

Radio Regulatory Council—930th Meeting
Summary of Minutes

1. Date and Time

Wednesday, April 9, 2008; 15:00–

2. Location

Conference Room 1002, 10th Floor, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications

3. Attendees (honorifics omitted)

(1) Council Members

Mitsutoshi Hatori (chair), Takeo Inokuchi (vice chair), Kashiko Kodate

(2) Hearing Examiner of the Radio Regulatory Council

Shuichi Nishimoto

(3) Secretary

Shuji Ishida (Deputy Director, General Affairs Division, Telecommunications Bureau)

(4) MIC Representatives (including Secretariat representative)

Tanaka (Director-General, Radio Department), Kawauchi (Deputy Director-General, Minister's Secretariat) and others

4. Agenda

- (1) Draft MIC Ordinances to Partially Amend the Regulations for Enforcement of the Radio Law and the Rules for Regulating Radio Equipment, and Draft Partial Changes to the Frequency Assignment Plan

(Consultations No. 8 and No. 9 of February 6, 2008)

The council deliberated on the subject Draft MIC Ordinances pertaining to the development of related regulations consequent to the introduction of active low-power radio systems using the 950 MHz band and upon the advancement of passive tag systems using the 950 MHz band, with reference to the written statements and written opinions (see the Written Opinions from the 444th Radio Regulatory Council Hearing) submitted by the hearing examiner who presided over the inquiry procedure, with the result that the council submitted a report stating that the subject Draft MIC Ordinances are acceptable.

- (2) Draft Partial Changes to the Frequency Assignment Plan

(Consultation No. 22)

The Frequency Assignment Plan is intended to be partially changed as a consequence of the establishment of expiration dates for firefighting frequencies based on the analog communication method, and therefore Draft Partial Changes were prepared. MIC gave an explanation as follows on these Draft Partial Changes.

○ MIC's Explanation

In this case, the Frequency Assignment Plan will be partially changed as a consequence of the fact that expiration dates for VHF band frequencies used in radio stations serving firefighting purposes have been set. Since the VHF band is suited to land-based mobile communication, this band is in heavy use, mainly for public services such as firefighting and disaster damage prevention. Therefore frequencies are in high demand.

Consequently, MIC intends to digitize radio systems and to switch to narrow frequency channels, thereby improving user convenience and promoting the effective use of frequencies.

Under such circumstances, in the case of firefighting analog radio systems using the 150 MHz band, there were requests, for example, for realizing data transmission and increasing available wavelength ranges. In response to these requests, digital frequencies were secured in the 260 MHz band, which is in the same VHF band as the frequency used until now. Thus users have been urged to switch to this new frequency band. For the purpose of making sure that this switchover will proceed expediently from this point on, the switchover deadline will be set for May 31, 2016.

(3) Draft MIC Ordinances to Partially Amend the Regulations for Procedures for Obtaining a Radio Station License and the Ordinance Concerning Technical Regulations Conformity Certification etc. of Specified Radio Equipment

(Consultation No. 12 of February 6, 2008)

The subject Draft MIC Ordinances, which were prepared as a consequence of the fact that gap-fillers for use in terrestrial digital television broadcasting are categorized as specified radio equipment, were partially corrected to remedy technical deficiencies. Subsequently, the council deliberated on the said Draft MIC Ordinances, with reference to the written statements and written opinions (see the Written Opinions from the 445th Radio Regulatory Council Hearing) submitted by the hearing examiner who presided over the inquiry procedure, with the result that the council submitted a report stating that the subject Draft MIC Ordinances are acceptable.

(4) Authorization of Changes to Paid Broadcasting Service Contract Covenant of WOWOW INC.

WOWOW INC. intends to make changes to its Paid Broadcasting Service Contract Covenant for the purpose of specifying that it will no longer accept new subscriptions for BS analog television broadcasting, and has filed an application for the authorization of the said changes. MIC gave an explanation as follows on the subject matter. Subsequently, a question-and-answer session took place as follows.

a. MIC's Explanation

To begin with, WOWOW INC. started BS analog television broadcasting in 1991 and began BS digital television broadcasting in 2000. This company provides paid broadcasting services primarily in the categories of film, sports, music, drama etc.

In this case, WOWOW INC. filed an application for the authorization of changes to its Paid Broadcasting Service Contract Covenant. This application was filed against the following background: At the Radio Regulatory Council meeting held in March 2008, a report was submitted stating that it is appropriate that the termination date of BS analog television broadcasting be set for July 24, 2011, which is the same as for terrestrial analog television broadcasting, with the result that this date was decided upon. On the basis of this, WOWOW INC. intends to stop accepting new subscriptions for BS analog television broadcasting for the purpose of ensuring a smooth transition from analog to digital broadcasting.

The contents of the application are as follows: to make it possible to refuse to conclude contracts in the event that new subscriptions to BS analog television broadcasting are applied for. Provisions consequent to the transition will be developed.

The contents of the application were assessed in accordance with the Broadcast Law etc., with the result that they are judged to be in compliance with the requirements. Therefore, MIC intends to authorize these changes.

b. Key answers and questions

A question was asked about what is the current number of contracts for WOWOW's paid broadcasting services and what is the tendency toward increase. MIC answered as follows: The number of contracts for analog and digital broadcasting combined is 2.42-odd million; and in the last 12 months, this number tended to increase, though slightly, thus indicating that progress is being made in the transition from analog to digital broadcasting.

(Office responsible for the above wording: The Secretariat of the Radio Regulatory Council.)