fifths, which preserves the existing uniform nominal fee per MHz in every Member State.

2. The allocation choice changes who pays, not the rate. The proposed rates produce a five-state amount per MHz that is the same under both options (Section 5.3). ECTEL estimates that total IMT fees rise by 25% to 29% "depending on the allocation basis" (Section 5.7). That difference arises only because licensees hold different amounts of spectrum in different states, so the question is which Member State, and therefore which licensee, bears which share. Nothing in the consultation suggests that ECTEL's costs, or the spectrum concerned, differ between the two options.

3. Population basis would produce a large and unexplained redistribution. On the 2024 populations in Table 3, a population basis would raise Saint Lucia's share of the total from 20% to about 35% (an increase of roughly 76% in that state for identical spectrum) and cut St Kitts and Nevis from 20% to about 9%. That is a material shift in the burden between markets which ECTEL has not justified by reference to cost or to any change in the spectrum concerned.

4. Consistency with ECTEL's own objectives. Objective 4 (Section 3.4) is harmonization, including "common structures and methods across Member States". A uniform nominal fee per MHz is the simplest expression of that objective and supports cross-border network planning and consistent investment signals (Section 3.3). The XCD/MHz/Pop unit is a benchmarking convention used to estimate the value of spectrum. It does not follow that the resulting total must then be re-divided by headcount. ECTEL's costs of licensing, monitoring, coordination and enforcement are incurred in every Member State and do not vary in proportion to population.

5. Predictability, stability and administration. Equal fifths is consistent with the current schedule, existing assignment instruments and licensees' business plans. A population basis would also make each state's fee depend on that state's own population figure. Because the Member States are small (Table 3), a census revision or a sudden fall in population after a hurricane or through migration would move one state's fee sharply. Under equal fifths those movements are spread across the five states. Neither option is stable, however, if the population figures behind it are updated over time, since the fee is proportional to population under both (see Question 1, paragraph 12). Whichever basis is adopted, Digicel asks that (i) the population source and year be fixed in the schedule and the fees stated as fixed XCD amounts per MHz; (ii) fees not be re-based annually, but only at a three (3) year intervals following consultation with the operators; and (iii) any change be phased in (see Question 1, paragraph 10).

Question 3

Do you agree that Fixed Wireless Access assignments in IMT-suitable bands should be charged under the IMT fee schedule rather than the fixed-links schedule?

Your view: [X] Agree [ ] Disagree [ ] Partially agree [ ] No view

Your response (please give reasons and any supporting evidence):

1. Agree, subject to the conditions below. Digicel supports charging Fixed Wireless Access (FWA) in IMT-suitable bands under the IMT schedule. This is consistent with technology neutrality (Section 3.4, objective 2) and with ECTEL's finding in Section 5.4 that FWA uses the same high-value, exclusive, high-power spectrum as mobile services.

2. The present anomaly is large. Table 14 shows FWA currently charged XCD500 to XCD1,500 per frequency block, irrespective of band or population covered. By comparison, a 10 MHz upper mid-band assignment at the proposed 0.03 rate would cost about XCD54,000 a year on Saint Lucia's population alone (0.03 x 10 x 179,744). The difference means competing broadband services using comparable spectrum currently pay a small fraction of what mobile operators pay. That is distortionary and cannot be justified by any difference in the value of the spectrum.

3. Conditions. (a) The scope must be defined by reference to frequency ranges (the band groups in Appendix A.1, once precisely defined) and by function. Any point-to-multipoint or similar authorisation in an IMT-suitable band used to serve end-user premises or provide broadband access, however described (FWA, WAN, LAN, PBX, wireless ISP, LMDS/MMDS), should fall under the IMT schedule, while genuine point-to-point backhaul links remain under the fixed-links schedule. (b) The same rates, the same population basis and the same treatment of geographic scope should apply to all licensees, with no exemption or discount by licensee category. (c) The change should apply from the same effective date to existing FWA assignments, with no grandfathering of current holders. (d) This support assumes the IMT rates are set at the levels Digicel proposes in response to Question 1.

Question 4
Do you agree that the existing minimum annual IMT spectrum fee of XCD300,000 per licensee should be removed, so that each licensee's annual fee is determined solely by its assigned spectrum holdings? Please provide reasons and any supporting evidence.
Your view: [ ] Retain [ ] Modify [X] Remove [ ] No view
Your response (please give reasons and any supporting evidence):
1. Remove, subject to safeguards. Digicel agrees that a fee calculated solely from assigned spectrum holdings and the applicable band rate is more transparent and proportionate than a flat minimum (Section 5.5). **2. No recovery through higher rates.** Removing the minimum reduces revenue from licensees with small holdings. ECTEL states that it has not set fees to maximize revenue (Section 10). Digicel asks ECTEL to confirm that the loss of minimum-fee revenue has not been, and will not be, offset by raising the per-MHz rates on other licensees. The rates should be justified on their own benchmark evidence, which for the reasons in Question 1 does not support the proposed sub-1 GHz and lower mid-band levels. **3. Competitive neutrality.** Every licensee, whether incumbent or new entrant, should pay the same rate per MHz per head of population for the same spectrum. Any entry incentive, deferral or discount should be transparent, time-limited and available on equal terms. Incumbents carry licence obligations (including coverage and quality of service commitments) and have made sunk network investments that new entrants have not.

Fixed links (Section 6)

Question 5
Do you agree that fixed-link fees should be set by the formula Base fee x Bandwidth (MHz) x Band factor, with fees scaling linearly in bandwidth?
Your view: [X] Agree [ ] Disagree [ ] Partially agree [ ] No view
Your response (please give reasons and any supporting evidence):
1. Agree. Digicel agrees that fixed-link fees should be set by the formula Base fee x Bandwidth (MHz) x Band factor, with fees scaling with bandwidth. The proposal follows the methodologies already used by other regulators in the region. Those regulators use different factors in the calculation, but the underlying principles are the same as those ECTEL proposes. **2. Consistent with regional and international practice.** Most of the benchmark jurisdictions reviewed in Section 6.3 share the same core structure. The Bahamas multiplies a constant per MHz by bandwidth and by island and frequency band factors (Section 6.3.1, Tables 15 and 16). Jamaica multiplies a base fee per MHz by bandwidth, a band factor and other factors (Section 6.3.4, Tables 21 to 23). The United Kingdom applies a spectrum price per MHz with band, path-

length and availability factors (Section 6.3.8, Table 26), and Trinidad and Tobago and Cape Verde also price by bandwidth and band (Tables 20 and 25). ECTEL's formula takes the elements common to these regimes: the amount of spectrum used and the band in which it is used. ECTEL has deliberately left out the congestion and distance factors used in some of them on grounds of administrative burden (Sections 6.1 and 6.4), which keeps the formula simple. Adopting this common structure supports ECTEL's harmonisation objective (Section 3.4, objective 4) and makes ECTEL's schedule easier to compare with those of neighbouring jurisdictions.

3. Bandwidth is the correct measure of spectrum use. A fixed link denies the assigned bandwidth to other users along its path. Charging in proportion to bandwidth therefore links the fee directly to the quantity of spectrum used and, as ECTEL notes, confronts all users with the same cost per MHz so that they can scale their use up or down according to the value they derive from it (Section 6.4). That supports efficient use (Section 3.4, objective 1) and technology neutrality (objective 2), because the fee depends on the spectrum used and not on the equipment or service carried. A formula is also transparent and predictable. Operators can calculate the fee for a planned link in advance, which supports the consistent investment signals referred to in Section 3.3.

4. A band factor is the correct way to reflect relative value. Lower-frequency bands support longer hops and are more heavily used, while higher bands are suited to shorter hops and wider channels and are generally less congested. A band factor that falls as frequency rises reflects those differences and gives licensees a reason to move links to higher bands where engineering allows, which releases capacity in the more congested lower bands. ECTEL proposes to deal with congestion through the band factor rather than a separate congestion factor (Section 6.4), which makes it important that the band factors are correctly set. Digicel's comments on the level of the base fee and the values of the band factors are in its responses to Questions 6 and 7.

5. Points of clarification. Digicel asks ECTEL to deal with the following points in the final schedule so that the formula is applied consistently. (a) Counting convention. ECTEL states that bandwidth is the total spectrum assigned, so that a 2x5 MHz link counts as 10 MHz (Sections 6.1 and 6.5). The base fee must be derived on the same basis. Figure 29 appears to halve the per-pair benchmarks for the United Kingdom and Trinidad and Tobago (XCD156 and XCD802 against XCD311 per 2x1 MHz and XCD1,592 per MHz pair), which is correct, but it treats the British Virgin Islands amounts, which are per frequency (Table 17), as amounts per MHz. ECTEL should confirm the basis for each benchmark. (b) Definition of a link. A link should be defined as one frequency pair between two fixed points, so that protection (1+1 hot standby), space or frequency diversity and cross-polar arrangements do not multiply the fee. A point-to-multipoint hub should be charged once per assigned frequency block, not once per remote terminal. (c) Very wide channels. Under strict linear scaling, wide channels in the highest bands become very expensive. An E-band link of 2x250 MHz (500 MHz in total) would pay 336 x 500 x 0.65 = XCD109,200 a year under the proposal, against XCD15,000 to XCD18,000 for a link above 30 MHz today (Table 14), a six- to seven-fold increase. ECTEL treats this as removal of an "implicit subsidy" (Section 6.6), but wide channels in high bands are the efficient means of relieving congestion in the lower bands, which is what the band factor is intended to encourage. ECTEL's own Table 28 records non-linear scaling in Jamaica and Mauritius: Jamaica's base fee falls from XCD336 to XCD252 and XCD168 per MHz above 50 MHz and 100 MHz (Table 21), and Mauritius charges far less than proportionately for

wider channels (Table 24). Digicel invites ECTEL to adopt either a similar taper above a bandwidth threshold or a separate, lower band factor for the very high bands (see Question 7, paragraph 6).

Question 6

Do you agree with the proposed base fee of XCD336 per MHz per link?

Your view: [ ] Agree [ ] Disagree [X] Partially agree [ ] No view

Your response (please give reasons and any supporting evidence):

1. Partly agree. Digicel has no objection to the use of a base fee in the fixed-link formula, or in principle to XCD336 per MHz as that base fee. A base fee per MHz is consistent with the practice of other jurisdictions in the region. Digicel's agreement is qualified because the fee actually payable is the product of the base fee and the band factor, so the two must be set on a consistent basis.

2. A base fee aligns with regional practice. Jamaica's Spectrum Management Authority uses a base fee of XCD336 per MHz for links up to 50 MHz (Table 21), and the Bahamas uses a constant of XCD11,485 per MHz for point-to-point links (Table 15). In each case the base amount is the starting point to which band and other factors are applied. ECTEL has adopted the median of the benchmark base fees because "the median is robust to outliers" (Section 6.1; see also Section 6.5.1). Digicel supports the use of the median for that reason and asks that the same approach be applied consistently elsewhere in the schedule, in particular to the band factors (see Question 7).

3. The base fee must be calibrated with the band factors. In the benchmark jurisdictions the base amount is a pre-adjustment constant that is then multiplied by factors which in most cases reduce it substantially. In Jamaica the base fee is multiplied by a band factor of up to 1.8 and by a zone factor of 0.04 to 0.10 (Section 6.3.4, Tables 22 and 23), so the highest Jamaican fee is about 336 x 1.8 x 0.10 = XCD60 per MHz, and a link at 13 GHz in the most congested zone pays about 336 x 0.6 x 0.10 = XCD20 per MHz. In the Bahamas the constant of XCD11,485 is multiplied by a frequency band factor of 0.01 between 6.7 and 30 GHz (Table 16), giving about XCD115 per MHz. ECTEL takes the median of these pre-factor constants and then multiplies it by its own band factor of up to 2.95 (Table 13). For links below 3 GHz the effective fee is therefore 336 x 2.95 = XCD991 per MHz, almost three times the median ECTEL says it is adopting, and at 10.7 to 15.35 GHz it is 336 x 0.97 = XCD326 per MHz, far above the Jamaican and Bahamian equivalents. The base fee of XCD336 is acceptable if the band factors are recalculated as Digicel proposes in response to Question 7 (top factor of 1.4). If the top factor of 2.95 is retained, the base fee should be reduced pro rata (to about XCD160) so that the effective fee in the lowest band remains close to the benchmark median.

4. Comparability of the benchmark data. Digicel asks ECTEL to confirm how each benchmark in Figure 29 was converted to a fee per MHz. The British Virgin Islands amounts in Table 17 (XCD784 and XCD811) are flat amounts per frequency that are the same for the <5, 5-15 and 15-30 MHz tiers. The United States figure of XCD329 is total revenue divided by payment units (Figure 29, note), that is, an amount per link, whereas Section 6.3.9 refers to a fee of XCD68 per link that does not vary with bandwidth. The mean is given as XCD1,915 in Figure 29 and XCD1,901 in Section 6.1. These points do not affect the principle of a base fee, but they should be resolved so that the median relied on is robust.

5. Effect on fees and transition. ECTEL's own Table 31 shows annual fees rising by 42% to 80% for a 2x5 MHz sub-1 GHz link (from XCD5,500 or XCD7,000 to XCD9,912), 49% to 148% for a 2x10 MHz link at 3-5 GHz (to XCD14,851) and 45% to 74% for a 2x40 MHz link at 10.7-15.35 GHz (to XCD26,074), against cumulative inflation since 2006 of 37.8% (Section 5.3). Section 10 says the increase in revenue is concentrated in IMT and fixed links but gives no aggregate or per-licensee figure. Digicel therefore asks that (a) no individual link fee rise by more than cumulative CPI as a result of the change; (b) any increase be phased in over at least [three] years; and (c) ECTEL publish the benchmark data and conversions.

Question 7

Do you agree with the proposed band factors in Table 13? Please give reasons and any supporting evidence.

Your view: [ ] Agree [ ] Disagree [X] Partially agree [ ] No view

Your response (please give reasons and any supporting evidence):

1. Partly agree. Digicel agrees that a band factor should form part of the fixed-link formula. Applying a band factor is consistent with the principles set out in the consultation and with the practice of the benchmark jurisdictions. However, the consultation does not explain clearly enough how the specific factors in Table 13 were calculated for respondents to test them, and Digicel cannot agree to the values themselves until that is done.

2. The principle of a band factor is sound. ECTEL notes that almost all benchmark countries use band factors under which lower frequency bands are more expensive than higher ones (Section 6.4), and the Bahamas, Cape Verde, Jamaica and the United Kingdom each apply a coefficient that differs by frequency band (Tables 16, 20, 22 and 26). The coefficient reflects the greater demand for, and the propagation advantages of, lower bands. A factor that falls as frequency rises encourages licensees to use higher bands where engineering permits, which promotes efficient use of the spectrum (Section 3.4, objective 1).

3. The derivation of the factors is not clear. Section 6.5.2 describes a three-step method. Step (i) takes the arithmetic mean of "the highest band factor across benchmark countries", on the premise that the band factor is highest for sub-1 GHz links in each country, and arrives at 2.95. The benchmark factors used are not identified. Digicel has reproduced the figure from the tables in the consultation: the highest factors for the Bahamas (1), Cape Verde (8), Jamaica (1.8) and the United Kingdom (1) give (1 + 8 + 1.8 + 1) / 4 = 2.95. If that is the calculation, it has three problems.

First, the result is driven by a single outlier, Cape Verde's coefficient of 8, which is applied within a formula that also has a large fixed component (Section 6.3.3) and is therefore not comparable with the other factors. Second, several of these factors are not sub-1 GHz factors: Cape Verde's 8 applies to 1-3.99 GHz (Table 20), and below 1 GHz Cape Verde uses a different formula with no band factor; the United Kingdom's factor of 1 applies from 1.35 GHz (Table 26); and Jamaica's 1.8 applies across 0-4.2 GHz (Table 22). Third, ECTEL uses the median for the base fee because it is robust to outliers (Sections 6.1 and 6.5.1) but uses the mean here without explanation. The median of the same four values is 1.4. Step (ii) then takes the median of proportional factors across five countries (Table 29). Three of them (Cape Verde, Jamaica and the United Kingdom) are at 100% for 1-3 GHz, so the 1-3 GHz band is priced at the full 2.95, the same as sub-1 GHz, although the Bahamas (50%) and Mauritius (22%) price it far lower. The average proportional factor is materially lower than the median in every band (74%, 59%, 50%, 32% and 19% for 1-3, 3-5, 5-8.5, 10.7-15.35 and above 15.35 GHz). The Mauritius factors were estimated by regression (Table 29, note) and the method is not described.

4. Request for the workings. Digicel asks ECTEL to publish, before the comment-on-comments period, the band factors taken from each benchmark country, how they were mapped to ECTEL's band boundaries, the regression used for Mauritius, and the reason for using the mean for the top factor and the median for the proportional factors.

5. Illustrative alternative. Applying the median top factor of 1.4 and the average proportional factors gives: below 1 GHz 1.40; 1-3 GHz 1.04; 3-5 GHz 0.83; 5-8.5 GHz 0.70; 10.7-15.35 GHz 0.45; 15.35-30 GHz 0.27. Applied to the examples in Table 31 with the base fee of XCD336, this gives about XCD4,700 for the 2x5 MHz sub-1 GHz link, XCD5,580 for the 2x10 MHz link at 3-5 GHz and XCD12,100 for the 2x40 MHz link at 10.7-15.35 GHz, which is broadly in line with or below today's fees.

6. Very high bands. The single band above 15.35 GHz (factor 0.65, being 22% of 2.95) covers everything up to E-band and beyond. The benchmarks price the very high bands at a small fraction of their highest band: the Bahamas above 30 GHz 0.5% (Table 16); Cape Verde above 52 GHz 0.5% (Table 20); Jamaica above 24.25 GHz 11% (0.2 against 1.8, Table 22); and the United Kingdom at 49.2-57 GHz 17% (Table 26), a median of about 6%. A separate tier for spectrum above 30 GHz, with a factor no greater than 10% of the top factor, is warranted. As shown in response to Question 5, paragraph 5(c), the proposed factor would otherwise increase the fee for an E-band link six- to seven-fold.

7. Gaps. Table 13 gives no factor for 8.5-10.7 GHz. Every frequency should fall within a defined band, and where an assignment straddles two bands the lower factor should apply.

Question 8

Do you agree that the distinctions between link types and service types (backhaul, inter-site, other microwave) should be removed, with one fee per link regardless of configuration?

Your view: [X] Agree [ ] Disagree [ ] Partially agree [ ] No view

Your response (please give reasons and any supporting evidence):

1. Agree. Digicel agrees that the separate backhaul, inter-site and other-microwave categories should be removed and that one fee should apply per link regardless of configuration. The use or type of a link has no bearing on the quantity of spectrum it uses, and so should have no bearing on its cost.

2. The fee should follow the spectrum, not the use. ECTEL states that fees should primarily recover administrative costs and reflect opportunity cost where demand exceeds supply (Section 3.4, objective 3). Both the administrative effort of assigning and coordinating a link and the opportunity cost it imposes on others depend on the bandwidth, the band and the path of the link. They do not depend on whether the link carries backhaul traffic, inter-site traffic or anything else. A 2x28 MHz link at 18 GHz occupies exactly the same spectrum whatever it carries. ECTEL itself recognises that the current categories mean that "different types of users (of the same resource) face different costs" (Section 6.4). Charging different amounts for identical spectrum is inconsistent with technology and service neutrality (Section 3.4, objective 2), and the formula proposed under Question 5 already captures everything relevant to the value of the spectrum.

3. The distinction is out of line with other regulators. The current categories are an artefact of the existing schedule (Table 14). ECTEL describes differentiation by link type as "a practice that we do not observe in other countries" (Section 6.4), and Table 28 shows that, of the jurisdictions reviewed, only the United States and ECTEL distinguish links by type. Removing the distinction brings ECTEL into line with regional and international practice and with its harmonisation objective (Section 3.4, objective 4).

4. Simpler administration and greater certainty. A single fee per link, identical for point-to-point and point-to-multipoint configurations (Section 6.1), removes the need for ECTEL and the NTRCs to classify each link, avoids disputes where a link serves more than one purpose or changes use over time, and lets operators reconfigure their transmission networks without changing the fee.

5. Definition of a link. To give effect to one fee per link, the schedule should define a link as one frequency pair between two fixed points, irrespective of the number of radios, protection or diversity arrangements, or polarisation (see Question 5, paragraph 5). Point-to-multipoint systems should be charged once per hub and frequency block, not once per terminal. Cape Verde's approach of summing the fees for every point-to-point connection in a point-to-multipoint system (Section 6.3.3) should not be followed.

6. Transition. Removing the categories moves links from the current stepwise fees of XCD5,500 to XCD18,000 per frequency pair (Table 14) to the new formula, and Table 31 shows resulting increases of 42% to 148%. Digicel's agreement to removing the distinctions is not agreement to

the size of those increases, which should be addressed through the base fee and band factors and phased in (see Questions 6, 7 and 14).

Broadcasting (Section 7)

Question 9

Do you agree with a 39% inflation adjustment to broadcasting channel fees, applied uniformly across Member States as the default schedule?

Your view: [ ] Agree [ ] Disagree [ ] Partially agree [X] No view

Your response (please give reasons and any supporting evidence):

1. No view on the level of broadcasting fees. Digicel does not offer a view on the broadcasting channel fees themselves.

2. Consistency of ECTEL's approach. Section 7.1 describes the 39% adjustment as cost recovery, and Section 10 states that "the cost-recovery services move by inflation or not at all". The same regulator proposes increases well above inflation for IMT (about 43% for sub-1 GHz) and fixed links (up to 148% in ECTEL's own Table 31). An approach that holds cost-related services to inflation but prices IMT and fixed links well above it should be explained by reference to cost and demand evidence (see Question 1, paragraph 3).

3. Internal inconsistencies. Table 32 gives the current prevailing TV channel fee as XCD3,300, Table 33 shows XCD3,000 for most states (and "3,5000" for Dominica) and Table 1 in the Executive Summary shows XCD3,000. A 39% uplift on XCD3,000 gives XCD4,170, not XCD4,600. The inflation figure is stated as "about 39%" (Executive Summary and Table 32), "exceeded 37%" (Section 3.1) and 37.8% (Sections 5.3 and 5.7). ECTEL should reconcile these figures.

Question 10
Do you agree with the proposed targeted relief mechanism for qualifying public-interest broadcasters? What eligibility criteria, evidence requirements and review periods should apply?
Your view: [ ] Agree [ ] Disagree [ ] Partially agree [X] No view
Your response, including any eligibility criteria, evidence requirements and review periods you propose:
1. No view on the mechanism itself. Digicel takes no position on which broadcasters should qualify. It makes the following points of principle. **2. Relief must not be cross-subsidised.** The cost of any exemption, reduction or phased payment should be met transparently by ECTEL or the Member States and should not be recovered through higher fees on other spectrum users, including mobile operators. ECTEL should confirm this. **3. Suggested criteria.** Eligibility should be limited to non-commercial or genuinely public-interest services (community, educational, cultural or emergency-information broadcasting) with no or minimal advertising or subscription revenue. Applicants should provide recent financial statements or management accounts and evidence of the public-interest programming provided. Relief should be for a fixed period of no more than [one year], renewable on fresh evidence, with an obligation to notify any change of circumstances and a right for ECTEL to withdraw relief and recover fees where the criteria are no longer met. Criteria and (anonymised) decisions should be published so that relief is applied consistently across Member States.

Satellite and NTN (Section 8)

Question 11
Do you agree that satellite earth station and VSAT fees should be charged per station rather than per frequency, at XCD20,000 per gateway earth station and XCD6,000 per VSAT earth station, uniform across frequency bands?
Your view: [ ] Agree [ ] Disagree [X] Partially agree [ ] No view
Your response (please give reasons and any supporting evidence):
1. Partly agree. Digicel understands the principle of charging satellite earth stations and VSATs per station rather than per frequency, and the simplification it brings. However, because the proposed fees are uniform across frequency bands and are not linked to the amount of spectrum used, satellite and NTN operators will incur no direct cost for the spectrum they occupy. Care is therefore needed to ensure that the spectrum available for NTN services is not monopolised. **2. The principle.** ECTEL explains that satellite authorisations generally involve shared or coordinated use and do not confer exclusive national rights comparable to IMT, so fees in this area are set principally on nominal and cost-recovery principles (Section 8). Much of the

administrative work of authorising an earth station (application processing, coordination and inspection) relates to the station rather than to each frequency, and every benchmark country charges a fee per gateway and per VSAT (Table 58). A per-station fee is also simpler to administer and does not need to be amended as new bands such as Ka come into use (Section 8.1).

3. ECTEL has identified the risk but not addressed it. ECTEL chose not to benchmark bandwidth-based fees partly because "a satellite operator may be assigned a much larger bandwidth than they are using at any given time" (Section 8.4.10). That is the risk Digicel is concerned about. Under a flat per-station fee, an operator can be assigned far more spectrum than it uses at no extra cost, and the proposal removes the one mechanism that would discourage it. The benchmarks show the effect. Three of the nine countries in Table 58 (the Bahamas, Trinidad and Tobago and the United Kingdom) charge by bandwidth, and Table 59 shows gateway fees elsewhere depending on assigned or used bandwidth, band and constellation type. ECTEL notes that Trinidad and Tobago's fee of XCD5,976 per MHz would produce XCD11.95 million a year for a gateway using a realistic 2,000 MHz (Section 8.4.11). Under ECTEL's proposal the same gateway would pay XCD20,000, about XCD10 per MHz. By comparison, a terrestrial microwave link above 15.35 GHz would pay 336 x 0.65 = about XCD218 per MHz under the proposed fixed-link formula, more than twenty times as much per MHz. Every other part of the schedule charges by the quantity of spectrum used: IMT by MHz per head of population (Section 5) and fixed links by MHz and band factor (Section 6). Removing that link for satellite services alone takes away the price signal for efficient use (Section 3.4, objective 1) and treats comparable spectrum use differently depending on the technology (objective 2). A large operator could hold wide authorisations it does not fully use, limiting access to the same spectrum for other satellite operators and, in bands shared with terrestrial services, constraining terrestrial use.

4. Safeguards. Digicel asks ECTEL to adopt the following safeguards alongside the per-station fee. (a) Each authorisation should specify the frequencies and bandwidth authorised, limited to what the applicant shows it needs. (b) Authorised frequencies that are not brought into use within a defined period, or that cease to be used, should be withdrawn. (c) Authorisations should not confer exclusive use or priority over other users. Where an authorisation would in practice confer exclusivity or prevent other use, the fee should reflect the spectrum denied to others, consistent with ECTEL's own statement that opportunity-cost pricing would be appropriate for exclusive spectrum (Section 8.7). (d) A per-MHz supplement should apply where the bandwidth authorised at a gateway exceeds a defined threshold, consistent with the bandwidth-based fees in the Bahamas, Trinidad and Tobago and the United Kingdom (Table 58), and ECTEL should consider distinguishing gateways serving large non-geostationary constellations, as some benchmarks do (Table 59). (e) The per-station approach should be reviewed within two years, as satellite and NTN services develop in the Member States.

5. Fee levels. ECTEL invites views on its decision to set the gateway fee above the benchmark median (Section 8.3). Digicel does not object to the proposed levels of XCD$20,000 per gateway and XCD$6,000 per VSAT earth station, which are above the benchmark medians (XCD8,027 per gateway and XCD$1,770 per VSAT, Sections 8.3, 8.4.11 and 8.4.12) but well below current fees. Digicel notes, however, that the reason given for the gateway level, scarcity of land, is a land-use matter rather than a spectrum one. The fees should be justified by spectrum-management considerations and kept under review so that they reflect the spectrum used by large gateways

and do not give satellite operators a cost advantage over terrestrial operators using comparable spectrum. ECTEL proposes no fee per user terminal, relying on the revenue-based NTN class licence fee to do equivalent work (Section 8.3). That reliance is appropriate only if the class licence fee is in fact adopted and applied to every NTN provider serving customers in the Member States (see Question 12).

6. Definitions and transition. (a) A station should be charged once regardless of the number of antennas or carriers at the site, subject to the safeguards in paragraph 4. (b) ECTEL should confirm whether terminals within a licensed VSAT network are treated as separate stations. (c) Receive-only stations should be excluded. (d) Existing per-frequency assignments should convert to per-station assignments automatically from the effective date, without re-application.

Question 12

Do you agree with a single linear NTN spectrum fee of XCD25 per MHz per Member State per year for shared, non-exclusive satellite spectrum, with no additional spectrum fee where the service uses IMT spectrum already licensed to a mobile network operator?

Your view: [ ] Agree [ ] Disagree [X] Partially agree [ ] No view

Your response (please give reasons and any supporting evidence):

1. Partly agree. Digicel agrees with the second limb of the proposal: there should be no additional spectrum fee where an NTN service uses IMT spectrum already licensed to a mobile network operator, because, as ECTEL notes, that use is already charged through IMT licence fees (Section 8.7). Digicel has concerns about the first limb. The fee structure should not in any way put mobile operators at a disadvantage or give NTN operators an advantage, especially where mobile and NTN operators compete in the same market.

2. Competitive neutrality is the governing principle. Technology neutrality is one of ECTEL's own objectives for the review: fees "should not bias technology choices or network design" (Section 3.4, objective 2). Satellite broadband and direct-to-device services are now offered to the same residential, business and government customers as mobile and fixed broadband in the Member States. Where two services compete for the same customers, the regulatory cost of the spectrum each uses should not decide which one wins. A fee structure that charges one competitor many times more than the other for comparable spectrum would distort competition and could undermine the investment in terrestrial networks on which the Member States depend for coverage, resilience and universal service.

3. Scale of the disparity. ECTEL notes that XCD$25 per MHz per Member State gives a regional total of XCD125 per MHz (Section 8.7). On the proposed IMT rates and 2024 populations, one MHz across the five Member States costs about XCD$71,486 a year for sub-1 GHz spectrum (0.14 x 510,615), XCD51,062 for lower mid-band and XCD$15,318 for upper mid-band. Even the lowest IMT tier is more than one hundred times the NTN rate. In a single state, 20 MHz of shared NTN spectrum would cost XCD$500 a year, whereas 20 MHz of sub-1 GHz spectrum in Saint Lucia would cost about XCD$503,000 (0.14 x 20 x 179,744). The gap will also widen over time. IMT fees are set per head of population and would rise if population figures are updated

(see Question 1, paragraph 12), while the NTN fee is fixed per MHz and does not change however many customers an NTN provider serves. Digicel accepts that the bases differ (shared rather than exclusive spectrum), but a gap of this size cannot be explained by sharing alone where the services compete directly. ECTEL should therefore ensure that the total regulatory burden on NTN providers (spectrum fee, the class licence fee of 3% of gross revenue with a XCD5,000 minimum proposed in ECTEL's September 2025 NTN consultation (Section 8.6), and licence obligations including coverage, quality of service, consumer protection, local presence and universal service contributions) is comparable to that on terrestrial licensees providing equivalent services.

4. The benchmark understates the fee. The XCD$25 rate is anchored to Canada's Fee Level 1 for non-geostationary space stations of CAD$62.42 (XCD$123) per MHz (Section 8.7). Fee Level 1 is a reduced rate that applies only until the deadline for full deployment of the constellation, after which Canada applies Fee Level 2 of CAD$124.84 (XCD$246) per MHz for the rest of the licence term (Section 8.5.3). ECTEL has adopted the deployment-phase rate without the step-up. Digicel proposes that the fee rise to at least XCD50 per MHz per Member State, mirroring Fee Level 2, once an NTN provider has launched commercial service in a Member State or after a fixed period. ECTEL's other space-segment benchmarks are also considerably higher: the United States charges XCD$6.1 million a year for a large non-geostationary constellation (Figure 36), and India applies 4% of gross revenue plus a charge per urban subscriber for non-geostationary FSS (Figure 35).

5. Definition of shared, non-exclusive spectrum. The reduced rate is justified only for spectrum that is genuinely shared or used on a no-protection, no-interference basis. ECTEL itself says that opportunity-cost pricing would be appropriate if exclusive MSS spectrum were allocated (Section 8.7). The schedule should state that any NTN use that in practice confers exclusivity, protection from interference or priority over terrestrial users falls outside the XCD$25 rate and is to be priced on the basis applied to IMT.

6. Safeguards on the second limb. Use of a mobile operator's IMT spectrum by an NTN provider should be permitted only with that operator's agreement. It should not reduce, dilute or alter the operator's rights or increase its fees, and the NTN provider should be required to comply with the conditions of the operator's licence and assignment, including interference and quality-of-service obligations. Without these safeguards, the second limb could allow an NTN provider to benefit from spectrum paid for by a mobile operator.

7. Basis and review. The fee should be stated as total MHz assigned or used per Member State, not per satellite or per beam. ECTEL proposes to keep the regime under review as the direct-to-device market matures (Section 8.7). Digicel asks that the review take place within [two] years, or sooner if NTN services gain a material share of the broadband or mobile market in any Member State, so that the level can be adjusted if it is giving NTN operators an advantage over terrestrial operators.

Other services (Section 9)

Question 13

Do you agree with the removal of the paging entries from the fee schedule and with leaving fees for spread spectrum, land mobile, maritime mobile, aeronautical mobile, community radio and studio transmitter links unchanged?

Your view: [ ] Agree [ ] Disagree [X] Partially agree [ ] No view

Your response (please give reasons and any supporting evidence):

1. Partly agree. Digicel agrees with removing the paging entries, which are no longer used or invoiced, and with leaving fees for land mobile, maritime mobile, aeronautical mobile, community radio and studio transmitter links unchanged. This is consistent with ECTEL's statement that it "has not raised any fee without evidence to support it" (Section 9). Digicel asks that this same evidential standard be applied to IMT and fixed links (see Questions 1 and 6).

2. Spread spectrum. ECTEL accepts that most benchmark countries do not charge for licence-exempt bands (Table 60) and retains the XCD5,000 to XCD25,000 fees because utilities use them for meter reading. Charging for operation in bands intended for licence-exempt use is contrary to the efficient-use and technology-neutrality objectives and discourages low-cost connectivity and IoT deployment. Digicel asks ECTEL to review these fees with a view to reducing or removing them, and in any event to confirm that use of licence-exempt bands (including Wi-Fi and IoT equipment operated by licensed operators) is not caught by the entries for spread spectrum.

Question 14

Do you have any other comments on the proposals in this consultation?

Any other comments:

1. Cumulative impact. The package raises IMT fees by 25-29% and, on ECTEL's own examples, fixed-link fees by 42% to 148% (Table 31), without any aggregate or per-licensee assessment (Section 10). Digicel asks ECTEL to publish a regulatory impact assessment showing the effect on each licensee category and the cumulative effect on a typical mobile operator, before the fees are finalized.

Digicel posits that high spectrum prices may impact Operator investment and pricing decisions, considering that the incentive for network investment may diminish leading to underinvestment by domestic and foreign investors (Section 10). High spectrum prices may also require debt financing, which has a direct impact on the competitive behaviour of Operators and their pricing strategies. Then again, Operators may try to recover these high costs via upwardly revised tariffs on end-users of telecommunication services. Considering that costly spectrum licence fees may act as a signal for Operators to set higher prices. The International Telecommunications Union (ITU) (2016) states from a fiscal perspective that … "Spectrum fees set too high combined with

income taxes, VAT, excise, regulatory fees, and other charges can negatively impact growth opportunities and attractiveness, sector valuations, investment levels, and compliance with authorizations". According to the GSMA (2018), the repercussions of high spectrum prices on consumers and business alike are poor network coverage, slower speeds, and expensive services.

The aforementioned is crucial especially considering the significant costs pre-natural disaster event to increase network resilience of extant network infrastructure and post-natural disaster to replace/upgrade network infrastructure given the frequency of recurrence of natural disasters in the region where the ECTEL jurisdictions are geographically domiciled.

2. Transparency. ECTEL's costs and revenues are described as confidential (Sections 3.2 and 10), yet the revenue shortfall is a principal justification for the review. Digicel asks ECTEL to publish at least summary cost and revenue information, the benchmark datasets and conversion workings (including the treatment of paired spectrum, per-frequency and per-link fees), and to confirm that spectrum fee revenue will be used only for spectrum management and related regulatory functions.

3. Phasing, indexation and legal basis. Any increase should be phased over at least three years, with no retrospective effect. Future changes should be by public consultation and in principle limited to CPI-linked adjustments between reviews. Because the IMT rate is expressed per head of population, updating population figures would itself be a fee change and should be implemented by amending Schedule 3 (Frequency Authorisation Fees) of the Telecommunications (Fees) Regulations of each Member State through the amendment procedure prescribed in that State's legislation.

4. Pro-rating and unusable spectrum. Fees should be pro-rated for part-year assignments, refunded or suspended for periods when spectrum cannot be used through no fault of the licensee (for example cross-border interference or delayed release of contiguous spectrum), and should not be payable on spectrum returned to the regulator, which should be permitted on reasonable notice.

5. Drafting corrections. (a) Table 2 and Appendix A.1 are inconsistent (Question 1, paragraph 11). (b) The Executive Summary refers to fifteen consultation questions but the consultation and response form contain fourteen. (c) The inflation figure is variously stated as about 39%, exceeding 37% and 37.8%. (d) The tables and figures noted under Questions 6 and 9 need correcting. (e) Tables 17 and 18 are headed "Bahamas" but relate to the British Virgin Islands, and Table 23 is headed "Band adjustment" but sets out Jamaica's zone factors. ECTEL should issue a corrected version and confirm that respondents may comment on the corrections.

6. Process. Given the volume of technical material and the corrections needed, Digicel requests that the comment-on-comments period (26 October to 6 November 2026) be extended, and that ECTEL hold a meeting or hearing with operators before submitting its recommendation to the Council of Ministers. Digicel reserves the right to supplement this response.

Submitting your response

Please return the completed form by 16th October 2026. After the consultation closes, ECTEL will consider all responses and publish a decision document that summarises the responses received, sets out its decisions and explains the reasons for them.

Thank you for responding to this consultation.