Implementation of a 5G Regulatory Framework in The Bahamas

Statement of Results and Final Decisions

ECS 10/2026

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1. Introduction

The Utilities Regulation and Competition Authority ("URCA") is the independent regulator and competition body for the Electronic Communications Sector ("ECS") in The Bahamas, which includes fixed and mobile telecommunications services, broadcasting, and the management of spectrum and numbering resources.

In this document, URCA presents its Statement of Results and Final Decisions ("SoR") in respect of the public consultation on the Implementation of a 5G Regulatory Framework in The Bahamas (ECS 01/2026). The SoR summarises the responses received, sets out URCA's assessment of the issues raised and explains its final decisions and next steps for implementing the framework.

Annexes A to C set out the baseline requirements, enhanced commitment framework and implementation sequence supporting the decisions in this document.

1.1 Background

This SoR concludes the consultation phase of URCA's phased approach to facilitating the introduction of fifth-generation mobile technology ("5G") in The Bahamas, building on its earlier consultations and decisions. URCA notes that further implementation work will follow, including finalisation of the band plan and the spectrum assignment process.

The Government of The Bahamas, through the Electronic Communications Sector Policy 2024–2027 ("ECSP 2024-2027"), identifies enhanced broadband connectivity and the deployment of advanced mobile communications technologies, including IMT-2020 ("5G") and beyond, as key national policy objectives. The ECSP 2024 – 2027 recognises the potential of 5G to enable new and innovative services, support technological integration across sectors, strengthen the digital economy and expand access to reliable high-speed connectivity.

URCA's work on 5G has proceeded in phases. Earlier work considered demand for 5G services, and the measures needed to enable deployment. The subsequent Roadmap to Enable 5G Deployment in The Bahamas consultation was published on 22 August 2024. URCA then published its Statement of Results and Next Steps in January 2025, identifying further work on spectrum confirmation, spectrum award design, infrastructure and network sharing, resilience and public engagement concerning electromagnetic field ("EMF") exposure.

On 5 February 2026, URCA published the Consultation Document on the Implementation of a 5G Regulatory Framework in The Bahamas (ECS 01/2026) ("Consultation Document"). The Consultation Document set out detailed proposals concerning the initial spectrum bands and quantum for 5G, the proposed spectrum assignment and pricing framework, rollout and performance obligations, private 5G networks, infrastructure sharing, resilience, cybersecurity, interference management, site approval, EMF exposure and the proposed implementation timetable.

1.2 Consultation Process

URCA wishes to thank all respondents for their participation in the consultation process and for the valuable technical, commercial, regulatory and policy perspectives provided. The submissions received have contributed meaningfully to the development of the 5G regulatory framework and have informed URCA's assessment and decisions set out in this SoR.

The deadline for responses to the Consultation Document was initially 8 April 2026 and was subsequently extended to 31 May 2026 at 5 pm. URCA received six (6) submissions from a cross-section of stakeholders, namely:

- The Bahamas Telecommunications Company Limited ("BTC");
- Be Aliv Limited and Cable Bahamas Limited (collectively, the "CBL Group");
- The Global Satellite Operators Association ("GSOA");
- AST & Science, LLC ("AST SpaceMobile");
- One respondent whose identity has been withheld at its request for confidential treatment (the "Confidential Respondent"); and
- The U.S. Embassy Nassau.

Certain respondents requested confidential treatment of information contained in their submissions. URCA has assessed these requests and determined the appropriate treatment of the relevant information in accordance with section 11 of the Utilities Regulation and Competition Authority Act, 2009, section 14 of the Communications Act, 2009 ("Comms Act"), and URCA's Consultation Procedure Guidelines (URCA 04/2017).

1.3 Legal and Regulatory Framework

This subsection sets out the legal and regulatory framework that governs URCA's power to conduct this consultation process and to implement the 5G regulatory framework.

Relevant Provisions of the Communications Act, 2009

Section 4 of the Comms Act sets out the main objectives of the electronic communications policy. These include, amongst other things, promoting investment and innovation in electronic communications networks and services, encouraging sustainable competition, promoting the optimal use of state assets including radio spectrum, and promoting affordable access to high-quality networks and carriage services in all regions of The Bahamas.

Section 5 of the Comms Act requires all policy measures, decisions and laws taking effect in the ECS to be made with a view to implementing the electronic communications policy objectives. In particular, market forces are to be relied upon as much as possible, while regulatory measures are to be introduced where market forces are unlikely to achieve the relevant objectives within

a reasonable timeframe, having due regard to the costs and implications of those measures. Regulatory measures must also be efficient and proportionate to their purpose and introduced in a transparent, fair and non-discriminatory manner.

Section 11 of the Comms Act requires URCA to allow persons with sufficient interest a reasonable opportunity to comment on a proposed regulatory measure that, in URCA's opinion, is of public significance or may materially adversely affect or prejudice their rights or interests. Section 13 identifies circumstances in which a regulatory measure is likely to be of public significance.

The Comms Act establishes the respective responsibilities of URCA and the Minister with responsibility for the ECS ("Minister") in relation to radio spectrum. In accordance with sections 29, 30 and 32 of the Comms Act, URCA manages and assigns radio spectrum, subject to the Minister's determination of the method for allocating premium spectrum. Section 93 provides for the Minister to determine charges for premium spectrum and URCA to determine charges for standard spectrum. URCA has consulted with the Minister on the proposed assignment model, deployment approach and premium-spectrum charges. The final implementation of the Premium Spectrum assignment will be subject to the applicable determination and approval of the Minister under the Comms Act.

URCA therefore considers that the cumulative effect of the foregoing statutory provisions required public consultation on the proposed 5G framework and requires URCA to give due consideration to the responses received before implementing the final regulatory measures.

1.4 Ministerial Approvals Relevant to the 5G Regulatory Framework

Pursuant to the provision of the Comms Act, URCA engaged with the Minister responsible for the Electronic Communications Sector, including the proposed spectrum assignment methodology, associated pricing arrangements, geographic deployment obligations and regulatory arrangements for private 5G networks.

Following consideration of the proposals, the Minister approved the assignment methodology and pricing arrangements for Premium Spectrum and emphasised that extending 5G deployment to the major Family Islands of The Bahamas was of paramount importance from a Government policy perspective, having regard to section 30 of the Comms Act. URCA has taken this policy consideration into account in finalising the baseline deployment requirements established under the regulatory framework.

The Minister also authorised the use of Premium Spectrum for controlled trials of standalone private 5G networks, subject to applicable statutory, licensing and spectrum management requirements. This authorisation facilitates the assessment of private 5G applications without conferring an automatic entitlement to permanent spectrum assignment.

The Minister's decisions concerning the assignment and pricing of Premium Spectrum were made

in accordance with his statutory responsibilities under sections 30 and 93(1) of the Comms Act. URCA retains its respective responsibilities concerning spectrum management, licensing and the assignment and pricing of Standard Spectrum under the applicable provisions of the Comms Act.

1.5 Alignment with National and International Policy Objectives

URCA has developed the 5G regulatory framework having regard to the ECSP 2024–2027, the National Spectrum Plan 2026 – 2029 ("NSP 2026 - 2029"), the ITU Radio Regulations and relevant international approaches to 5G spectrum management and deployment.

In particular, the framework seeks to give effect to national policy objectives concerning advanced broadband connectivity, investment in next-generation infrastructure, digital inclusion, innovation, network resilience and the efficient use of spectrum. URCA has also taken into account the specific characteristics of The Bahamas, including its two-operator mobile market and archipelagic geography.

URCA considers that the final framework is consistent with these policy objectives, supports public and private 5G deployments and retains flexibility to accommodate infrastructure sharing, satellite-enabled connectivity, 5G-Advanced and other emerging technologies.

1.6 URCA's Approach to Consultation Responses

Given the number of consultation questions and the overlap in the issues raised by respondents, URCA has adopted a thematic approach to summarising stakeholder views and presenting its assessment. This approach allows related submissions to be considered together, avoids unnecessary repetition and facilitates a focused assessment of the principal issues.

Responses are presented by consultation question, with stakeholder views grouped by theme rather than on a respondent-by-respondent basis. URCA has attributed comments to individual respondents where they raise material or distinctive points relevant to its assessment.

URCA has considered the submissions received and addressed the principal alternatives and objections relevant to its decisions. Where an issue is referred to another regulatory process, the relevant process and scope of that referral are identified. The absence of a response to a particular question is not treated as support for URCA's proposal.

1.7 Structure of the Remainder of this Document

The remainder of this document is structured as follows:

- **Section 2** summarises the comments and responses received from stakeholders on the Consultation Document, sets out URCA's analysis and final decisions on the matters consulted upon, and provides URCA's overall assessment of the proportionality of the adopted 5G regulatory framework;

- **Section 3** provides URCA's conclusions on the 5G regulatory framework and outlines the principal next steps for its implementation; and
- **Annexes A to C** set out the mandatory minimum baseline requirements, enhanced commitment framework and procedures governing the initial assignment of 5G spectrum.

2. Responses to the Consultation

Respondents expressed a range of views on specific aspects of the proposed 5G framework, reflecting the perspectives of mobile operators, satellite-sector stakeholders, enterprise users and other interested parties. While views differed on several important issues, several common themes emerged.

This section provides an overview of the principal areas of alignment and divergence across respondents, as well as key concerns and expectations raised during the consultation process. It then addresses each Consultation Question, setting out stakeholder views, URCA's analysis and URCA's final decision or next step.

2.1 General Comments

2.1.1 Areas of Broad Alignment Across Respondents

There was broad support for the objective of establishing a clear and fit-for-purpose regulatory framework to facilitate 5G deployment in The Bahamas. Respondents generally recognised that 5G is an important component of the continuing evolution of the country's communications infrastructure and that its introduction should support investment, innovation, improved network capacity, resilience and new use cases.

There was also broad support for prioritising low- and mid-band spectrum for the initial phase of 5G deployment. Respondents generally recognised the coverage advantages of the 600 MHz band (n71) and the capacity advantages associated with contiguous mid-band spectrum in n78.

Most respondents who addressed spectrum assignment supported a managed, policy-led approach rather than a conventional revenue-maximising auction. There was, however, material disagreement as to whether the managed framework should include a comparative evaluation component or should instead take the form of direct assignment to the two existing MNOs.

Respondents generally recognised the importance of network resilience, network security, interference management and compliance with internationally recognised EMF exposure standards. Several also emphasised technology neutrality and flexibility to accommodate satellite-enabled backhaul, non-terrestrial networks ("NTN"), including direct-to-device ("D2D") services, and other evolving network architectures.

2.1.2 Key Points of Divergence

A principal area of divergence concerned the design and complexity of the initial spectrum assignment process. BTC and GSOA supported URCA's proposed hybrid framework comprising baseline eligibility requirements and comparative evaluation. The CBL Group, by contrast, argued

that a direct managed assignment would be more proportionate in a market with only two MNOs and where spectrum could largely be divided between them.

The MNOs also raised concerns regarding the proposed quantum of n71 spectrum. Both considered 2 × 10 MHz per operator insufficient for longer-term requirements, although BTC proposed at least 2 × 15 MHz while the CBL Group proposed 2 × 20 MHz. There was broader support for approximately 100 MHz of contiguous n78 spectrum per operator.

Views also diverged on the appropriate scope of rollout and performance obligations. The CBL Group stressed the weak or uncertain incremental business case for 5G and cautioned against imposing obligations that could require investment beyond demonstrated demand, particularly in the Family Islands. Other respondents placed greater emphasis on nationwide connectivity, resilience and the role of hybrid terrestrial-satellite architectures in extending coverage.

Private 5G also generated materially different positions. The Confidential Respondent advocated early direct spectrum access for geographically bounded standalone non-public networks ("S-NPNs") and a trial-to-permanent licensing pathway. BTC favoured preserving premium spectrum primarily for public mobile networks during the initial phase, while the CBL Group considered public-network-integrated non-public networks ("PNI-NPNs") likely to be more appropriate initially and supported targeted pilots.

Satellite-sector respondents placed particular emphasis on protection of existing satellite operations, technology-neutral performance requirements, satellite backhaul and the future integration of NTN and D2D services. The U.S. Embassy Nassau raised distinct cybersecurity and supply-chain recommendations, including consideration of the Telecommunications Industry Association's SCS 9001 standards.

2.1.3 Concerns and Expectations Regarding URCA's Approach

Respondents emphasised the importance of ensuring that the final framework is proportionate to the economic realities of the Bahamian mobile market, supports long-term investment and provides sufficient regulatory certainty for commercial planning.

The MNOs in particular urged URCA to consider the cumulative effect of spectrum fees, rollout obligations, performance requirements, resilience measures and compliance mechanisms. Concerns were raised that an overly prescriptive framework could weaken the business case for 5G or delay investment.

Other respondents urged URCA not to treat terrestrial mobile deployment in isolation. They highlighted opportunities for private 5G, satellite backhaul, D2D and enterprise infrastructure to contribute to national connectivity, resilience and economic development.

Respondents also stressed the importance of coordination with related regulatory initiatives, including URCA's work on universal service, infrastructure sharing, cybersecurity, EMF regulation and the satellite regulatory framework.

2.1.4 URCA's Response to General Comments

URCA has carefully considered all submissions received and the themes identified above. More detailed analysis is set out in the responses to the individual Consultation Questions below.

URCA recognises the need for the 5G framework to take account of the economics of investment in a mature, two-operator mobile market. However, URCA also considers that spectrum is a scarce public resource and that the assignment of spectrum for 5G should produce credible and measurable public-interest outcomes in relation to deployment, coverage, service performance, resilience and efficient spectrum use.

Accordingly, URCA considers that the final framework should combine investment flexibility with clear minimum requirements and proportionate, enforceable commitments. The framework should also remain technology-neutral and capable of accommodating voluntary infrastructure sharing, satellite-enabled connectivity, private network trials and emerging technologies where consistent with the statutory objectives of the Comms Act and the Government's policy objectives.

URCA also recognises that the financial and regulatory implications of the 5G framework must be considered collectively, rather than solely by reference to individual requirements. In this regard, URCA has considered the cumulative effect of spectrum charges, geographic coverage and rollout obligations, network performance and resilience requirements, performance bonds, and applicable compliance and enforcement measures. URCA's overall assessment of the proportionality of these measures, having regard to the relevant statutory and policy objectives, is set out in Section 2.23 of this SoR.

2.2 Responses to Question 1: Managed Spectrum Assignment Model

Question 1:
Having regard to the international benchmarks outlined in Section 2 of the Consultation Document, do you agree/disagree that a tailored managed spectrum assignment model would be most appropriate for The Bahamas, given the market structure (two MNOs) and the country's archipelagic geography? Please provide supporting rationale and, where applicable, suggest any additional international best practices or regulatory considerations that URCA should take into account when designing The Bahamas' 5G regulatory framework.

2.2.1 Summary of Stakeholder Views

BTC supported a tailored managed spectrum assignment model incorporating baseline eligibility

requirements and comparative evaluation. It considered that the presence of two licensed MNOs and The Bahamas' archipelagic geography warranted an approach capable of aligning spectrum assignments with national policy objectives, coverage requirements and long-term investment sustainability.

GSOA also supported a managed assignment model. It submitted that auctions are less effective where only two MNOs participate and may impose financial burdens without corresponding benefits in deployment. GSOA favoured an approach based on concrete deployment commitments, including coverage obligations to support service provision in commercially less attractive areas and avoid an urban-only rollout. It also identified resilience, timely deployment and digital inclusion as relevant objectives.

The CBL Group supported managed assignment in principle but opposed URCA's proposed two-stage hybrid model. It questioned the relevance of the Mauritius and Singapore benchmarks, citing differences in market structure, population concentration and economic conditions, and considered that the benchmarks did not adequately reflect more recent experience of the commercial prospects for 5G. It argued that the other examples cited by URCA supported direct assignment to existing operators.

The CBL Group proposed that the available spectrum be assigned equally to the two existing MNOs, with any overlapping block preferences resolved through negotiation or a drawing of lots. It considered that comparative evaluation would provide limited benefit in those circumstances. It also requested clarification on whether spectrum would be reserved for a potential third mobile operator after the current Sector Policy period, including the bands concerned, the rationale for any reservation and its implications for efficient spectrum use and investment.

The Confidential Respondent supported managed assignment rather than an auction but recommended that the framework accommodate non-MNO participants and geographically bounded enterprise licensing from the outset. It referred to international approaches providing for enterprise and localised spectrum access alongside public mobile assignments. The Confidential Respondent also recommended that FWA deployment be included as a scored commitment, rather than limiting the comparative criteria to mobile broadband coverage.

2.2.2 URCA's Analysis

URCA considers that a managed assignment approach remains appropriate for the initial introduction of 5G in The Bahamas and is consistent with the objectives of the ECSP 2024–2027. It places deployment, coverage, network performance, resilience and investment sustainability at the centre of the assignment process, while taking account of the domestic mobile market and the cost of serving geographically dispersed islands.

The assignment process must comply with the Comms Act. Section 26(5) provides for competitive selection where the Minister or URCA intends to restrict the number of individual licences

granting rights to use the same or similar radio spectrum. Section 26(6) provides for the application of objective selection criteria, including commitments concerning service type, quality and geographical coverage. Section 32 further requires spectrum management to be open, objective, transparent and non-discriminatory. URCA has had regard to these statutory provisions in designing the initial 5G spectrum assignment process, including the need for objective evaluation criteria and transparent procedures for resolving competing applications.

URCA consulted with the Minister responsible for the ECS regarding the proposed managed assignment approach pursuant to section 30 of the Comms Act. Following these consultations, the Minister approved the refined spectrum assignment model for the initial assignment of 5G spectrum in the n71 and n78 bands.

URCA notes CBL Group's view that most benchmark jurisdictions adopted direct assignment approaches. Differences in market structure, geography, economic conditions and the timing of those awards limit the extent to which any individual example applies to The Bahamas. The benchmarks demonstrate available approaches rather than prescribe a particular model. URCA's decision therefore rests on the circumstances of The Bahamas, the objectives of the framework and the requirements of the Comms Act.

URCA has considered CBL Group's proposal that the available spectrum be assigned equally to the two existing MNOs, with overlapping block preferences resolved through negotiation or a drawing of lots. While URCA recognises that the presence of two existing MNOs and the availability of sufficient spectrum may reduce the need for comparative ranking, it does not consider that these circumstances establish an automatic entitlement to additional spectrum rights. URCA considers that the assignment of Premium Spectrum should remain subject to objective and transparent requirements designed to secure identifiable public benefits.

URCA also acknowledges CBL Group's concerns regarding the complexity of the proposed two-stage hybrid assignment model and the limited utility of comparative ranking where sufficient spectrum is available to accommodate qualifying applicants. Having considered these concerns, URCA has refined the proposed assignment process to adopt a single-stage managed competitive assignment model comprising mandatory minimum baseline requirements and a simplified points-based evaluation of enhanced commitments.

URCA recognises that, given the prevailing Government policy restricting eligibility for the initial assignment of Premium IMT spectrum for public mobile services to the two existing MNOs, and the availability of sufficient spectrum to accommodate both qualifying applicants, the comparative evaluation process will not ordinarily determine whether one applicant receives spectrum to the exclusion of the other. Rather, its principal function is to establish an objective and transparent mechanism for determining allocation priority where applicants express competing preferences for the same frequency blocks.

URCA considers that this comparative element serves a meaningful regulatory purpose by

providing applicants with an incentive to undertake additional, enforceable commitments concerning geographic coverage, network performance and resilience beyond the prescribed minimum baseline requirements. Allocation priority will be determined by reference to applicants' total enhanced commitment scores, assessed against the predetermined scoring criteria established in Annex B. Where applicants achieve equal total scores, the prescribed category-specific tie-breaking criteria will apply, with any remaining tie resolved through a supervised random draw in accordance with predetermined and published procedures.

The minimum baseline requirements will establish binding obligations concerning network deployment, coverage, performance, resilience and security, including the extension of qualifying 5G services across the designated major Family Islands within a prescribed timeframe. The enhanced commitment framework will provide additional incentives for applicants to undertake commitments beyond these minimum requirements, with allocation priority determined through a transparent scoring mechanism where competing frequency block preferences arise.

URCA considers that the refined approach appropriately balances the need to maintain a transparent and objective spectrum assignment process with the importance of facilitating investment and securing measurable improvements in national connectivity. The use of predetermined evaluation criteria and enforceable enhanced commitments provides a proportionate means of resolving competing frequency block preferences while securing additional public benefits, without introducing the additional financial burdens associated with an auction-based assignment process. The rationale for, and detailed arrangements governing, the refined assignment process, including the treatment of competing spectrum requests, are addressed under Question 8.

2.2.3 URCA's Decision

Having considered the stakeholder submissions and the applicable requirements of the Comms Act, URCA confirms its decision to adopt a tailored, single-stage managed competitive assignment process for the initial assignment of 5G spectrum in The Bahamas.

The refined assignment model comprises two components: mandatory minimum baseline requirements concerning network deployment, coverage, performance, resilience and security; and a simplified points-based evaluation of enhanced commitments to determine allocation priority where competing spectrum block preferences arise.

The detailed structure and operation of the assignment process, including the minimum baseline requirements, enhanced commitment scoring framework and procedures for addressing competing spectrum requests, are addressed under Question 8. The applicable coverage and rollout obligations are further addressed under Question 12 and Annex A.

2.3 Responses to Question 2: Low-Band Spectrum (n71)

Question 2:
Do you agree/disagree that n71 is an appropriate low-band candidate to support wide-area 5G coverage in The Bahamas? Please provide technical or commercial rationale and identify any potential implementation challenges.

2.3.1 Summary of Stakeholder Views

All respondents who addressed this question agreed that n71 is technically well suited to wide-area 5G coverage in The Bahamas, citing its favourable propagation and indoor-penetration characteristics. Several respondents raised implementation considerations relating to device availability, the quantum of spectrum, satellite coexistence and D2D use.

BTC agreed that n71 is technically appropriate for wide-area and Family Island coverage. It noted, however, that the global device ecosystem for the band remains comparatively limited and may constrain early device availability. BTC considered the proposed 2 × 10 MHz per operator insufficient and recommended at least 2 × 15 MHz. It also noted that certain proposed performance benchmarks may not be consistently achievable at 2 × 10 MHz.

CBL Group agreed that n71 is the best coverage band for The Bahamas. It considered 2 × 10 MHz per operator too small for adequate spectrum planning and proposed 2 × 20 MHz per operator.

GSOA agreed that the 600 MHz band is well suited to wide-area coverage, particularly given the logistical and economic challenges of serving remote islands. It urged URCA to maintain technology neutrality and to account for coexistence with satellite services in accordance with relevant international allocations.

AST SpaceMobile agreed with URCA's technical assessment of n71 for an archipelagic market. It submitted that n71 and the 700 MHz band are strategically relevant for D2D services, which it described as becoming commercially available now. It recommended that any regulatory decision on these bands explicitly incorporate their potential D2D use, so that conditions for hybrid terrestrial-satellite deployment are preserved from the outset.

The Confidential Respondent strongly supported n71 as the band that makes Family Island coverage economically viable, owing to the reduced number of base stations required. It described n71 as a key band for 5G fixed wireless access ("FWA"). It recommended that URCA explicitly link n71 deployment obligations to FWA broadband outcomes rather than mobile coverage percentages alone.

2.3.2 URCA's Analysis

URCA remains of the view that n71 is the most appropriate low-band candidate for the initial 5G assignment. Its propagation characteristics are well suited to wide-area and in-building coverage.

They are particularly relevant to deployment beyond New Providence and Grand Bahama, and URCA notes the unanimous support for the band among respondents.

URCA notes that the National Frequency Allocation Table (NFAT) under the NSP 2026 - 2029 appears on its face to identify the Mobile Service as a secondary allocation in the 614–698 MHz frequency range. However, ITU Radio Regulations footnote 5.293, which is expressly referenced in the NFAT, provides for a primary Mobile Service allocation in The Bahamas within this frequency range, subject to agreement obtained under Radio Regulations No. 9.21.

For the avoidance of doubt, URCA recognises that the primary Mobile Service allocation applicable to The Bahamas under footnote 5.293 is incorporated into the NFAT by reference to that footnote. Accordingly, the initial assignment of n71 spectrum for 5G deployment will proceed on the basis of this primary allocation, subject to the applicable international coordination, technical and regulatory requirements.

URCA further notes that footnote 5.308A identifies the 614–698 MHz frequency range for International Mobile Telecommunications (IMT) in The Bahamas and establishes additional conditions for its use. In particular, mobile stations implementing IMT are subject to agreement obtained under Radio Regulations No. 9.21 and must not cause harmful interference to, or claim protection from, broadcasting services in neighbouring countries. URCA will undertake the necessary technical assessments and engagement with potentially affected administrations through the applicable international coordination procedures to address these requirements. Any material technical or operational restrictions arising from these requirements, including the status and implications of any outstanding international coordination requirements, will be identified, as appropriate, in the 5G Spectrum Band Plan and relevant spectrum licence conditions, which will be made available as part of the ITA documentation before applicants are required to submit binding commitments. Prospective applicants will be afforded a reasonable opportunity to submit written requests for clarification concerning these requirements and to receive URCA's responses before the applicable submission deadline.

URCA notes BTC's observation regarding device availability. However, it considers that this does not outweigh the coverage advantages of n71 or justify delaying access to the band. n71 has been deployed at scale in the United States, and support for the band is now common in handsets supplied through that market, from which a substantial share of devices used in The Bahamas are sourced. Operators also retain flexibility in deployment sequencing and device strategy.

URCA notes the submissions of BTC and CBL Group on the quantum of n71 spectrum per operator, together with the related concerns on achievable performance. These matters are addressed in URCA's response to Question 6.

URCA has considered the Confidential Respondent's recommendation that n71 deployment obligations be linked to FWA outcomes. URCA recognises the potential for low-band 5G to support broadband-grade connectivity, particularly in underserved and lower-density

communities. However, URCA also notes CBL Group's submission that the business case for 5G FWA in remote, low-density areas has weakened, in part due to the increasing availability of LEO satellite broadband.

Having considered these views, URCA does not consider it appropriate to prescribe separate FWA-specific deployment obligations or introduce a distinct FWA commitment category within the enhanced commitment framework for the initial spectrum assignment. Nevertheless, URCA recognises that 5G FWA may contribute to meeting applicable coverage commitments where the resulting network deployment satisfies the relevant geographic coverage, technical and performance requirements established under the framework. Accordingly, FWA deployments may be taken into account in assessing compliance with qualifying coverage commitments but will not attract separate points under the enhanced commitment scoring framework established in Annex B. Broader questions concerning broadband availability and affordability in underserved Family Island communities will also be considered, as appropriate, within URCA's forthcoming review of the universal service framework.

URCA also notes the submissions of AST SpaceMobile and GSOA concerning D2D and coexistence with satellite services. URCA does not consider it necessary to embed D2D-specific provisions in the initial n71 assignment. D2D services of the kind described by AST SpaceMobile operate in IMT spectrum through commercial arrangements with licensed MNOs, so assigning n71 to MNOs does not foreclose such arrangements. Any D2D or NTN use of n71 would be subject to URCA's prior authorisation and will be addressed through a separate regulatory process. Cross-border coordination of n71, including with adjacent United States deployments, is addressed under Question 17.

2.3.3 URCA's Decision

URCA confirms n71 (600 MHz) as the low-band spectrum for the initial 5G assignment process. The assignment and deployment of n71 spectrum will be subject to the applicable technical and regulatory requirements, including the international agreement and coordination requirements under Radio Regulations No. 9.21 arising from footnotes 5.293 and 5.308A, and the applicable obligations concerning the protection of broadcasting services in neighbouring countries. Any technical or operational conditions relating to coexistence, interference management or future spectrum evolution will be addressed through the 5G Spectrum Band Plan, relevant spectrum licence conditions and/or subsequent spectrum-management measures, as appropriate.

The 5G Spectrum Band Plan and proposed spectrum licence conditions, including any material technical or operational restrictions and the status and implications of any outstanding international coordination requirements affecting the initial assignment, will be made available as part of the ITA documentation before applicants are required to submit binding commitments. Prospective applicants will be afforded a reasonable opportunity to submit written requests for

clarification concerning these requirements and to receive URCA's responses before the applicable submission deadline.

2.4 Responses to Question 3: Mid-Band Spectrum (n78)

Question 3:
Do you agree/disagree that n78 is an appropriate mid-band candidate to support initial 5G deployment in The Bahamas? Please provide technical or commercial rationale and identify any potential implementation challenges.

2.4.1 Summary of Stakeholder Views

Respondents generally supported contiguous mid-band spectrum for initial 5G deployment. However, they differed on the treatment of the upper portion of the C-band, particularly the 3700–3800 MHz range.

BTC agreed that n78 should be the primary mid-band for initial 5G deployment and supported the proposed allocation of approximately 100 MHz per operator. It recommended that n66 (the AWS band, 1710–1780 MHz uplink / 2110–2200 MHz downlink) be expressly recognised as a complementary candidate for future refarming and capacity enhancement, given its strong global ecosystem and suitability for urban deployment.

The CBL Group expressed interest in 100 MHz of n78 spectrum to support initial rollout. It suggested that URCA consider whether the allocation should be framed under the n77 (3300–4200 MHz) rather than the n78 band plan, noting that n77 is used in the United States. CBL Group cautioned that less equipment is available above 3.8 GHz, that interference risk is higher, and that propagation is poorer than at 3.3 GHz.

GSOA expressed significant reservations about using C-band spectrum for initial 5G deployment, particularly in the 3700–3800 MHz range. It noted that FSS operations in the 3700–4200 MHz band are extensively used across the region for broadcast distribution, disaster recovery communications and connectivity to remote areas. GSOA nonetheless supported URCA's objective of making approximately 80–100 MHz of contiguous mid-band spectrum available per operator within 3300–3700 MHz. In related submissions, GSOA proposed a guard band of 30–40 MHz to protect FSS operations above 3700 MHz, together with emission limits and coordination or protection zones around earth stations. It also noted that receive-only earth stations whose locations are unknown are particularly difficult to protect.

The Confidential Respondent agreed that n78 is essential and submitted that enterprise private networks require 100 MHz of contiguous C-band spectrum to meet high-density capacity requirements. It proposed that URCA designate the 3700–3800 MHz range, which it described as unencumbered, as a geographically bounded enterprise band for private network licensing, citing

international precedent including Germany. The Confidential Respondent submitted that the archipelagic geography of The Bahamas would allow the same block to be reused across multiple enterprise deployments.

2.4.2 URCA's Analysis

URCA considers contiguous mid-band spectrum necessary to deliver the capacity benefits expected from 5G and notes the broad support among respondents for this approach. The mid C-band is the focus of international harmonisation for 5G, and the use of n78 aligns The Bahamas with that practice. URCA therefore maintains its approach of making two 100 MHz contiguous spectrum blocks available for the initial 5G assignment process, subject to the applicable technical and regulatory requirements.

The Consultation Document initially proposed two 100 MHz blocks at 3300–3400 MHz (Block A) and 3600–3700 MHz (Block B). However, further technical assessment has identified potential coexistence and coordination concerns associated with the use of 3300–3400 MHz for terrestrial 5G deployment, particularly in relation to radar systems operating in neighbouring countries. URCA is examining these concerns and will pursue engagement, as appropriate, with the relevant administrations to determine the necessary technical and coordination arrangements. Pending further assessment and resolution of these matters, URCA considers it appropriate to refrain from including the 3300–3400 MHz frequency range in the initial 5G spectrum assignment process. This approach does not preclude the potential future use of this frequency range for 5G, subject to the satisfactory resolution of the relevant technical and regulatory considerations.

In this regard, URCA notes that Section 3.4 and Question 5 of the Consultation Document expressly contemplated the potential refarming, reconfiguration or migration of existing spectrum assignments within the 3.4–3.6 GHz frequency range, including assignments used for CCTV and WiMAX applications, to facilitate the availability of additional contiguous mid-band spectrum for 5G deployment. Stakeholders were therefore afforded an opportunity to comment on the potential release and use of these frequencies for 5G.

URCA has subsequently undertaken further assessment of spectrum utilisation within the 3.4–3.6 GHz frequency range, including engagement with a licensee which has resulted in the voluntary surrender of its spectrum assignment within the 3400–3500 MHz frequency range. In light of this development, URCA considers that the 3400–3500 MHz frequency range provides an appropriate alternative to the initially proposed 3300–3400 MHz block. The revised configuration will therefore comprise two nominal 100 MHz TDD blocks at 3400–3500 MHz (Block A) and 3600–3700 MHz (Block B), maintaining the proposed quantum of mid-band spectrum per operator while addressing the technical concerns associated with the original configuration.

URCA considers that the revised configuration falls within the scope of the matters addressed during the public consultation. In particular, the Consultation Document expressly identified the

potential refarming, reconfiguration or migration of existing assignments within the 3.4–3.6 GHz frequency range to facilitate additional spectrum availability for 5G deployment. The substitution of the originally proposed 3300–3400 MHz block with 3400–3500 MHz reflects subsequent technical assessments and developments in spectrum availability, without altering the proposed quantum of spectrum per operator, the underlying assignment methodology or the principal regulatory obligations established under the framework. Having regard to these considerations, URCA does not consider a further consultation specifically concerning this refinement to be necessary.

URCA nevertheless recognises that the two proposed frequency blocks may be subject to different technical and regulatory requirements. In particular, the 3400–3500 MHz frequency range is allocated to the Mobile Service and identified for International Mobile Telecommunications (IMT) under the NSP 2026 - 2029, subject to the applicable provisions of the ITU Radio Regulations. Footnote 5.431A makes the primary Mobile Service allocation within this frequency range subject to agreement obtained under Radio Regulations No. 9.21, while footnote 5.431B establishes additional requirements applicable to the implementation of IMT systems, including relevant international coordination procedures and cross-border power flux-density limits.

URCA will undertake the necessary technical assessments and engagement with potentially affected administrations to address these requirements through the established international coordination procedures. The inclusion of 3400–3500 MHz in the initial 5G assignment does not remove the obligation to comply with applicable international coordination requirements before the relevant stations are brought into use. Any technical or operational restrictions arising from these requirements will be reflected, as appropriate, in the 5G Spectrum Band Plan and relevant spectrum licence conditions, which will form part of the ITA documentation made available to prospective applicants before they are required to submit binding commitments in the spectrum assignment process. Prospective applicants will be afforded a reasonable opportunity to submit written requests for clarification concerning these requirements and to receive URCA's responses before the deadline for submitting binding commitments under the spectrum assignment process.

URCA notes the CBL Group's submission on n77 and n78. As defined in 3GPP TS 38.101-1 and TS 38.104, n78 (3300–3800 MHz) is a subset of n77 (3300–4200 MHz). Both proposed blocks therefore fall within the frequency ranges of n77 and n78. The concerns raised by the CBL Group relate principally to spectrum above 3800 MHz, which is not proposed for this initial assignment. URCA therefore does not consider it necessary to designate n77 as a separate spectrum band for the initial 5G assignment process, given that both proposed frequency blocks fall within the n78 band. Applicants will nevertheless be required to demonstrate that their proposed network equipment and devices are compatible with the specific frequency blocks to be assigned.

The placement of both blocks below 3700 MHz avoids direct assignment of spectrum within the 3700–4200 MHz frequency range identified by GSOA as being used for FSS operations. However, this does not eliminate the risk of adjacent-band interference to FSS receivers from terrestrial 5G transmissions near the upper edge of the 3600–3700 MHz block. Accordingly, the use of this block may be subject to appropriate technical measures to facilitate coexistence between terrestrial 5G and adjacent FSS operations. The proposed 3400–3500 MHz block does not present the same immediate adjacent-band coexistence concern, although its use is subject to the international coordination requirements identified above.

URCA has considered GSOA's proposal for a guard band of 30–40 MHz. Depending on how any such guard band is implemented, it could reduce the usable bandwidth of the 3600–3700 MHz block. URCA will determine the appropriate technical measures to facilitate coexistence between terrestrial mobile and FSS operations, while having regard to the need to ensure the efficient and effective use of spectrum assigned to mobile network operators. Such measures may include guard-band arrangements, block-edge emission masks, power limits and coordination requirements, and will be established through the 5G Spectrum Band Plan, consistent with the applicable ITU Radio Regulations and URCA's decision under Question 17. These measures will be reflected, where appropriate, in the relevant spectrum licence conditions.

URCA notes that receive-only Fixed-Satellite Service (FSS) earth stations are not currently subject to registration requirements under the existing ECS regulatory framework. Nevertheless, URCA recognises the importance of taking account of existing FSS receiving installations that may be affected by the proposed 5G assignments, as well as any potential interference or coexistence implications for 5G operations arising from existing satellite services.

In this regard, URCA will consider available information concerning such installations and, where necessary, may undertake targeted engagement with relevant stakeholders to inform the development of appropriate technical coexistence measures. These measures, including any applicable guard bands, emission limits and coordination requirements, will be specified in the 5G Spectrum Band Plan and reflected in the relevant technical and spectrum licence conditions made available as part of the ITA documentation before applicants are required to submit binding commitments. Prospective applicants will be afforded a reasonable opportunity to submit written requests for clarification concerning these requirements and to receive URCA's responses before the deadline for submitting binding commitments under the spectrum assignment process. This approach is intended to facilitate the identification and mitigation of potential interference risks without introducing a formal registration requirement for receive-only FSS earth stations as part of the initial 5G assignment process.

URCA may also consider, as part of a future regulatory workstream, whether a broader registration framework for certain categories of radio equipment, including receive-only FSS earth stations and other equipment currently exempt from licensing or registration, is necessary

and appropriate. Such a framework could improve URCA's visibility of equipment deployed and operating within the national spectrum environment, thereby supporting more effective spectrum planning, interference management and the efficient use of radio spectrum. Any proposal to introduce such a framework would be subject to public consultation and the applicable statutory and regulatory requirements before a final decision is made.

Respondents have expressed differing views on the 3700–3800 MHz range. The Confidential Respondent considers the range to be unencumbered and has proposed its use for enterprise networks, while GSOA has raised concerns regarding potential interference with existing FSS operations. URCA confirms that the 3700–3800 MHz range will not form part of the initial 5G spectrum assignment. Any potential use of this range for Standalone Non-Public Networks (S-NPNs) or other applications will be considered separately, as addressed under Question 11, having regard to spectrum availability, existing allocations and the technical requirements necessary to ensure appropriate coexistence with incumbent services.

URCA notes BTC's submission concerning n66. The use of existing spectrum assignments for 5G is addressed under Question 5, while the potential future release of additional spectrum bands is considered under Question 7. In light of the revised initial spectrum configuration and the matters addressed above, URCA does not consider it necessary to establish separate assignment arrangements for n66, n77 or other additional bands as part of the initial 5G assignment process.

2.4.3 URCA's Decision

Having considered the stakeholder submissions, the outcomes of its spectrum utilisation assessment and the relevant technical and regulatory considerations, URCA confirms n78 as the primary mid-band for the initial 5G spectrum assignment process. The initial assignment will comprise two nominal 100 MHz TDD blocks at 3400–3500 MHz (Block A) and 3600–3700 MHz (Block B), as further addressed under Question 6.

The revised configuration reflects URCA's decision to refrain from including 3300–3400 MHz in the initial assignment pending further technical assessment and consideration of potential coexistence and coordination concerns involving radar operations in neighbouring countries. It also takes account of the availability of the 3400–3500 MHz frequency range following the voluntary surrender of the relevant spectrum assignment by a licensee, consistent with the spectrum refarming and reconfiguration matters addressed under Question 5. The potential future use of 3300–3400 MHz for 5G will be considered separately, having regard to the outcome of the relevant technical assessments and international coordination arrangements.

URCA further confirms that the use of 3400–3500 MHz for terrestrial 5G deployment will be subject to the applicable international agreement and coordination requirements under the ITU Radio Regulations, including those arising under footnotes 5.431A and 5.431B and Radio

Regulations No. 9.21. The use of 3600–3700 MHz may also be subject to technical measures necessary to facilitate coexistence between terrestrial 5G and adjacent FSS operations in the 3700–4200 MHz range. URCA will address these matters through the relevant technical and regulatory processes, including applicable international coordination arrangements and the development of the 5G Spectrum Band Plan.

The frequency block configurations, usable bandwidth and applicable technical and operational restrictions, including any guard-band, emission-limit, power restriction or coordination requirements, will be specified in the 5G Spectrum Band Plan and reflected in the ITA and relevant spectrum licence conditions, consistent with the final decisions set out in this SoR, including URCA's decision under Question 17.

The Band Plan will be published following the issuance of this SoR and prior to the ITA. Any material differences in usable bandwidth, technical characteristics, international coordination requirements or operational restrictions applicable to the two blocks, including the status and implications of any outstanding international coordination requirements, will be clearly identified in the ITA documentation before applicants are required to submit binding commitments. Prospective applicants will be afforded a reasonable opportunity to submit written requests for clarification concerning these requirements and to receive URCA's responses before the deadline for submitting binding commitments under the spectrum assignment process.

The 3700–3800 MHz frequency range will not form part of the initial 5G spectrum assignment. Any potential use of this frequency range for private 5G networks or other applications will be considered separately, in accordance with URCA's decision under Question 11, having regard to spectrum availability, the applicable frequency allocations, existing spectrum use and the technical requirements necessary to ensure appropriate coexistence between terrestrial and satellite services. URCA will continue to assess additional mid-band spectrum options, including potential refarming and the future release of other frequency bands, having regard to market demand, existing spectrum use and spectrum availability.

2.5 Responses to Question 4: High-Band Spectrum (mmWave)

Question 4:

(a) Do you agree/disagree with URCA's proposal not to prioritise mmWave spectrum for the initial 5G spectrum assignment process? Please provide your comments with supporting reasoning.

(b) Do you have views on the potential use cases for the assignment of mmWave spectrum (e.g. 26 GHz, 28 GHz) in The Bahamas? Please identify any specific use cases, geographic areas, or industries that may benefit from early or targeted mmWave deployments.

2.5.1 Summary of Stakeholder Views

BTC agreed that mmWave spectrum should not be prioritised in the initial assignment phase. It considered mmWave more appropriate for targeted, high-density and localised use cases, including major sporting events, cruise ship ports and similar environments.

GSOA also supported URCA's proposal not to prioritise mmWave spectrum for the initial 5G deployment phase. It considered the current demand profile in The Bahamas to be better addressed through low- and mid-band spectrum and noted that international mmWave deployments have experienced limited commercial success and underutilisation in some markets due to high infrastructure costs, limited propagation characteristics and insufficient near-term demand outside niche use cases. GSOA further emphasised that higher-frequency spectrum, particularly within the Ka-band, is heavily utilised by satellite systems for high-throughput satellite services and broadband connectivity, including maritime and aviation applications.

In its comments on URCA's future spectrum roadmap, GSOA took a stronger position in relation to 28 GHz and opposed its future allocation for terrestrial 5G. GSOA considered the band to form part of an important globally harmonised satellite ecosystem and expressed concern that terrestrial 5G use could create harmful interference, operational constraints and reduced spectrum availability for existing and future satellite systems.

The Confidential Respondent partially disagreed with complete deferral of mmWave. It considered that The Bahamas has specific high-density use cases where C-band capacity may be insufficient during periods of peak demand. The Confidential Respondent identified high-density public venues, transportation hubs, sporting and entertainment facilities, and convention and conference centres as potential applications for targeted mmWave deployment.

The Confidential Respondent recommended that URCA include mmWave in its near-term spectrum roadmap and undertake a dedicated consultation on 26 GHz and 28 GHz within twelve months of finalisation of the 5G framework.

The CBL Group agreed that mmWave spectrum should not be prioritised in the short or medium term. It considered the case for mmWave deployment in The Bahamas to be weak, principally because the country does not contain the extremely dense urban environments that would typically warrant deployment in these bands. It nevertheless identified stadiums, industrial parks, private networks and fixed wireless access as potential targeted applications. CBL Group considered that future demand should be market-led and that URCA should indicate, as a matter of principle, that mmWave spectrum could be made available to operators where demand emerges.

2.5.2 URCA's Analysis

URCA considers that the current demand profile and deployment priorities in The Bahamas are better served by low- and mid-band spectrum. These bands provide the combination of coverage

and capacity required to support the initial deployment of nationwide 5G services, whereas mmWave spectrum is principally suited to highly localised environments characterised by very high traffic density and capacity requirements.

URCA notes the broad agreement among BTC, CBL Group and GSOA that mmWave spectrum need not form part of the initial assignment process. URCA also considers GSOA's observations regarding the international experience with mmWave deployment to be relevant. The comparatively limited propagation characteristics of mmWave spectrum, together with the need for denser network infrastructure and the more specialised nature of the applications identified, support a phased approach rather than inclusion of these bands in the initial national assignment.

At the same time, URCA notes that the use cases identified by BTC and the Confidential Respondent demonstrate that mmWave spectrum may have value in particular locations or circumstances, especially high-density environments where significant numbers of users or devices are concentrated within a defined geographic area and where additional network capacity may be required during peak periods. Such environments may include sporting and entertainment venues, transportation hubs, convention facilities and other locations with concentrated connectivity demands.

However, URCA does not consider that the submissions presently establish the level of demand, preferred frequency band, spectrum quantum, licensing model or coexistence conditions necessary to support a permanent mmWave allocation. The existence of potentially viable use cases does not, by itself, justify the immediate release of spectrum. In URCA's view, any future allocation should be based on demonstrated demand and an assessment of the technical and regulatory conditions applicable to the relevant band.

URCA has also considered CBL Group's proposal that future access to mmWave spectrum should be responsive to market demand and that such spectrum should, in principle, be available where requested by operators. URCA agrees that evidence of concrete market demand should be an important consideration in determining whether and when a future release is warranted. However, URCA does not consider it appropriate to give an advance commitment that any particular mmWave band will be made available upon request. Any future assignment must remain subject to spectrum availability, competing uses, efficient spectrum management and the applicable technical and policy considerations.

Particular caution is required in relation to the 28 GHz band. GSOA has identified existing and prospective satellite uses within this frequency range and has opposed its allocation for terrestrial 5G. URCA therefore considers that any future consideration of 28 GHz would require a separate assessment of applicable international allocations, current and prospective satellite use, coexistence requirements and the potential for harmful interference. URCA does not therefore accept that 26 GHz and 28 GHz should necessarily be treated as interchangeable candidates for future terrestrial 5G deployment.

URCA nevertheless considers that targeted trials and other controlled testing arrangements may provide useful evidence regarding the practical value of mmWave technologies in Bahamian conditions. Such arrangements could assist URCA in understanding demand, propagation, interference, network architecture and appropriate authorisation models without prejudging whether any particular band should ultimately be released on a permanent basis.

URCA therefore considers that the appropriate approach is to retain mmWave spectrum outside the initial national assignment while continuing to monitor market demand and allowing technically bounded proposals to be considered through controlled testing arrangements where appropriate. Any permanent release should be considered separately and on the basis of evidence concerning demand, spectrum availability, competing uses and applicable coexistence requirements.

2.5.3 URCA's Decision

URCA will not prioritise mmWave spectrum in the initial 5G spectrum assignment process.

URCA will continue to assess evidence of targeted demand for mmWave spectrum, including the potential use of 26 GHz and other appropriate high-frequency bands, through its future spectrum planning work and controlled testing arrangements.

URCA does not consider it appropriate to adopt the Confidential Respondent's proposed twelve-month timeframe for undertaking a dedicated mmWave consultation or making additional spectrum available for assignment. The timing and scope of any future consultation or spectrum release will be determined having regard to demonstrated market demand, evidence obtained through trials and commercial deployments, spectrum availability, and relevant technical, regulatory and policy considerations.

Any future consideration of the 28 GHz band will additionally take account of existing and prospective satellite use, applicable international spectrum arrangements, coexistence requirements and the potential for harmful interference. URCA therefore makes no commitment at this stage regarding the future availability of 28 GHz for terrestrial 5G.

The high-density and enterprise use cases identified during the consultation will inform URCA’s future spectrum work. Where sufficient evidence of demand emerges and the relevant technical and coexistence considerations can be satisfactorily addressed, URCA may undertake a separate consultation on the release or authorisation of appropriate mmWave spectrum.

2.6 Responses to Question 5: Spectrum Refarming and Reconfiguration

Question 5:
What are your views on whether URCA should explore re-farming, reconfiguration or migration of current assignments (e.g. CCTV use in the 3.4–3.6 GHz band or LTE use in 700 MHz) to facilitate 5G rollout? Please provide any views on how this process should be managed, including timing, safeguards, or transition mechanisms.

2.6.1 Summary of Stakeholder Views

BTC supported URCA's willingness to explore future spectrum refarming, including possible refarming of CCTV spectrum in the 3.4–3.6 GHz band and existing LTE use in the 700 MHz band. BTC cautioned, however, that refarming, particularly in 700 MHz, could require replacement of existing network equipment and involve significant capital expenditure. It therefore considered that any refarming process should include appropriate safeguards, realistic implementation timelines and due consideration of legacy investment recovery.

The CBL Group considered that there is a case for future refarming of the 3.4–3.6 GHz range currently used for CCTV. It questioned the efficiency of using 3.5 GHz spectrum for video surveillance and proposed that such systems migrate to fibre-based backhaul over time. CBL Group considered that the wider 3.3–3.8 GHz range should ultimately be available for 5G and suggested that URCA seek to clear sufficient spectrum to provide approximately 200 MHz for future 5G use. By contrast, CBL Group did not favour refarming existing 700 MHz LTE assignments and considered that MNOs should instead have flexibility to deploy 5G using their existing 800 MHz holdings where appropriate.

The Confidential Respondent supported a gradual technology-migration approach rather than the immediate displacement of existing CCTV users. It considered CCTV to be an important public-safety function and proposed that URCA develop a roadmap under which existing systems progressively migrate to modern IP-based infrastructure, including potentially over 5G networks. The Confidential Respondent proposed no immediate refarming of 3.4–3.6 GHz in the near term, voluntary migration of CCTV systems during 2027–2028, and potential future availability of the band for enterprise, MNO or specialised 5G use as incumbent systems migrate. The Confidential Respondent took no position on whether 700 MHz LTE should be refarmed but cautioned that any such process should take account of the importance of existing LTE coverage, particularly in Family Island communities.

GSOA focused principally on the 700 MHz band. It considered 700 MHz technically suitable for 5G NR because of its favourable propagation characteristics and device ecosystem but emphasised that the band is also relevant to satellite Direct-to-Device and other non-terrestrial network deployments. GSOA therefore recommended that any decision concerning 700 MHz

preserve the potential for hybrid terrestrial-satellite use, including as a means of extending connectivity to remote and underserved Family Island communities.

AST SpaceMobile did not provide a specific response to Question 5 but made related submissions concerning the strategic importance of 700 MHz for D2D services. It recommended that future spectrum planning preserve the ability to support hybrid terrestrial-satellite use of low-band IMT spectrum and provide a regulatory pathway for D2D deployment.

2.6.2 URCA's Analysis

URCA considers refarming, reconfiguration and migration to be important spectrum-management tools for ensuring that radio spectrum continues to be used efficiently and is capable of supporting technological evolution and changing demand.

This approach is grounded in the Comms Act. Section 4 establishes the electronic communications policy objectives, including promoting efficiency, investment and innovation, and the optimal use of state assets, including radio spectrum. Subject to section 30, section 29 assigns to URCA responsibility for managing, allocating and assigning spectrum, while section 32 requires spectrum to be managed in an open, objective, transparent, non-discriminatory and economically efficient manner that facilitates the evolution of new technologies and services. Section 32 also requires appropriate regard to existing investment and the costs associated with migration.

URCA therefore considers that the existence of an incumbent assignment does not, by itself, justify its indefinite continuation. Relevant considerations include the extent and efficiency of actual use, the bandwidth reasonably required, available alternative technologies or spectrum resources, existing investment, service-continuity requirements and demonstrated demand for alternative uses.

In relation to the 3.4–3.6 GHz range, BTC, CBL Group and the Confidential Respondent supported, to varying degrees, consideration of the future refarming or migration of existing uses to facilitate 5G deployment. CBL Group favoured migration of existing CCTV applications to fibre and the eventual clearing of additional contiguous spectrum for 5G, while the Confidential Respondent proposed a more gradual and voluntary technology-migration process. BTC similarly supported URCA's consideration of refarming existing spectrum for 5G, while emphasising the need for appropriate safeguards, realistic transition periods and due regard to existing investment and migration costs.

URCA considers the 3.4–3.6 GHz range to be an important spectrum resource for the continued development of 5G services in The Bahamas. The availability of sufficiently large and contiguous blocks of mid-band spectrum can support greater network capacity, higher data throughput and the continued evolution of advanced mobile services.

Against this background, URCA considers that existing assignments within the 3.4–3.6 GHz range should be assessed having regard to actual utilisation. This includes whether the assigned frequencies and bandwidth are actively and efficiently used, the geographic and operational extent of deployment, the services and users dependent on the spectrum, and whether some or all of the assignment is unused, not in significant use or materially underutilised.

The availability of alternative technologies or spectrum resources is also a relevant consideration. Where an incumbent service may be capable of being accommodated through fibre, another spectrum band or another technically suitable solution, URCA considers that this should form part of the assessment of whether continued use of the existing assignment remains appropriate, having regard to the technical, operational and financial implications of migration.

This approach is consistent with section 36 of the Comms Act, which provides a mechanism for assigned spectrum to be declared vacant and made available for reassignment in specified circumstances, including where spectrum is not in significant use and there is demonstrable demand from other persons for the efficient use of all or part of it.

Accordingly, where the evidence indicates that existing assignments are unused, not in significant use or potentially underutilised, URCA considers that further assessment may be warranted to determine whether reconfiguration, reduction or migration would be appropriate. Where the statutory criteria under section 36 of the Comms Act are satisfied, URCA may take appropriate action in accordance with that provision. URCA will also consider opportunities for voluntary or coordinated migration where suitable alternative arrangements are available.

URCA considers it important, however, to distinguish between the broader spectrum-management objective of increasing the availability of contiguous mid-band spectrum and the treatment of individual incumbent assignments. Any decision affecting a particular assignment must be supported by evidence concerning the actual use of that spectrum, the operational requirements of the incumbent service and the availability of reasonable alternatives.

URCA does not consider that migration should be pursued merely to create spectrum for which there is no demonstrated requirement. Equally, existing assignments should not be preserved solely because they have historically been assigned where the evidence supports a more efficient alternative use.

URCA notes the Confidential Respondent's preference for voluntary technology migration. URCA considers that voluntary or coordinated migration may provide an appropriate and efficient means of facilitating transition where suitable alternatives are available and the interests of affected users can be adequately addressed. However, URCA also considers that, where voluntary arrangements are not sufficient to achieve efficient spectrum use or to meet demonstrated spectrum requirements, a more structured reconfiguration or migration process may need to be considered, having regard to the applicable statutory framework and the technical, operational and financial circumstances of any affected incumbent.

In relation to 700 MHz, URCA considers the position materially different. Stakeholder submissions highlighted existing LTE investment, coverage requirements, particularly in the Family Islands, and the potential relevance of 700 MHz to D2D and NTN services. URCA therefore does not consider that the record presently supports refarming existing 700 MHz LTE assignments for the initial 5G spectrum release.

URCA also notes CBL Group's request to use its existing 800 MHz spectrum holdings for 5G. URCA considers that any such use should be assessed through the applicable licensing and spectrum-management process to determine whether it is consistent with the NSP 2026 - 2029 and any other applicable regulatory or technical requirements.

Overall, URCA does not consider immediate refarming of existing 700 MHz LTE assignments necessary for the initial 5G spectrum release at this time. The position in relation to 3.4–3.6 GHz is different. URCA considers that increasing the availability of contiguous spectrum in this range is an appropriate spectrum-management objective and will assess existing assignments and utilisation to determine the extent to which spectrum may be reconfigured, reduced, migrated or otherwise made available for 5G.

Any such action will be evidence-based and proportionate and will have regard to actual spectrum use, demonstrated demand, existing investment, migration costs, service continuity and the applicable statutory framework.

2.6.3 URCA's Decision

Having considered the stakeholder submissions and the statutory framework for the management of radio spectrum, URCA has determined that:

1. URCA will not, at this stage, refarm existing 700 MHz LTE assignments as part of the initial 5G spectrum assignment process, recognising that the band continues to support the provision of 4G LTE services, including coverage in the Family Islands. URCA may, however, explore the potential for future refarming of the band, having regard to existing service requirements, network coverage and continuity, evolving spectrum demand, and emerging Direct-to-Device (D2D) and Non-Terrestrial Network (NTN) applications
2. URCA will pursue opportunities to increase the availability of contiguous spectrum within the 3.4–3.6 GHz range for 5G and other advanced mobile services. To this end, URCA is assessing existing spectrum assignments and utilisation to determine whether, and to what extent, spectrum may appropriately be reconfigured, reduced, migrated or otherwise made available for 5G, having regard to the applicable statutory framework and the circumstances of affected licensees.
3. In making that assessment, URCA will have regard to the extent and efficiency of actual spectrum use, whether spectrum is unused or not in significant use, the bandwidth

reasonably required for incumbent services, demonstrated demand for alternative use, the availability of suitable alternative technologies or spectrum resources, existing investment, migration costs and service-continuity requirements.

4. Where the statutory criteria under section 36 of the Comms Act are satisfied, including where assigned spectrum is not in significant use and there is demonstrable demand from other persons for the efficient use of all or part of that spectrum, URCA may take appropriate action in accordance with that section.
5. Where spectrum is in use, but reconfiguration or migration is otherwise considered appropriate, URCA will determine the appropriate regulatory approach having regard to the applicable statutory framework and the technical, operational and financial circumstances of affected incumbents.
6. URCA will consider requests from existing licensees to deploy 5G services using their existing IMT spectrum assignments, including the 800 MHz band, on a technology-neutral and non-discriminatory basis, subject to the NSP 2026 - 2029 and any other applicable regulatory or technical requirements. This is without prejudice to any future refarming of the relevant frequency bands.

Any reconfiguration, migration or other action affecting an existing spectrum assignment will be implemented through the applicable regulatory process and will be evidence-based and proportionate, with appropriate regard to reasonable notice, technical coordination and continuity of existing services.

2.7 Responses to Question 6: Initial Spectrum Configuration and Quantum

Question 6:
Do you agree/disagree with the proposed spectrum configuration for the initial 5G assignment, including the proposal to make available low-band spectrum holdings in the order of 2 × 10 MHz per operator in the n71 band and contiguous mid-band spectrum holdings in the order of 100 MHz per operator in the n78 band, as set out in Table 1 and Table 2 respectively?

2.7.1 Summary of Stakeholder Views

BTC supported the proposed assignment of approximately 100 MHz of contiguous n78 spectrum per operator. However, BTC considered the proposed 2 × 10 MHz allocation in the n71 band insufficient to support the coverage and performance expectations contemplated under the framework. BTC recommended that the initial low-band assignment be increased to at least 2 × 15 MHz per operator to support improved spectral efficiency, user experience and longer-term scalability. BTC also recommended that URCA review its proposed performance benchmarks having regard to the spectrum quantum ultimately assigned.

The CBL Group similarly considered the proposed n71 allocation insufficient for efficient and effective 5G deployment and recommended an allocation of 2 × 20 MHz per operator. It also proposed the assignment of 100 MHz of contiguous mid-band spectrum per operator in the n77/n78 range.

The Confidential Respondent supported the proposed configuration of low-band and mid-band spectrum for MNOs, considering it appropriate for balancing wide-area coverage and network capacity. However, The Confidential Respondent submitted that the proposed configuration did not adequately address the spectrum requirements of standalone private 5G networks. It recommended that URCA designate the 3.7–3.8 GHz range for geographically bounded enterprise spectrum assignments.

GSOA supported the proposed spectrum configuration in principle, including the allocation of n71 and contiguous n78 spectrum for initial 5G deployment. However, GSOA emphasised the importance of protecting existing satellite services operating in adjacent C-band frequencies. It recommended appropriate technical safeguards, including guard bands, emission limits, coordination arrangements and, where necessary, protection or exclusion zones around satellite earth stations.

AST SpaceMobile did not provide a specific recommendation concerning the proposed spectrum quantum. However, it supported the suitability of n71 for wide-area connectivity and emphasised the importance of preserving opportunities for future terrestrial-satellite integration, including D2D services.

2.7.2 URCA's Analysis

URCA notes the broad support for the proposed use of n71 and n78 spectrum for the initial deployment of 5G services in The Bahamas. However, stakeholders expressed differing views on the appropriate quantum of low-band spectrum to be made available to each operator, particularly having regard to anticipated coverage, capacity and performance requirements.

URCA has considered BTC's recommendation to increase the initial n71 assignment to at least 2 × 15 MHz per operator and CBL Group's proposal for 2 × 20 MHz per operator. The proposed n71 plan comprises 35 MHz of paired spectrum in each direction. Two assignments of 2 × 20 MHz would require 40 MHz in each direction and therefore cannot be accommodated within the proposed plan. Although two assignments of 2 × 15 MHz could be accommodated arithmetically, this would leave only 5 MHz of paired spectrum available for future assignment.

URCA considers that the proposed assignment of 2 × 10 MHz per operator represents an initial allocation intended to facilitate the introduction of wide-area 5G services while preserving flexibility to respond to future spectrum requirements. URCA does not consider it appropriate, at this stage, to assign substantially all available n71 spectrum, particularly where future requirements may evolve with network deployment, technological developments and demand

for additional connectivity services.

URCA notes that the initial assignment of n71 spectrum will leave 15 MHz of paired spectrum in each direction available for potential future assignment. For the avoidance of doubt, this remaining spectrum is not reserved for any particular licensee or prospective applicant, and no decision has been taken regarding its future assignment. Any future release or assignment will be considered separately, having regard to market demand, spectrum availability, the efficient use of spectrum, the promotion of competition, applicable Government policy, including policy relating to market entry, and other relevant policy objectives. Any such assignment will be undertaken in accordance with the applicable provisions of the Comms Act, the NSP 2026 - 2029 and the relevant regulatory and assignment procedures.

URCA notes the concerns raised by BTC regarding the relationship between the proposed low-band spectrum quantum and the performance expectations under the framework. URCA recognises that achievable service performance will depend on several factors, including the available spectrum bandwidth, network configuration, equipment capabilities, deployment density and propagation characteristics. Accordingly, URCA clarifies that the minimum downlink and uplink network capability requirements apply to the licensee's overall 5G network in designated urban or high-demand areas, rather than independently to each assigned frequency band. The applicable assessment methodology and compliance criteria will be specified in the ITA and reflected in the relevant spectrum licence conditions.

In relation to n78, URCA notes the broad support for the proposed assignment of approximately 100 MHz of contiguous spectrum per operator. URCA considers that such assignments are consistent with widely adopted approaches to mid-band 5G deployment and provide substantial capacity to support enhanced mobile broadband services, subject to the applicable technical conditions and network deployment arrangements.

As explained in Section 2.4, URCA has reconsidered the initially proposed n78 block configuration in light of further technical assessments concerning the 3300–3400 MHz frequency range and developments regarding the potential availability of spectrum within 3400–3500 MHz following the voluntary surrender of relevant assignments by a licensee. Accordingly, URCA considers it appropriate to substitute 3400–3500 MHz for the originally proposed 3300–3400 MHz block, while retaining 3600–3700 MHz as the second block. The revised configuration maintains the proposed quantum of 100 MHz of contiguous n78 spectrum per operator and is consistent with the spectrum refarming and reconfiguration matters addressed during the consultation, as further explained under Question 3.

URCA recognises that the revised n78 blocks may be subject to different technical and regulatory requirements. In particular, the use of 3400–3500 MHz is subject to applicable international agreement and coordination requirements under the ITU Radio Regulations, including those arising under footnotes 5.431A and 5.431B and Radio Regulations No. 9.21. The use of 3600–

3700 MHz may also require technical measures to facilitate coexistence between terrestrial 5G and adjacent Fixed-Satellite Service (FSS) operations in the 3700–4200 MHz range. These considerations, including any implications for usable bandwidth and operational conditions, are addressed in Section 2.4 and will inform the applicable technical conditions and spectrum assignment arrangements.

With respect to the Confidential Respondent's proposal to designate spectrum within the 3700–3800 MHz range for standalone private 5G networks, URCA recognises the potential role of dedicated spectrum access in supporting enterprise applications. While URCA has considered the regulatory framework for private 5G networks as part of this consultation, it considers that the designation of specific spectrum for such networks warrants further technical and regulatory assessment, including consideration of spectrum availability, demonstrated demand, applicable international coordination requirements and coexistence with existing services.

In this regard, URCA intends to facilitate controlled trials of private 5G networks to inform future decisions concerning spectrum access and assignment arrangements. The frequency bands and technical conditions applicable to such trials will be determined on a case-by-case basis, having regard to the proposed use, spectrum availability, applicable regulatory requirements and the need to protect existing authorised services. Accordingly, URCA does not consider it appropriate to designate the 3700–3800 MHz range for permanent private 5G assignments at this stage.

URCA notes the relevance of emerging D2D and NTN applications to future spectrum planning. While these developments do not alter the initial spectrum quantum determined in this section, URCA will continue to consider their implications in the context of future spectrum management and regulatory initiatives.

2.7.3 URCA's Decision

Having considered the stakeholder submissions and the relevant technical and regulatory considerations, URCA confirms the spectrum configuration for the initial 5G spectrum assignment process, as refined from the proposals set out in Section 3.5 of the Consultation Document, comprising:

1. **n71:** Two paired Frequency Division Duplex (FDD) assignments of 2 × 10 MHz each, consisting of:
    - Pair A: 617–627 MHz (downlink) and 663–673 MHz (uplink); and
    - Pair B: 642–652 MHz (downlink) and 688–698 MHz (uplink).
2. **n78:** Two contiguous Time Division Duplex (TDD) assignments of 100 MHz each, consisting of:
    - Block A: 3400–3500 MHz; and

- Block B: 3600–3700 MHz.

The revised n78 configuration reflects URCA's assessment of the relevant technical considerations and developments in spectrum availability, including the voluntary surrender by a licensee of its spectrum assignment within the 3400–3500 MHz frequency range, as explained in Section 2.4. The assignment and deployment of the relevant spectrum blocks will remain subject to applicable international coordination requirements and technical measures necessary to facilitate coexistence with existing services.

The assignment of individual spectrum blocks will be determined through the applicable spectrum assignment process. The 5G Spectrum Band Plan and ITA documentation will specify the applicable technical and operational conditions, usable bandwidth and any material restrictions or outstanding coordination requirements affecting the assigned frequency blocks, consistent with URCA's decisions under Questions 3 and 17. These requirements will be made available to prospective applicants before they are required to submit binding commitments. Applicants will be afforded a reasonable opportunity to submit written requests for clarification and receive URCA's responses before the applicable submission deadline.

2.8 Responses to Question 7: Indicative Spectrum Roadmap Beyond Initial Deployment

Question 7:
Do you have views on URCA's indicative spectrum roadmap beyond the initial phase of 5G deployment? In particular, are there additional frequency bands or use cases that URCA should consider prioritising for future consultation and potential release?

2.8.1 Summary of Stakeholder Views

BTC recommended that URCA expressly recognise band n66 as a potential candidate for future refarming and capacity enhancement, particularly for urban deployments. BTC also supported continued flexibility to refarm existing spectrum holdings as older mobile technologies are progressively replaced.

The CBL Group considered that the initial spectrum assignments may be sufficient to meet foreseeable demand, having regard to moderating mobile data traffic growth. It therefore did not consider that further spectrum releases, including spectrum for 6G, should be prioritised at this stage. CBL Group also anticipated that spectrum currently used for 3G and 4G services may progressively be refarmed for 5G.

GSOA supported URCA's indicative and phased approach to future spectrum releases but emphasised that the roadmap should remain technology-neutral and recognise the complementary role of satellite services. In particular, GSOA opposed the future allocation of the

28 GHz band for terrestrial 5G services, citing its importance for satellite operations and the potential for harmful interference. GSOA further recommended that the roadmap expressly recognise satellite backhaul, hybrid terrestrial-satellite networks and Direct-to-Device (D2D) connectivity as means of improving coverage and resilience.

AST SpaceMobile recommended that URCA establish a defined regulatory pathway during 2026–2027 to facilitate D2D services using IMT spectrum in partnership with authorised mobile network operators. AST SpaceMobile also advocated a complementary pathway for access to traditional Mobile-Satellite Service (MSS) spectrum, including consideration of the applicable moratorium, to support satellite-based mobile broadband services.

The Confidential Respondent welcomed the recognition of private and specialised network spectrum within URCA's indicative roadmap but considered that clearer frequency bands, milestones and implementation arrangements were necessary. It proposed a phased enterprise spectrum roadmap encompassing the designation of 3.7–3.8 GHz for geographically bounded private 5G networks, controlled enterprise trials, future consideration of 26 GHz and 28 GHz for targeted high-density applications, the progressive migration of CCTV systems from 3.4–3.6 GHz, and the development of permanent enterprise spectrum arrangements by 2028.

2.8.2 URCA's Analysis

URCA notes the stakeholder submissions concerning the future spectrum roadmap and considers that a phased and flexible approach remains appropriate to support the continued evolution of electronic communications services in The Bahamas. URCA considers that decisions concerning future spectrum releases should be informed by demonstrated demand, existing spectrum utilisation, technological developments, international harmonisation and the need to safeguard existing authorised services.

URCA notes BTC's recommendation to recognise band n66 as a potential future capacity band and CBL Group's observation that the initial spectrum assignments may be sufficient to accommodate foreseeable demand. URCA considers that these submissions underscore the importance of ensuring that future spectrum releases are demand-led and supported by appropriate technical and regulatory assessments. Accordingly, URCA will continue to monitor the potential for additional spectrum assignments, including opportunities arising from the refarming of existing holdings and the evolution of mobile technologies. This may include consideration of band n66, subject to relevant technical, regulatory and spectrum-availability considerations.

With respect to higher-frequency spectrum, URCA has considered GSOA's concerns regarding the potential use of the 28 GHz band for terrestrial 5G services, particularly the implications for existing satellite operations. URCA considers that any future consideration of mmWave spectrum, including the 26 GHz and 28 GHz bands, must have appropriate regard to

demonstrated demand, the applicable international frequency allocations, existing authorised services, technical coexistence requirements and the potential for harmful interference. URCA does not consider it appropriate at this stage to commit to the future release of either band for terrestrial 5G services or to determine their exclusive future use.

URCA further recognises the growing importance of satellite-terrestrial integration, including satellite-enabled backhaul and D2D connectivity, in supporting network coverage, resilience and connectivity in underserved and remote areas. URCA notes AST SpaceMobile's recommendation for a defined regulatory pathway for D2D services using IMT spectrum and complementary MSS spectrum. URCA considers that these matters should be addressed consistently with its existing regulatory framework for satellite-based electronic communications services (ECS 07/2026), the applicable spectrum-authorisation arrangements and any relevant Government policy or restrictions. In this regard, URCA intends to publish a consultation before the end of 2026 on the development of a regulatory framework to facilitate trials of emerging technologies, including satellite D2D services, which will consider the applicable regulatory and technical arrangements for such trials.

URCA also notes the Confidential Respondent's proposal for a phased enterprise spectrum roadmap, including the early designation of 3700–3800 MHz for standalone private 5G networks and the establishment of permanent enterprise licensing arrangements following controlled trials. URCA recognises the potential benefits of private 5G networks for enterprise and specialised applications. However, URCA considers that the designation of specific spectrum for such networks warrants further technical and regulatory assessment, including consideration of demonstrated demand, spectrum availability, existing assignments, applicable international coordination requirements and coexistence with other authorised services. In this regard, URCA intends to facilitate controlled trials of private 5G networks to inform future decisions concerning spectrum access and assignment arrangements, consistent with its approach under Question 11. The frequency bands and technical conditions applicable to such trials will be determined separately, having regard to the proposed applications, spectrum availability, applicable regulatory requirements and the need to protect existing authorised services.

URCA further notes the Confidential Respondent's proposals concerning the future use of mmWave spectrum and the migration of existing CCTV systems from the 3.4–3.6 GHz frequency range. As explained above, URCA has undertaken further assessment of existing spectrum assignments within this frequency range, including engagement with a licensee which has resulted in the voluntary surrender of its spectrum assignment within the 3400–3500 MHz frequency range. In light of this development, URCA has determined to include the 3400–3500 MHz frequency range in the initial 5G assignment, replacing the originally proposed 3300–3400 MHz block. Any further consideration of spectrum within the 3.4–3.6 GHz frequency range will be informed by existing utilisation, spectrum availability, demonstrated demand and applicable technical and regulatory requirements. Proposals concerning the future use of mmWave

spectrum will be addressed consistently with URCA's decisions under Question 4.

Overall, URCA considers that the indicative spectrum roadmap should provide a basis for identifying and assessing potential future spectrum requirements without prejudging the outcome of subsequent technical assessments, consultations or assignment processes. URCA will therefore maintain flexibility to review and update its spectrum priorities as market conditions, technological developments and national policy requirements evolve.

2.8.3 URCA's Decision

Having considered the stakeholder submissions, URCA has determined to maintain a phased and indicative spectrum roadmap beyond the initial assignment of spectrum in the n71 and n78 bands.

URCA will continue to assess opportunities for future spectrum releases, including additional low-band, mid-band and high-band spectrum, the refarming of existing assignments, and spectrum access for emerging technologies and specialised applications. Such assessments will have regard to demonstrated demand, spectrum availability, technical feasibility, existing authorised services, international harmonisation and applicable national policy requirements.

URCA will also continue to facilitate the development of emerging connectivity services, including satellite-terrestrial integration, D2D applications and private 5G networks, through the applicable regulatory and spectrum-management processes. In particular, controlled trials may be undertaken to inform future decisions concerning spectrum access and assignment arrangements. The frequency bands and applicable technical conditions for such trials will be determined having regard to spectrum availability, the proposed applications, applicable international coordination and coexistence requirements, and the protection of existing authorised services, without prejudging the designation of specific frequency bands for permanent use.

Any future spectrum release or material change to existing spectrum assignments will be undertaken in accordance with the applicable statutory and regulatory requirements, including public consultation where required.

2.9 Responses to Question 8: Hybrid Assignment Model, Baseline Requirements and Comparative Evaluation

Question 8:
(a) Do you agree/disagree with URCA's proposed use of a hybrid assignment model combining administrative and comparative evaluation methods for the initial award of 5G spectrum? Please explain your views and whether an alternative model (e.g. auction or direct assignment) would be more appropriate for The Bahamas. (b) Do you agree/disagree with URCA's Proposed Non-Negotiable Minimum Baseline Requirements for 5G Spectrum Eligibility? (c) Do you agree/disagree with the proposed comparative evaluation and commitment tier framework?

2.9.1 Summary of Stakeholder Views

BTC supported URCA's proposed hybrid spectrum assignment model combining administrative and comparative evaluation, together with the principle of non-negotiable minimum baseline requirements. However, BTC cautioned that certain proposed user-speed and performance requirements may not be consistently achievable where low-band spectrum is limited to 2 × 10 MHz per operator. BTC therefore recommended that the proposed benchmarks be reviewed having regard to the spectrum configurations ultimately assigned.

The CBL Group opposed the proposed hybrid assignment model and recommended direct assignment of spectrum to the existing MNOs. It considered the proposed two-stage process unnecessarily complex and burdensome, particularly given the existing market structure, and questioned whether additional commitments under the comparative evaluation would be commercially sustainable. CBL Group also argued that the international benchmarks considered by URCA supported a direct assignment approach and that, given the restrictions on additional mobile market entry, the proposed process would be unlikely to produce a different outcome. CBL Group further raised concerns regarding the compatibility of the proposed assignment arrangements with potential Radio Access Network (RAN) sharing.

With respect to the minimum baseline requirements, CBL Group considered the proposed 100 Mbps downlink benchmark acceptable but challenged the proposed 50 Mbps uplink requirement, citing the technical characteristics of TDD network configurations and comparatively lower uplink spectral efficiency. It suggested that uplink performance closer to 10% of downlink performance would be more realistic. CBL Group also considered the proposed 30 ms end-to-end latency benchmark too stringent, suggesting approximately 40 ms as a more achievable threshold, and requested clarification of the referenced IMT-2000 performance benchmarks.

CBL Group further opposed the proposed comparative evaluation and enhanced commitment framework, arguing that additional coverage and performance commitments should be driven by demonstrated market demand rather than regulatory incentives. In particular, it considered

that enhanced coverage obligations in the Family Islands should be assessed in the broader context of universal service and the availability of alternative technologies.

GSOA supported the proposed hybrid assignment model and the establishment of enforceable baseline requirements. However, GSOA objected to the proposed 30 ms end-to-end latency requirement, considering that it could disadvantage satellite backhaul and hybrid terrestrial-satellite architectures, particularly where geostationary satellite systems are used. GSOA recommended differentiated or flexible performance criteria and encouraged URCA to recognise satellite-enabled solutions within the award framework, particularly for remote-area connectivity, rapid deployment and network resilience.

The Confidential Respondent supported the hybrid assignment model and the proposed tiered commitment framework for national MNO spectrum assignments. However, the Confidential Respondent recommended that FWA deployment to underserved communities be expressly recognised as a scored criterion under the coverage category. The Confidential Respondent also considered that the baseline requirements designed for national MNOs should not be applied to standalone private 5G networks and proposed separate eligibility and evaluation criteria for enterprise trials, placing greater emphasis on deployment readiness, use-case justification, public benefit and proportionate technical requirements.

2.9.2 URCA's Analysis

URCA has carefully considered the stakeholder submissions concerning the proposed hybrid spectrum assignment model, minimum baseline requirements and comparative evaluation framework. URCA maintains that the initial assignment of 5G spectrum should be undertaken through an objective, transparent and proportionate process that facilitates timely network deployment while ensuring that successful applicants undertake appropriate and enforceable commitments concerning network coverage, performance and resilience.

Spectrum Assignment Model

URCA notes BTC's support for the proposed hybrid assignment model and the CBL Group's recommendation for direct assignment to the existing MNOs. In particular, the CBL Group questioned the necessity of a two-stage assignment process where only two operators are eligible to receive the relevant spectrum and expressed concerns regarding the administrative and commercial implications of the proposed comparative evaluation framework. The CBL Group also contended that the international benchmarks considered in the Consultation Document supported a direct assignment approach.

URCA has considered the CBL Group's reliance on international benchmarks in support of direct assignment. While URCA acknowledges that direct administrative assignment has been adopted in certain jurisdictions, international experience demonstrates that managed spectrum assignment processes may take different forms, including approaches incorporating objective

eligibility requirements, comparative evaluation and binding deployment commitments.

In particular, as outlined in Section 2 of the Consultation Document, Mauritius adopted a managed assignment approach in 2021 under which operators' coverage commitments and spectrum preferences informed the allocation of 5G spectrum. Similarly, the 2024 assignment arrangements for 3.4–3.8 GHz spectrum in Martinique and Guadeloupe provided for qualifying applicants to receive an initial spectrum block upon acceptance of prescribed commitments, with additional spectrum assigned through competitive bidding.[1]

URCA considers these examples instructive, as they demonstrate that the limited number of operators in a market does not necessarily require the adoption of direct assignment. Rather, the appropriate assignment mechanism must reflect the applicable statutory framework, prevailing Government policy, market circumstances and regulatory objectives.

In the Bahamian context, URCA notes that the prevailing Government policy restricts eligibility for Premium IMT spectrum for the provision of public mobile services to BTC and Aliv. However, URCA does not consider that this restriction establishes an automatic entitlement to additional spectrum rights or dispenses with the applicable statutory requirements governing spectrum assignment.

Section 26(5) of the Comms Act requires a competitive selection process in circumstances where the Minister or URCA intends to restrict the number of individual licences granting rights to use the same or similar radio spectrum. Section 26(6) provides for the application of objective selection criteria, including financial bids, applicants' capabilities and deployment commitments, or a combination of these factors. URCA considers that these provisions are relevant to the design and implementation of the initial 5G spectrum assignment process.

URCA maintains that the hybrid assignment model proposed in the Consultation Document represented an appropriate approach to promoting transparency, objectivity and the achievement of national connectivity objectives. However, having considered the stakeholder submissions and the circumstances of the initial spectrum release, URCA considers that these objectives can be achieved through a more streamlined assignment process.

Accordingly, URCA has refined the proposed hybrid model to establish a single-stage managed competitive assignment process comprising two components within a single application and

[1] ARCEP, Decision No. 2024-0637 of 21 March 2024, concerning the procedures and conditions for assigning spectrum in the 700 MHz, 900 MHz and 3.4–3.8 GHz bands in Martinique and Guadeloupe, particularly Sections I.4.3(b), I.4.3(c) and I.5.1, available at: https://www.arcep.fr/uploads/tx_gsavis/24-0637.pdf.

assessment process:

a) **Mandatory Minimum Baseline Requirements:** Applicants must demonstrate their technical, financial and organisational capability and accept the applicable mandatory minimum deployment, coverage, performance, resilience and network and supply-chain security requirements established under Annex A.

b) **Enhanced Commitments:** Applicants must select at least one enhanced commitment from the prescribed categories and levels established under Annex B. Qualifying enhanced commitments will be evaluated using a simplified points-based system to determine allocation priority where applicants request the same frequency block.

URCA notes the CBL Group's concerns regarding the potential implications of Radio Access Network (RAN) sharing. URCA clarifies that its approach does not require applicants to undertake wholly independent network deployments. Applicants may rely on infrastructure and/or network-sharing arrangements approved by URCA to satisfy applicable baseline and enhanced commitments, subject to relevant regulatory requirements and safeguards. However, each successful applicant shall remain individually responsible for fulfilling its commitments and complying with its licence obligations.

Moreover, URCA recognizes that infrastructure and/or network sharing may also assist operators in meeting their respective Family Island deployment obligations and reducing unnecessary duplication of infrastructure.

Mandatory Minimum Baseline Requirements

URCA considers that mandatory minimum baseline requirements remain appropriate for the initial assignment of 5G spectrum. These requirements establish minimum expectations concerning network deployment, coverage, service performance, resilience, security and applicants' technical and financial capabilities.

URCA notes BTC's concerns regarding the proposed performance requirements in light of the available low-band spectrum quantum, the CBL Group's objections to the proposed uplink and latency benchmarks, and GSOA's concerns regarding the treatment of satellite-enabled network architectures.

In response to the CBL Group's request for clarification regarding the applicable IMT performance benchmarks, URCA confirms that the Consultation Document refers to IMT-2020, the framework established by the ITU for fifth-generation mobile technologies, rather than IMT-2000, which relates to third-generation mobile systems.

URCA recognises that performance requirements must take account of the technical characteristics of the relevant spectrum bands and network architectures. In particular, data-rate

requirements are intended to apply under specified assessment conditions and within designated service areas, rather than constitute uniform nationwide or cell-edge performance guarantees.

URCA notes stakeholders' comments regarding the measurement of uplink performance and end-to-end latency, including the need for clear and consistent measurement methodologies that account for different network architectures. URCA recognises that satellite-enabled solutions may complement terrestrial networks in extending coverage and improving network resilience, particularly in remote and underserved areas. In this regard, URCA acknowledges the inherent propagation delays associated with geostationary satellite backhaul and clarifies that the 30 ms end-to-end latency requirement will apply within designated assessment areas during initial Non-Standalone (NSA) deployment. The applicable assessment areas, measurement methodology and compliance criteria will be specified in the ITA and reflected in the relevant spectrum licence conditions.

Having considered the submissions, URCA remains of the view that the proposed minimum baseline requirements are appropriate to establish a common standard for 5G deployment and service delivery. Accordingly, URCA has decided to retain the minimum baseline framework, with clarifications where necessary to facilitate its implementation and enforcement. The final requirements are set out in Annex A.

URCA will retain the proposed minimum downlink and uplink capability requirements of 100 Mbps and 50 Mbps, respectively, in the designated assessment areas. Compliance with these requirements will be assessed in accordance with the technical conditions and measurement methodology specified in the Invitation to Apply (ITA). URCA does not consider it necessary to impose a fixed upload-to-download speed ratio across all coverage areas.

URCA further considers that network and supply-chain security should form part of the mandatory minimum baseline requirements. Applicants will be required to demonstrate appropriate cybersecurity governance, risk management and implementation arrangements consistent with the framework established under Question 15. At the application stage, URCA's assessment will focus on the adequacy of the proposed arrangements rather than requiring full operational compliance before deployment. Following deployment, URCA will monitor and verify compliance with the applicable security obligations. Any identified non-compliance may result in regulatory action, including enforcement measures, in accordance with the Comms Act and applicable licence condition.

Applicants must demonstrate their capacity and commitment to satisfy the mandatory minimum baseline requirements through appropriate supporting evidence. Where an applicant has not adequately demonstrated compliance with a mandatory minimum baseline requirement, URCA may provide an opportunity to clarify or remedy the deficiency within a prescribed period. Such opportunities shall not permit the relaxation of minimum standards or material changes to enhanced commitments.

An applicant that fails to satisfy the applicable mandatory minimum baseline requirements following any permitted clarification or rectification process will not qualify for spectrum assignment.

Enhanced Commitment Framework

URCA has considered the stakeholder submissions concerning the proposed comparative evaluation and enhanced commitment framework, including the CBL Group's concerns regarding the proportionality and commercial implications of additional deployment obligations.

URCA maintains that the assignment of additional Premium Spectrum should secure identifiable public benefits beyond the minimum requirements established for 5G deployment. The comparative evaluation framework proposed in the Consultation Document was intended to achieve this objective by encouraging applicants to undertake additional commitments concerning network coverage, performance and resilience.

Having considered the submissions received, URCA considers that these objectives can be achieved through a simplified points-based evaluation of predetermined enhanced commitments.

In determining the enhanced commitment categories and their relative priority, URCA has had regard to the objectives of the ECSP 2024–2027, the statutory objectives of the Comms Act and the particular geographic and market circumstances of The Bahamas. URCA considers that the initial assignment of 5G spectrum should support three principal policy outcomes: extending advanced connectivity across the country, improving the quality and performance of electronic communications services, and strengthening network resilience.

Accordingly, URCA has established the following enhanced commitment categories, in order of priority:

a) **Enhanced Coverage:** This category is accorded the highest priority, recognising the Government's objective of expanding access to advanced connectivity throughout The Bahamas and the particular challenges associated with serving geographically dispersed and underserved Family Island communities.

b) **Enhanced Network Performance:** This category is accorded the second priority, reflecting the importance of ensuring that 5G deployment delivers measurable improvements in network capacity, service quality and user experience for consumers and businesses.

c) **Enhanced Network Resilience:** This category is accorded the third priority, recognising the importance of strengthening network reliability, service continuity and preparedness for natural disasters and other disruptions, particularly given The Bahamas' vulnerability to hurricanes and other severe weather events.

URCA considers that these priorities reflect the public benefits sought from the initial assignment

of 5G spectrum. The relative priority assigned to each category is intended to guide the allocation of spectrum where competing block preferences arise and does not diminish the importance of the minimum obligations concerning coverage, performance and resilience that all successful applicants must satisfy.

Each category will comprise three progressively more demanding commitment levels, as specified in Annex B.

URCA recognises that applicants may differ in their ability to undertake the highest commitment level within a particular category. A framework that gives automatic priority to the highest individual commitment level may therefore disadvantage an applicant willing to undertake several additional commitments across the identified policy priorities.

To address this, URCA has adopted a simplified scoring mechanism that recognises both the level and breadth of enhanced commitments undertaken. The scoring framework assigns a relative weighting of 4:3:2 to Enhanced Coverage, Enhanced Network Performance and Enhanced Network Resilience, respectively. This weighting gives greater emphasis to geographic coverage while providing meaningful recognition for additional commitments relating to service performance and network resilience.

Within each category, points increase progressively according to the commitment level undertaken. URCA considers that this approach provides a transparent and proportionate means of reflecting the relative policy priorities while encouraging applicants to undertake more demanding commitments across multiple categories.

The scoring matrix is set out in Table below.

Enhanced commitment category	**Level 1**	**Level 2**	**Level 3**
Enhanced Coverage	4	8	12
Enhanced Network Performance (QoS)	3	6	9
Enhanced Network Resilience	2	4	6
Maximum available score			**27**

Applicants may select commitments from one or more categories. Where an applicant undertakes commitments across multiple categories, the points awarded for each qualifying commitment will be added to determine its total enhanced commitment score.

Applicants may earn points for enhanced commitments across multiple categories. However, within each category, points will be awarded only for the highest commitment level undertaken. Points for different levels within the same category will not be added together.

URCA considers that this approach provides applicants with the flexibility to select enhanced commitments that best align with their respective network deployment strategies, operational

capabilities and investment priorities. It encourages applicants to offer commitments across different policy priorities without requiring them to achieve the highest commitment level in every category. The scoring mechanism also provides a transparent and objective basis for differentiating applicants where competing spectrum block preferences arise.

The minimum baseline requirements will remain mandatory qualification requirements and will not contribute to the enhanced commitment score. All enhanced commitments for which points are awarded must be supported by credible evidence of deliverability and will constitute binding and enforceable licence obligations.

Spectrum Block Allocation and Tie-Break Arrangements

URCA considers that the allocation of particular frequency blocks should be governed by predetermined, objective and transparent criteria. Satisfaction of the mandatory minimum baseline requirements will not, of itself, establish an entitlement to an applicant's preferred frequency block.

Applicants will be required to identify their preferred frequency blocks as part of their applications. Where qualifying applicants request different available frequency blocks, URCA may proceed with their respective assignments, subject to applicable technical and licensing requirements.

Where qualifying applicants request the same frequency block, allocation priority will be determined by reference to their total enhanced commitment scores. For the avoidance of doubt, each applicant's total enhanced commitment score will apply to the determination of its block preference priority in both the n71 and n78 bands.

The applicant achieving the higher total score will receive priority for the contested frequency block.

Where applicants achieve the same total score, priority shall be determined sequentially by comparing the points awarded for:

a) Enhanced Coverage;

b) Enhanced Network Performance; and

c) Enhanced Network Resilience.

Where applicants remain tied following the application of these criteria, URCA will resolve the competing preferences through a supervised random draw conducted in accordance with predetermined procedures that will be published in the ITA.

URCA considers that these arrangements provide an objective and proportionate mechanism for resolving competing spectrum requests without requiring negotiations between applicants.

Implementation of the Spectrum Assignment Process

URCA considers that the refined single-stage managed competitive assignment model should be implemented through a structured and transparent process that provides applicants with clear information concerning the applicable requirements and procedures.

Accordingly, URCA has established the principal procedures for the initial assignment of 5G spectrum, as set out in Annex C. These include issuance of the ITA, submission and assessment of applications, determination of applicant qualification, evaluation of enhanced commitments, resolution of competing spectrum preferences, notification of spectrum awards and issuance of the relevant spectrum licences.

The ITA will specify the applicable administrative and evidential requirements, submission deadlines, clarification procedures and detailed arrangements necessary to implement the assignment framework, consistently with the decisions established in this SoR.

2.9.3 URCA's Decision

Having regard to the foregoing, URCA confirms the adoption of a single-stage managed competitive assignment process comprising two components for the initial assignment of spectrum in the n71 and n78 bands.

Under the refined process, each eligible applicant will submit a single application demonstrating its capability and commitment to satisfy the mandatory minimum baseline requirements, identifying its preferred spectrum blocks and undertaking enhanced commitments in accordance with Annex B.

URCA confirms its decision to adopt the following assignment arrangements:

1. **Minimum Baseline Requirements:** Applicants must demonstrate their technical, financial and organisational capability and accept the applicable minimum baseline requirements established under Annex A, including network deployment, coverage, performance, resilience and network and supply-chain security. URCA may provide applicants with an opportunity to clarify or remedy deficiencies in demonstrating compliance with these requirements, in accordance with the procedures specified in the ITA. Applicants that fail to satisfy the applicable minimum qualification requirements following this process will not qualify for spectrum assignment. The minimum baseline requirements shall not attract numerical points and will constitute binding licence obligations for successful applicants.
2. **Enhanced Commitment Framework:** Each applicant shall select at least one enhanced commitment from the following categories:
    - Enhanced Coverage;
    - Enhanced Network Performance; or

- Enhanced Network Resilience.

Each category shall comprise three prescribed levels, as set out in Annex B. Applicants may undertake commitments across multiple categories, with all qualifying commitments constituting binding licence obligations.

3. **Enhanced Commitment Scoring:** URCA shall apply a simplified points-based evaluation of enhanced commitments, reflecting the following policy priority: Enhanced Coverage, Enhanced Network Performance and Enhanced Network Resilience. Points shall be awarded in accordance with the scoring matrix established in Annex B, with a maximum available score of 27 points.

   Only the highest qualifying commitment level within each category shall attract points. Points awarded across different categories shall be aggregated to determine each applicant's total enhanced commitment score.

4. **Spectrum Allocation Priority:** Where qualifying applicants request the same frequency block, priority shall be given to the applicant achieving the higher total enhanced commitment score.

   Where applicants achieve equal total scores, priority shall be determined sequentially by reference to their scores for Enhanced Coverage, Enhanced Network Performance and Enhanced Network Resilience. Where applicants remain tied, their competing preferences shall be resolved through a supervised random draw conducted in accordance with predetermined and published procedures.

5. **Licence Obligations and Enforcement:** The applicable minimum baseline requirements and enhanced commitments undertaken by successful applicants shall constitute binding licence obligations, subject to applicable implementation milestones, monitoring and enforcement requirements.

6. **Implementation of the Assignment Framework:** The ITA will specify the applicable application procedures, qualification criteria, evidential requirements, scoring methodology, spectrum block preference arrangements and allocation priority procedures. The assignment process will be implemented consistently with the decisions established in this SoR, the applicable provisions of the Comms Act.

2.10 Responses to Question 9: Spectrum Pricing Framework

Question 9:
Do you agree/disagree with URCA's proposed formula-based pricing framework for initial 5G spectrum, which relies on URCA's existing bandwidth-related fee methodology (ECS 01/2016)?

2.10.1 Summary of Stakeholder Views

BTC supported URCA's proposed formula-based spectrum pricing framework, considering that it provides transparency and predictability. BTC submitted that, applying a 10% weighted average cost of capital over a ten-year period, the effective spectrum price would be approximately BSD $52,228 per MHz, or BSD $0.13 per MHz-population based on an assumed population of 400,000. While BTC considered the proposed pricing reasonable in isolation, it emphasised that spectrum fees should be assessed alongside the substantial deployment, coverage and resilience obligations contemplated under the framework.

CBL Group opposed the proposed fee levels. It argued that the commercial case for 5G deployment is constrained by the maturity of the Bahamian mobile market and the absence of significant incremental revenues, and that 5G would primarily be deployed to meet capacity needs rather than to generate new revenue. CBL Group submitted that there is limited scope for URCA to extract value through either fees or performance obligations, and that the combined burden of both could deter investment or result in spectrum remaining unassigned. It further submitted that URCA should assess the commercial viability of 5G having regard to the cumulative costs of spectrum, network investment and regulatory obligations, and suggested that Government financial support may be required in commercially unattractive areas, citing the United Kingdom's part-publicly funded shared rural network.

CBL Group characterised the proposed charges as premium fees for non-premium spectrum and considered that a premium pricing approach would be an error of policy. Based on the spectrum holdings it had requested (2 × 20 MHz in n71 and 100 MHz in n77/n78), CBL Group estimated annual charges of approximately BSD $680,000 for n71 and BSD $510,000 for n78. It recommended that the Government assign additional spectrum without charges exceeding the usual applicable spectrum fees, having regard to the BSD $62.5 million paid for its spectrum and operating licence in 2016. CBL Group also proposed, as a broader condition for viable 5G deployment, that network equipment and new tower sites be exempt from VAT and import duties.

The Confidential Respondent, in its response to Question 11, proposed that URCA's existing formula-based methodology could be adapted for geographically bounded private 5G deployments through a geographic scoping factor, so that fees are proportionate to the area served while generating revenue from each deployment.

2.10.2 URCA's Analysis

URCA has considered the stakeholder submissions concerning the proposed formula-based pricing framework for the initial assignment of 5G spectrum, including BTC's support for the proposed approach and CBL Group's concerns regarding spectrum fees and their implications for investment in 5G networks.

Spectrum Pricing Methodology

URCA considers that retaining a formula-based approach, drawing upon the bandwidth-related spectrum pricing methodology outlined in ECS 01/2016, provides an appropriate basis for determining the fees applicable to the initial assignment of 5G spectrum. Such an approach promotes transparency, predictability and consistency in spectrum pricing, while taking account of the characteristics of the relevant frequency bands.

Pursuant to section 93(1) of the Comms Act, the Minister is responsible for imposing charges for Premium Spectrum or prescribing the method by which such charges are determined. This provision also recognises the need for spectrum charges to reflect the objective of ensuring the optimal use of spectrum.

In this regard, URCA consulted with the Minister regarding the proposed spectrum pricing framework, including the relevant considerations concerning spectrum fees. Following these consultations, the Minister approved the adoption of the formula-based pricing framework for the initial assignment of 5G spectrum in the n71 and n78 bands, based on the methodology outlined in ECS 01/2016.

URCA considers that the underlying principles of the bandwidth-related methodology remain appropriate for the initial assignment of 5G spectrum. In particular, relating spectrum charges to the quantity of spectrum assigned and the characteristics of the relevant frequency bands provides a transparent basis for charging and encourages operators to assess their spectrum requirements and utilise assigned frequencies efficiently.

URCA acknowledges BTC's support for the proposed methodology and CBL Group's objection to the proposed fee levels. However, URCA does not consider that the absence of substantial incremental revenues directly attributable to 5G deployment necessarily warrants the assignment of additional Premium Spectrum without the application of appropriate spectrum fees. Spectrum is a finite public resource, and the applicable charges should promote its efficient utilisation while supporting investment in electronic communications infrastructure.

URCA further notes CBL Group's characterisation of the proposed charges as premium fees for non-premium spectrum. URCA does not agree with this characterisation. The designation of Premium Spectrum is a regulatory classification under the applicable spectrum framework and does not, of itself, denote the imposition of an additional pricing premium. The proposed fees are derived from an established bandwidth-related methodology rather than an auction or competitive financial bidding process.

Proposed Spectrum Fees

URCA notes that the Consultation Document proposed frequency-band factors of 1.00 for n71 and 0.30 for n78, corresponding to annual reference rates of BSD $8,500 per MHz and BSD $2,550 per MHz, respectively.

URCA considers that the proposed differentiation between the bands reflects their respective technical characteristics and anticipated uses. In particular, low-band spectrum provides favourable propagation characteristics for wide-area coverage, including across the Family Islands, whereas mid-band spectrum supports greater network capacity and higher data throughput in areas of concentrated demand, but generally requires denser network infrastructure to achieve comparable geographical coverage.

URCA considers that the application of differentiated frequency-band factors provides an appropriate means of recognising these differences within the proposed pricing framework. The higher factor applicable to n71 reflects the coverage advantages associated with low-band spectrum, while the lower factor for n78 recognises its different propagation characteristics and principal role in supporting additional network capacity.

URCA further considers that the proposed fee levels must be assessed having regard to the need to promote the efficient and effective utilisation of spectrum while facilitating investment in advanced electronic communications networks. Spectrum fees should provide appropriate incentives for operators to make productive use of the spectrum assigned, without imposing unnecessary financial burdens that could discourage investment or delay network deployment. In this regard, a bandwidth-related approach ensures that the charges payable reflect the quantity of spectrum assigned, thereby encouraging operators to assess their spectrum requirements and make effective use of the assigned frequencies.

URCA has also considered the CBL Group's illustrative calculations of the proposed annual spectrum charges. URCA notes that these calculations are based on spectrum quantities greater than those proposed for the initial assignment, particularly in the n71 band, and appear to overstate the resulting fees. For clarity, spectrum fees are calculated on the basis of the total bandwidth assigned, with paired spectrum comprising the sum of the uplink and downlink components. Accordingly, applying the proposed annual reference rates, an assignment of 2 × 20 MHz in n71 would attract an annual fee of BSD $340,000, rather than BSD $680,000, while an assignment of 100 MHz in n78 would attract an annual fee of BSD $255,000, rather than BSD $510,000, assuming a full-year national assignment.

Under URCA's proposed initial assignment arrangements, an operator receiving 2 × 10 MHz in n71 and 100 MHz in n78 would therefore incur illustrative annual spectrum fees of BSD $170,000 and BSD $255,000, respectively, representing a combined annual amount of BSD $425,000. The actual fees payable will be calculated by reference to the bandwidth assigned, excluding any spectrum reserved for guard-band purposes and excluded from the assignment, and the applicable parameters of the approved pricing methodology.

URCA acknowledges that the introduction of 5G will require substantial capital investment and that the commercial implications of spectrum charges must be considered alongside the obligations associated with deployment. Nevertheless, URCA does not consider that these

investment requirements, or uncertainty regarding the incremental revenues attributable to 5G services, provide sufficient justification for dispensing with spectrum charges. Rather, the appropriate regulatory approach is to establish a charging framework that recognises the economic value and scarcity of spectrum while supporting its efficient utilisation and the timely deployment of advanced networks**.**

Commercial Sustainability and Deployment Obligations

URCA has considered the concerns expressed by BTC and CBL Group regarding the cumulative financial implications of spectrum fees and associated deployment obligations. URCA recognises that the introduction of 5G requires substantial capital investment and that the commercial viability of deployment must be considered having regard to market conditions, anticipated demand and the costs of meeting regulatory requirements.

URCA further recognises that the financial implications of spectrum charges must be considered alongside the cumulative costs associated with the deployment, coverage, performance and resilience obligations established under the 5G framework. In this regard, URCA emphasises that the adopted spectrum pricing approach is not intended to maximise revenue or extract the full economic value of the spectrum, but rather to promote its efficient utilisation while supporting investment in 5G networks. URCA has considered these financial and regulatory obligations collectively, taking into account the implementation flexibility afforded under the framework and the broader investment incentives available to qualifying licensees. URCA's overall assessment of the proportionality of the final 5G framework is set out in section 2.23 of this document.

URCA notes the representation by CBL that spectrum fees represent an additional financial obligation for operators undertaking 5G deployment. However, URCA considers that the need for substantial network investment does not, in itself, warrant the reduction or removal of spectrum charges. Spectrum remains a finite public resource, and the applicable pricing framework must provide appropriate incentives for its efficient and effective utilisation while avoiding unnecessary financial burdens that could discourage investment or delay network deployment.

In this regard, URCA notes that the Government has established a Communications Licence Fee Reduction Scheme pursuant to the Communications Act (Amendment to Schedule 3) Order, 2022, which provides an existing mechanism to incentivise qualifying investments in electronic communications infrastructure. Under the scheme, eligible licensees may apply for reductions in their Communications Licence Fees in respect of qualifying investments, including those aimed at extending the geographical availability of new electronic communications services and expanding network coverage into underserved or uneconomic areas.

URCA considers that qualifying investments associated with 5G deployment may benefit from this scheme, subject to the applicable eligibility and verification requirements. While the scheme does not provide a reduction in spectrum fees, it may assist in mitigating the overall financial

burden associated with qualifying network investments and thereby support the commercial sustainability of 5G deployment.

Government Support and Future Pricing Arrangements

URCA notes CBL Group's suggestion that public financial support may be necessary to facilitate network deployment in commercially unattractive areas. URCA recognises that the extension of electronic communications services to underserved and uneconomic areas may present challenges that warrant consideration under the broader universal service framework. However, URCA considers that such matters are distinct from the determination of spectrum fees for the initial assignment of 5G spectrum and do not, in themselves, provide a basis for departing from the adopted pricing methodology. These matters may be considered as part of URCA's forthcoming review of universal service arrangements.

URCA further notes CBL Group's proposals concerning relief from certain taxes and import duties associated with network deployment. These matters fall within the Government's fiscal policy responsibilities and are outside URCA's authority to determine under the present consultation.

Private 5G Spectrum Pricing

URCA acknowledges the Confidential Respondent's proposal that the existing formula-based spectrum pricing methodology could be adapted to reflect the geographically bounded nature of private 5G networks. URCA notes that the bandwidth-related methodology outlined in ECS 01/2016 already incorporates geographical differentiation through an Island Factor, which takes account of the geographical scope of spectrum assignments.

However, URCA recognises that the existing methodology principally provides for differentiation on a national or per-island basis and does not expressly address assignments restricted to individual premises or other narrowly defined geographical areas.

URCA considers that the pricing arrangements for controlled private 5G trials should reflect the temporary and geographically limited nature of such deployments, while ensuring that any applicable spectrum charges are determined in accordance with the relevant statutory and regulatory requirements. The outcomes of these trials may also inform the development of an appropriate pricing methodology for longer-term private 5G spectrum assignments, including assignments restricted to individual premises or other narrowly defined geographical areas.

2.10.3 URCA's Decision

Having considered the stakeholder submissions and the matters set out in Section 2.10.2, URCA has decided to retain the formula-based pricing framework for the initial assignment of 5G spectrum in the n71 and n78 bands, drawing upon the bandwidth-related spectrum pricing methodology outlined in ECS 01/2016.

Accordingly, the following frequency-band factors and corresponding annual reference rates shall apply:

1. **n71 (600 MHz):** A frequency-band factor of 1.00, corresponding to an annual reference rate of BSD $8,500 per MHz.
2. **n78 (3.5 GHz):** A frequency-band factor of 0.30, corresponding to an annual reference rate of BSD $2,550 per MHz.

The spectrum fees payable by successful applicants shall be calculated by reference to the actual bandwidth assigned and the applicable parameters of the approved pricing methodology. For the avoidance of doubt, any spectrum reserved for guard-band purposes and excluded from a licensee's assignment shall not be included in the calculation of spectrum fees. The applicable assigned bandwidth and guard-band arrangements for each frequency block will be specified in the 5G Spectrum Band Plan and reflected in the ITA.

URCA further confirms that spectrum assignments for controlled private 5G trials will be subject to the applicable spectrum fees, determined in accordance with the relevant statutory and regulatory requirements and reflected in URCA's Fee Schedule, as appropriate. The pricing arrangements for longer-term private 5G spectrum assignments, including those restricted to individual premises or other narrowly defined geographical areas, will be considered separately, taking into account the outcomes of controlled trials, the geographical scope and technical characteristics of such assignments, and the applicable regulatory requirements. Any resulting fees will be reflected in URCA's Fee Schedule, subject to the necessary statutory approvals.

2.11 Responses to Question 10: Compliance, Incentive Mechanisms and Minimum Service Levels

Question 10:
Do you agree/disagree with URCA's proposed compliance incentive mechanisms and minimum service level requirements, including binding licence conditions, 'use it or lose it' provisions, performance bonds, ongoing monitoring and compliance audits, and the indicative financial penalties proposed for non-compliance with minimum service level requirements?

2.11.1 Summary of Stakeholder Views

BTC supported the principle of binding compliance obligations but recommended that observation periods and assessment frequencies be reviewed to ensure that enforcement outcomes are proportionate and reflect sustained network performance rather than short-term variability.

The CBL Group accepted that operators receiving scarce spectrum resources should assume rollout and quality-of-service commitments but considered that such obligations should be

proportionate to market demand and the commercial realities of 5G deployment. It cautioned that overly demanding requirements could impose unnecessary investment costs and undermine the commercial viability of 5G services.

Regarding the proposed "use it or lose it" provisions, the CBL Group argued that spectrum withdrawal should be reserved for serious or persistent failures and should follow a process that allows licensees to explain and remedy non-compliance. It also distinguished between spectrum that remains unused and spectrum that is underutilised because of limited demand, suggesting that spectrum trading could provide an alternative means of promoting efficient utilisation. The CBL Group further emphasised that compliance assessments should recognise deployment constraints arising from third parties, including landowners and electricity suppliers.

The CBL Group opposed the proposed performance bonds, citing the additional financial costs, the absence of comparable requirements in previous spectrum assignments and the practical difficulties of assessing compliance during the initial deployment of non-standalone 5G networks.

Regarding minimum service levels, the CBL Group argued that the interworking between 4G and non-standalone 5G networks would make separate performance requirements difficult to implement and assess. It recommended that 5G services be subject to the existing Quality of Service Regulations, with any necessary modifications addressed through amendments to those Regulations. It similarly proposed that performance reporting, financial penalties and enforcement escalation follow the existing QoS regulatory framework.

2.11.2 URCA's Analysis

URCA considers that the assignment of spectrum for 5G deployment should be accompanied by clearly defined and enforceable obligations concerning network deployment, coverage, performance and resilience. Such obligations are necessary to ensure that the assignment of scarce spectrum resources delivers measurable public benefits and advances the objectives of the regulatory framework.

URCA recognises the importance of ensuring that compliance obligations are proportionate, practicable and consistent with the technical and commercial circumstances of 5G deployment. In this regard, URCA notes that the assessment of compliance and the exercise of its enforcement powers are subject to the applicable provisions of the Comms Act and established principles of administrative law, including proportionality and procedural fairness. Accordingly, compliance assessments should distinguish between sustained or material non-compliance and temporary or isolated fluctuations in network performance, having regard to the nature and circumstances of the relevant obligations. URCA will take these considerations into account in establishing and implementing the applicable compliance and enforcement arrangements.

Regarding the proposed "use it or lose it" provisions, URCA recognises the distinction between a

failure to deploy or utilise assigned spectrum in accordance with applicable licence obligations and relatively low utilisation arising from limited customer demand. URCA considers that any restriction or withdrawal of spectrum rights should be based on objectively established grounds, taking into account the nature, seriousness and persistence of any non-compliance and the applicable statutory requirements. Low traffic volumes would not, by themselves, establish non-compliance where a licensee has satisfied the relevant deployment and utilisation obligations.

URCA notes the CBL Group's suggestion that spectrum trading could promote the efficient utilisation of assigned spectrum. URCA recognises that spectrum trading may, in appropriate circumstances, facilitate more efficient spectrum utilisation. However, any transfer, trading or leasing of spectrum rights remains subject to the applicable provisions of section 38 of the Comms Act, the NSP 2026 - 2029 and the relevant Individual Spectrum Licence conditions, including any applicable requirements for URCA's prior written approval.

URCA further considers that spectrum trading and the initial assignment of 5G spectrum are distinct regulatory mechanisms. Accordingly, the potential availability of spectrum trading does not provide a basis for departing from the competitive assignment process established under this framework, nor does the framework confer any automatic right to transfer, trade, lease or otherwise dispose of assigned spectrum rights.

URCA also recognises that network deployment may be affected by factors outside the immediate control of licensees, including access to suitable sites and the availability of supporting infrastructure. Such circumstances may be relevant to the assessment of compliance and the determination of an appropriate regulatory response. However, licensees remain responsible for taking reasonable steps to anticipate and mitigate foreseeable deployment risks.

URCA notes the CBL Group's concerns regarding the additional financial burden associated with performance bonds. URCA clarifies that its consultation proposal provided that licensees may be required to post performance bonds, with amounts and triggering conditions determined on a licence-specific basis, rather than mandating their imposition. URCA continues to consider performance bonds an appropriate mechanism, where warranted, to secure the deployment commitments undertaken by licensees in exchange for access to scarce spectrum resources.

Any requirement for a performance bond will be proportionate to the nature and extent of the relevant obligations, having regard to the minimum baseline requirements and the commitments associated with the deployment option selected by the applicant, and will be applied on a transparent, objective and non-discriminatory basis. To provide certainty to prospective applicants, URCA will include in the ITA package the terms and conditions governing performance bonds, including the circumstances in which they may be required, the methodology for determining their amounts, the conditions for their reduction or release upon achievement of relevant milestones, and the circumstances governing forfeiture. Consistent with the consultation proposal, any forfeiture may be partial or full, having regard to the extent of non-

compliance, and will be subject to the applicable procedures, including notice to the licensee and an opportunity to make representations.

URCA further recognises the importance of ensuring that performance bond arrangements are appropriately coordinated with the applicable compliance and enforcement framework. Performance bonds are intended to provide financial security for the fulfilment of specified deployment and related licence obligations, with the circumstances governing their forfeiture to be established in the applicable bond terms and conditions. Where non-compliance may engage both the performance bond arrangements and URCA's statutory enforcement powers, any regulatory action will be considered having regard to the nature and purpose of the relevant mechanisms, the circumstances of the non-compliance, the applicable statutory and contractual requirements, and the principles of proportionality and procedural fairness. URCA will also take account of any related financial consequences, where relevant, in determining an appropriate regulatory response.

With respect to minimum service level requirements, URCA acknowledges that the initial deployment of non-standalone 5G networks will involve significant interworking with existing 4G networks. URCA therefore recognises the need to avoid unnecessary duplication or inconsistencies between the performance monitoring and reporting requirements applicable to 5G services and those established under the general QoS regulatory framework.

However, URCA considers that the existing QoS requirements do not necessarily address the specific deployment and performance commitments associated with the assignment of 5G spectrum. Accordingly, URCA maintains that the minimum baseline requirements and any enhanced commitments undertaken through the spectrum assignment process should be incorporated as binding licence conditions, with monitoring and reporting arrangements coordinated, where practicable, with the generally applicable QoS framework.

Regarding the indicative financial penalties proposed in Table 9 of the Consultation Document, URCA notes the CBL Group's concerns regarding the establishment of a separate penalty regime for 5G services. URCA nevertheless considers that financial penalties linked to measurable performance targets provide an appropriate incentive for compliance with the minimum service level requirements undertaken through the spectrum assignment process. Accordingly, URCA will retain the proposed indicative penalty framework, with any penalties for non-compliance to be determined and imposed in accordance with the Comms Act, the applicable QoS regulatory framework and all relevant factors.

2.11.3 URCA's Decision

Having considered the submissions received, URCA confirms its decision to adopt the following compliance and enforcement arrangements for the initial assignment of 5G spectrum:

1. **Binding Licence Conditions:** The applicable minimum baseline requirements and any enhanced commitments accepted through the spectrum assignment process will be incorporated into the relevant spectrum licences as binding conditions, including obligations relating to deployment, coverage, performance and resilience.
2. **"Use It or Lose It" Provisions:** Spectrum licences will include provisions addressing failure to deploy or utilise assigned spectrum in accordance with the applicable licence obligations. Any restriction, withdrawal or reassignment of spectrum rights will be subject to the Comms Act and applicable statutory procedures, having regard to the nature and circumstances of the non-compliance.
3. **Performance Bonds:** URCA may require performance bonds where warranted by the nature and extent of the relevant deployment commitments. The circumstances in which bonds may be required, the methodology for determining their amounts, and the conditions governing their reduction, release or forfeiture will be specified in the spectrum assignment documentation before applicants submit binding commitments.
4. **Compliance Monitoring and Reporting:** URCA will monitor compliance through periodic performance reports, technical assessments, audits, field inspections and other appropriate verification mechanisms. Compliance assessments will take account of the nature and duration of any non-compliance and relevant technical and operational circumstances.
5. **Minimum Service Level Requirements:** The applicable minimum service level requirements, determined by reference to the baseline requirements and any enhanced commitments accepted through the assignment process, will be incorporated as binding spectrum licence conditions. Monitoring and reporting arrangements will be coordinated, where practicable, with the generally applicable QoS/QoE regulatory framework.
6. **Financial Penalties:** URCA will retain the indicative financial penalty framework set out in Table 9 of the Consultation Document as the basis for addressing non-compliance with the applicable minimum service level requirements. Financial penalties will be linked to the extent of non-compliance with the prescribed performance targets and will be determined and imposed in accordance with the Comms Act and the applicable QoS/QoE regulatory framework, subject to relevant statutory procedures and principles of proportionality and procedural fairness.

2.12 Responses to Question 11: Private 5G Networks

Question 11:
Do you agree or disagree that URCA should make provision for spectrum access to support Private 5G Network deployments using S-NPNs? In responding, stakeholders were invited to comment on demand and use cases, spectrum-access models, licensing and assignment approaches for S-NPNs and PNI-NPNs, and testing, pilot or trial deployments.

2.12.1 Summary of Stakeholder Views

The Confidential Respondent strongly supported establishing a regulatory framework for private 5G networks, particularly Standalone Non-Public Networks (S-NPNs), to address the connectivity requirements of large enterprise environments. It advocated direct access to geographically bounded spectrum assignments and proposed the 3.7–3.8 GHz band as a candidate for enterprise deployments. The Confidential Respondent also recommended a phased licensing approach beginning with time-limited trials and progressing towards permanent authorisations informed by trial outcomes. It proposed a minimum trial duration of 24 months, supported by defined performance criteria and periodic reporting.

BTC supported innovation and enterprise applications associated with private 5G networks but considered that Premium Spectrum should remain primarily allocated to public mobile networks during the initial phase of national 5G deployment.

The CBL Group considered Public Network Integrated Non-Public Networks (PNI-NPNs) to be the more appropriate initial approach in The Bahamas, having regard to anticipated market demand and the technical capabilities of existing mobile network operators. It nevertheless supported targeted pilot deployments in sectors such as tourism, ports, public safety and utilities to assess technical feasibility and commercial viability. The CBL Group also suggested that spectrum within the 3.8–4.2 GHz range could be considered for private networks, drawing on emerging international approaches.

GSOA supported the use of private 5G trials to evaluate hybrid terrestrial and satellite connectivity arrangements. It recommended that NTN operators be permitted to participate in relevant trials and that aggregated findings be published to inform future regulatory policy.

2.12.2 URCA's Analysis

URCA recognises the potential for private 5G networks to support innovation, operational efficiency and the development of advanced connectivity solutions across sectors such as tourism, transportation, utilities and critical infrastructure. The submissions received demonstrate emerging interest in private 5G applications, particularly among large enterprise users. However, URCA considers that further evidence is required concerning the scale and sustainability of demand, appropriate spectrum access arrangements and the technical and

regulatory requirements associated with different deployment models.

Private 5G Deployment Models

URCA acknowledges the distinction between Standalone Non-Public Networks (S-NPNs) and Public Network Integrated Non-Public Networks (PNI-NPNs). PNI-NPN arrangements generally utilise the network infrastructure and spectrum rights of an authorised mobile network operator, whereas S-NPN deployments operate independently and may require direct spectrum access. URCA considers that the appropriate regulatory arrangements should reflect the technical and operational characteristics of each model.

In relation to PNI-NPNs, URCA considers that these arrangements may be accommodated under the existing licensing framework, given their reliance on the infrastructure and spectrum rights of authorised mobile network operators. Accordingly, URCA does not consider it necessary to require PNI-NPN deployments to undergo a mandatory trial phase before applications may be considered. Such arrangements may proceed through URCA's established licensing and authorisation processes, subject to applicable regulatory requirements and any necessary approvals.

With respect to S-NPNs requiring direct spectrum access, URCA notes the proposals to make specific frequency bands available for private network deployments. However, any such arrangements must be considered having regard to the NSP 2026 - 2029, existing spectrum assignments, applicable licensing requirements and prevailing Government policy, including restrictions concerning the assignment of Premium Spectrum. URCA therefore does not consider it appropriate to establish a general entitlement to permanent access to Premium Spectrum for private 5G networks through the initial assignment framework. This does not preclude consideration of applications involving Standard Spectrum where permitted under the existing regulatory framework.

URCA notes the CBL Group's suggestion that spectrum within the 3800–4200 MHz frequency range could be made available for private 5G networks. URCA notes that the National Frequency Allocation Table provides for both the Mobile Service and the Fixed-Satellite Service (FSS) within this frequency range. Accordingly, the potential use of this spectrum for private 5G networks must be considered having regard to the applicable frequency allocations and the need to ensure appropriate coexistence between terrestrial and satellite services.

As discussed in Section 2.4.2, URCA recognises the importance of ensuring appropriate coexistence between terrestrial mobile and FSS operations, including through the identification and implementation of technical measures to mitigate potential harmful interference between these services. While the National Frequency Allocation Table provides for mobile services within this frequency range, URCA considers that further technical and regulatory assessment would be necessary to determine the appropriate arrangements for private 5G deployments, including any applicable coordination requirements, technical operating conditions and interference

mitigation measures.

Accordingly, URCA has not included the 3800–4200 MHz frequency range within the spectrum arrangements for private 5G networks under the initial 5G framework. This does not preclude future consideration of this frequency range for private 5G applications, subject to the applicable statutory and regulatory requirements and any necessary technical assessment.

URCA further considers that the distinction between S-NPNs and PNI-NPNs does not, of itself, establish separate licensing categories. Private 5G applications shall be assessed under the existing licensing and spectrum authorisation framework, having regard to the nature of the proposed service, network architecture, spectrum requirements and applicable statutory conditions.

Ministerial Approval for Controlled Private 5G Trials using Premium Spectrum

Sections 29 and 30 of the Comms Act establish the respective responsibilities of URCA and the Minister concerning the management and assignment of radio spectrum. While URCA is responsible for spectrum management and assignment, section 30(1) provides for the Minister to determine the method of allocating frequencies in Premium Spectrum bands, including the criteria and procedures applicable to the allocation process.

In this context, URCA consulted with the Minister responsible for the Electronic Communications Sector regarding the potential use of Premium Spectrum for standalone private 5G networks. Following these discussions, the Minister authorised the use of Premium Spectrum for controlled trials of standalone private 5G networks, subject to applicable statutory, licensing and spectrum management requirements. This authorisation provides a pathway for facilitating S-NPN deployments on a trial basis without establishing a general entitlement to permanent access to Premium Spectrum.

URCA considers that evidence obtained through controlled trials may support the subsequent consideration of permanent licensing and spectrum access arrangements without necessarily requiring a further general public consultation. Any permanent assignment of Premium Spectrum would nevertheless remain subject to prevailing Government policy, the applicable Ministerial determination and other relevant statutory and regulatory requirements.

Controlled Trials and Future Licensing Arrangements

URCA considers that controlled trials offer a proportionate means of evaluating the technical feasibility, spectrum coexistence, interference management, network security and potential benefits of standalone private 5G deployments. Such trials would also provide an evidence base to inform subsequent consideration of permanent licensing and spectrum access arrangements.

URCA notes GSOA's proposal that satellite and NTN operators be permitted to participate as connectivity component providers in controlled private 5G trials. URCA considers that such participation may be accommodated where relevant to the objectives and technical

requirements of a proposed trial, subject to the applicable licensing, spectrum authorisation and regulatory requirements. Any participation involving the provision of satellite or NTN connectivity will be assessed having regard to the existing regulatory framework governing such services and shall not, of itself, confer any additional spectrum rights or authorisations.

URCA also notes GSOA's suggestion that the outcomes of controlled trials be published in aggregate form. URCA may, where appropriate, publish summary findings or general observations arising from such trials to inform future regulatory considerations, subject to applicable confidentiality requirements and the protection of commercially sensitive information.

URCA notes the Confidential Respondent's proposal for a minimum trial period of 24 months. While recognising that certain enterprise applications may require extended testing periods, URCA considers that the duration of individual trials should be determined by reference to their objectives, technical requirements and the evidence required, rather than prescribing a uniform minimum duration.

URCA further considers that applications for private 5G networks should be processed through its established licensing and authorisation procedures, having regard to the nature of the proposed deployment, the spectrum requested and the applicable regulatory requirements. Controlled trials of standalone private 5G networks may be facilitated through URCA's proposed Innovation Reef framework, if adopted, or through other applicable licensing and authorisation mechanisms under the existing regulatory framework.

Where a standalone private 5G trial demonstrates technical feasibility, effective interference management and compliance with applicable regulatory requirements, URCA may consider a subsequent application for permanent authorisation through its established licensing procedures, without necessarily requiring a further general public consultation. Any such application would remain subject to prevailing Government policy and the applicable statutory provisions concerning Premium Spectrum.

URCA emphasises that participation in a trial shall not confer an automatic entitlement to permanent authorisation or subsequent spectrum assignment. Where permanent licensing can be accommodated within the existing regulatory and spectrum management framework, URCA may proceed through its established application procedures. Where new regulatory measures, spectrum designations or assignment arrangements are required, URCA will undertake the applicable statutory and regulatory processes.

Spectrum Pricing

With respect to spectrum pricing, URCA notes that the bandwidth-related spectrum fee methodology established in its *Review of Radio Frequency Spectrum Pricing* (ECS 01/2016) provides an existing basis for determining charges for qualifying spectrum assignments, including

those involving Standard Spectrum. The methodology takes account of relevant assignment characteristics, including bandwidth, frequency band, duration and geographic location through the applicable Island Factor.

URCA recognises that private 5G networks may serve individual facilities, campuses or other geographically defined operational areas rather than providing island-wide or nationwide coverage. While the existing spectrum pricing methodology provides an established framework for determining spectrum charges, geographically bounded assignments may present distinct pricing considerations, particularly having regard to the scale and geographic scope of the spectrum rights granted. Accordingly, URCA may consider whether further refinements to the existing methodology are appropriate for such assignments, including campus-level private 5G networks, as part of a future review of its spectrum pricing framework.

With respect to controlled trials, URCA recognises that appropriate spectrum fees should reflect the temporary and experimental nature of such activities. In this regard, URCA may consider the establishment of specific spectrum fees for qualifying controlled trials, including through the forthcoming consultation on Innovation Reef or other applicable regulatory processes. Any such fees would be determined in accordance with the applicable statutory requirements, and published in URCA's prevailing Fee Schedule.

Regarding permanent private 5G spectrum assignments, URCA considers that any new or tailored pricing arrangements should be informed by the outcomes of controlled trials, including evidence concerning spectrum requirements, deployment characteristics, geographic scope and demand for dedicated enterprise spectrum. Such arrangements may also be informed by any future review of URCA's spectrum pricing methodology established under its *Review of Radio Frequency Spectrum Pricing* (ECS 01/2016), including consideration of the appropriate treatment of geographically bounded assignments, such as campus-level private 5G networks. Any fees associated with the temporary or permanent use of Premium Spectrum will remain subject to the applicable provisions of the Comms Act.

URCA considers that this phased approach will facilitate the development of private 5G networks while preserving the regulatory flexibility necessary to respond to emerging demand, technological developments and evidence obtained through controlled trials.

2.12.3 URCA's Decision

Having regard to the foregoing, URCA confirms its decision to adopt the following approach to facilitating private 5G network development in The Bahamas:

1. **Private 5G Network Development:** URCA supports the development of private 5G networks, recognising their potential to support innovation, enterprise connectivity, operational efficiency and economic development. The applicable regulatory arrangements shall distinguish between standalone and public-network-integrated

deployments, having regard to their respective technical, operational and spectrum access requirements. These deployment models shall not, of themselves, constitute separate licensing categories.

2. **Standalone Non-Public Networks (S-NPNs):** URCA will not establish a general entitlement to permanent access to Premium Spectrum for S-NPN deployments under the initial 5G assignment framework. Controlled trials of standalone private 5G networks using Premium Spectrum may be permitted, subject to applicable statutory, licensing and spectrum management requirements. Applications involving Standard Spectrum may be considered under the existing regulatory framework without a general requirement for prior trials. Any future arrangements for permanent access to Premium Spectrum shall remain subject to prevailing Government policy and applicable statutory requirements.

3. **Public Network Integrated Non-Public Networks (PNI-NPNs):** Private 5G networks operating through the infrastructure and spectrum rights of an authorised mobile network operator may proceed through URCA's established licensing and authorisation processes without a mandatory trial period, subject to compliance with applicable regulatory requirements. Any additional authorisations or licence variations required for the proposed deployment shall be considered under the existing regulatory framework.

4. **Testing and Trial Deployments:** URCA will facilitate controlled trials of standalone private 5G networks requiring temporary access to Premium Spectrum, subject to applicable statutory, licensing and spectrum management requirements. Such trials may be undertaken through the proposed Innovation Reef framework, if adopted, or through other applicable licensing and authorisation mechanisms. The scope, duration and conditions of individual trials shall be determined having regard to their objectives, technical characteristics, spectrum requirements and appropriate regulatory safeguards. Participation in a trial shall not confer an entitlement to permanent spectrum access or commercial deployment beyond the scope of the relevant authorisation.

5. **Spectrum Pricing:** URCA has not established separate spectrum pricing arrangements for private 5G networks under the initial framework. Specific fees for controlled trials may be considered through Innovation Reef or other applicable regulatory processes, subject to statutory requirements and publication in URCA's Fee Schedule. Pricing for permanent private 5G assignments may be informed by trial outcomes and may also take account of any future review of the spectrum pricing methodology under ECS 01/2016.

6. **Future Licensing and Spectrum Access Arrangements:** URCA will use evidence obtained through private 5G trials, stakeholder engagement and relevant international developments to inform the consideration of permanent licensing and spectrum access arrangements for standalone private 5G networks. Any future assignment of spectrum will be considered in accordance with the applicable statutory and regulatory framework, including the NSP 2026 - 2029.

   Where a proposed deployment can be accommodated under existing licensing and

spectrum assignment arrangements, URCA may consider an application for permanent authorisation through its established procedures, subject to any applicable consultation and competitive selection requirements. Where the introduction of permanent private 5G spectrum access necessitates new regulatory measures, spectrum designations or assignment arrangements, URCA will undertake the relevant statutory and regulatory processes, including public consultation where required under sections 11 and 13 of the Comms Act. Participation in a trial shall not confer an automatic entitlement to permanent authorisation or subsequent spectrum assignment.

2.13 Responses to Question 12: Deployment Priorities and Family Island Rollout

Question 12:
Do you agree/disagree with URCA's expectation that initial 5G deployment will likely prioritise major population centres (e.g. New Providence and Grand Bahama) followed by targeted rollout to underserved Family Islands? Please provide views on additional priority locations and the technical, economic or operational factors URCA should take into account when applying or refining rollout and coverage obligations, particularly in the Family Islands.

2.13.1 Summary of Stakeholder Views

BTC supported URCA's proposed phased deployment approach, with initial 5G rollout prioritising New Providence and Grand Bahama, followed by targeted deployment in the Family Islands. BTC considered that deployment priorities should reflect market demand, infrastructure availability and economic viability.

The CBL Group accepted that initial deployment would likely concentrate in New Providence and Grand Bahama, where demand for additional network capacity is greatest. However, it cautioned against imposing extensive 5G deployment obligations in the Family Islands without adequate consideration of commercial viability and the availability of alternative technologies. The CBL Group argued that deployment in less densely populated islands may require infrastructure sharing, including active Radio Access Network (RAN) sharing, and potentially public funding or other financial support. It further recommended that the broader question of improving broadband connectivity in the Family Islands be addressed through URCA's forthcoming universal service review or a separate regulatory initiative.

The Confidential Respondent supported the proposed phased deployment approach but recommended that priority locations expressly include major tourism and hospitality zones and enterprise campuses demonstrating deployment readiness. It also advocated incorporating Fixed Wireless Access (FWA) into Family Island deployment obligations, alongside consideration of existing tower infrastructure and network resilience in areas exposed to severe weather events.

GSOA supported prioritising major population centres during initial terrestrial 5G deployment but emphasised the importance of integrating satellite-enabled and hybrid connectivity solutions

to serve remote and underserved islands. It encouraged URCA to recognise satellite networks as an integral component of the national connectivity strategy rather than solely as a supplementary or fallback option.

AST SpaceMobile similarly emphasised the potential contribution of satellite Direct-to-Device (D2D) services to extending connectivity in the Family Islands. It recommended that URCA recognise arrangements between mobile network operators and satellite providers as a potential means of supporting coverage obligations in areas where terrestrial deployment may be uneconomic.

2.13.2 URCA's Analysis

URCA considers that a phased approach to 5G deployment remains appropriate having regard to the geographic distribution of population, existing network infrastructure, anticipated demand and the commercial considerations associated with network investment. In this regard, URCA recognises that initial deployment is likely to be concentrated in New Providence and Grand Bahama, where population density, economic activity and demand for additional network capacity are expected to support earlier investment.

URCA nevertheless considers that the assignment of additional spectrum for 5G deployment should contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the ECSP 2024–2027, particularly the expansion of advanced connectivity and improved access to electronic communications services throughout The Bahamas. While recognising the commercial and operational challenges associated with deployment in the Family Islands, URCA does not consider that such challenges justify excluding these areas from the initial deployment framework. Accordingly, URCA maintains that targeted Family Island rollout commitments are appropriate to give effect to Government's policy objectives and ensure that the assignment of low-band spectrum delivers meaningful public benefits beyond the principal population centres.

URCA further recognises the importance of prioritising locations of strategic economic and social significance, including critical infrastructure, public safety facilities and major tourism centres. These considerations may inform deployment priorities beyond the minimum baseline requirements established under the spectrum assignment framework.

URCA further recognises that infrastructure sharing may assist in reducing deployment costs and improving the commercial viability of extending 5G services to less densely populated islands. Voluntary passive and active infrastructure sharing arrangements may therefore support the achievement of deployment commitments, subject to the applicable regulatory requirements and appropriate safeguards concerning competition, network resilience and service quality. The broader regulatory treatment of infrastructure sharing is addressed under Question 13.

Regarding the use of alternative technologies, URCA acknowledges that the provision of reliable broadband connectivity throughout The Bahamas requires consideration of a range of

technological solutions. In particular, FWA may provide an additional means of extending broadband access using 5G infrastructure, while satellite networks may support terrestrial deployments through backhaul, redundancy and connectivity in remote areas. URCA also recognises the potential contribution of emerging D2D services. However, URCA considers that the use of alternative technologies should not automatically displace the deployment obligations associated with the assignment of terrestrial 5G spectrum.

URCA also notes the CBL Group's concerns regarding the economic viability of deploying advanced mobile services in areas with limited commercial demand. However, URCA considers that the targeted rollout obligations established under the 5G spectrum assignment framework should be distinguished from the broader policy objectives associated with universal service. In this regard, URCA notes that the existing Communications Licence Fee Reduction Scheme may provide incentives for qualifying infrastructure investments in underserved or uneconomic areas, while additional measures to support the expansion of connectivity in such areas will be considered through URCA's forthcoming work on universal service.

Refinement of Minimum Deployment and Coverage Requirements

In finalising the deployment and coverage requirements, URCA has taken this the Government policy consideration into account alongside the statutory objectives set out in section 4 of the Comms Act, stakeholder submissions and its assessment of the relevant technical, economic and regulatory considerations, including the feasibility and proportionality of the proposed obligations. On this basis, URCA has determined that it is appropriate to refine the minimum geographic coverage requirements to facilitate the timely extension of 5G services to the major Family Islands.

Accordingly, the framework establishes minimum population coverage requirements for New Providence and Grand Bahama, to be achieved within eighteen (18) months and twenty-four (24) months, respectively. For the Family Islands, each operator will be required to deploy 5G services to at least two (2) designated Family Islands within thirty-six (36) months and achieve qualifying 5G coverage in the designated population centres or geographic areas of the major Family Islands within forty-eight (48) months, in accordance with its operator-specific rollout obligations. Each operator will remain individually responsible for meeting its applicable deployment and coverage obligations, as specified in Annex A. Applicants may also propose enhanced coverage commitments beyond these baseline requirements, as provided in Annex B.

2.13.3 URCA's Decision

Having considered the submissions received, the statutory objectives set out in section 4 of the Comms Act, the Government's policy objectives and priorities, and the relevant technical, economic and regulatory considerations associated with nationwide 5G deployment, URCA has determined that it is appropriate to adopt a phased approach to the initial deployment of 5G

networks in The Bahamas, as follows:

:

1. **Phased Deployment:** Licensees shall achieve the prescribed coverage requirements in New Providence and Grand Bahama within eighteen (18) months and twenty-four (24) months, respectively. Each licensee shall undertake initial 5G deployment to at least two (2) designated Family Islands within thirty-six (36) months, with qualifying coverage to be achieved across designated areas in all major Family Islands within forty-eight (48) months, in accordance with the applicable operator-specific rollout obligations. These timelines represent the prescribed requirements and may be shortened by enhanced deployment or coverage commitments accepted through the spectrum assignment process.
2. **Coverage and Rollout Obligations:** The minimum deployment and coverage requirements established under Annex A shall constitute binding conditions of the relevant spectrum licences. Any enhanced coverage commitments offered by successful applicants and accepted through the spectrum assignment process shall also be incorporated into the applicable licences. Licensees shall be required to demonstrate compliance with these obligations in accordance with the applicable verification and reporting requirements.
3. **Deployment Priorities:** URCA recognises the importance of extending 5G connectivity to locations of economic and social significance, including critical infrastructure, public safety facilities and major tourism centres. Applicants may take these considerations into account when formulating enhanced deployment commitments, subject to the requirements established in Annex B.
4. **Infrastructure Sharing and Supporting Technologies:** Licensees may rely on infrastructure or network-sharing arrangements approved by URCA, where required, and supporting technologies, including satellite backhaul, to facilitate deployment, subject to applicable regulatory requirements and safeguards. Such arrangements shall not relieve licensees of their individual responsibility to comply with applicable coverage, performance and other licence obligations. The use of alternative technologies shall not automatically substitute for required terrestrial 5G deployment.
5. **Deployment Incentives and Universal Service:** URCA recognises that qualifying investments in underserved or uneconomic areas may be eligible for reductions in Communications Licence Fees under the existing Communications Licence Fee Reduction Scheme, subject to its applicable requirements. Further measures to facilitate connectivity in underserved areas will be considered as part of URCA's work on the Universal Service Framework.

2.14 Responses to Question 13: Infrastructure and Network Sharing

Question 13:
Do you agree or disagree that market-led deployment by licensed MNOs, supported where appropriate by voluntary passive and active infrastructure sharing, should remain the primary approach for 5G deployment? Should neutral-host or regulated wholesale models be considered only as supplementary or fallback options in clearly defined high-cost or uneconomic-to-serve locations? What safeguards should apply, and do you agree with URCA's proposed interim principles-based approach pending review of the Infrastructure Sharing Regulations?

2.14.1 Summary of Stakeholder Views

BTC supported market-led 5G deployment, supplemented by voluntary passive and active infrastructure sharing where commercially and technically appropriate. It considered that neutral-host or regulated wholesale network models should remain supplementary options, primarily for clearly defined uneconomic-to-serve areas.

The CBL Group supported market-led deployment but argued that active Radio Access Network (RAN) sharing could be essential to the commercial viability of 5G in The Bahamas. It considered that a shared 5G network could reduce infrastructure duplication and deployment costs while preserving competition at the retail level. The CBL Group proposed that operators be afforded approximately six months to assess the feasibility of RAN sharing, with URCA examining the associated regulatory implications. It further argued that the adoption of a shared RAN could affect the proposed spectrum assignment process, particularly the ability to differentiate between applicants on the basis of coverage, rollout and performance commitments.

The CBL Group agreed that regulated wholesale network arrangements should be considered only where market-led approaches prove insufficient, particularly in high-cost or uneconomic-to-serve areas. It emphasised the need for regulatory flexibility and further consideration of infrastructure sharing arrangements as part of URCA's review of the Infrastructure Sharing Regulations.

GSOA supported market-led deployment and voluntary infrastructure sharing, noting their potential to reduce costs and accelerate network expansion. It recommended that the regulatory framework expressly accommodate satellite-enabled backhaul, backbone connectivity and hybrid terrestrial-satellite architectures, particularly in remote and high-cost locations.

The Confidential Respondent supported market-led deployment and the proposed interim principles-based approach but advocated broader recognition of enterprise infrastructure investment. In particular, it proposed that enterprise operators deploying private 5G infrastructure should be permitted to enter into sharing arrangements with MNOs, thereby extending public network coverage or capacity through privately funded infrastructure.

2.14.2 URCA's Analysis

URCA considers that market-led deployment by licensed mobile network operators, supported where appropriate by voluntary infrastructure and network sharing, remains the most suitable approach to the initial deployment of 5G networks in The Bahamas. This approach is consistent with the Government's policy of relying on market forces wherever practicable, while allowing operators flexibility to pursue commercially and technically appropriate deployment arrangements.

URCA recognises that passive and active infrastructure sharing may contribute to more efficient network deployment by reducing infrastructure duplication and associated costs, particularly in high-cost or underserved areas. In this regard, URCA acknowledges the CBL Group's submission concerning the potential benefits of RAN sharing and considers that such arrangements may provide an appropriate means of improving the commercial viability of 5G deployment. However, URCA does not consider that the exploration of voluntary sharing arrangements necessitates deferring or redesigning the initial spectrum assignment process. Operators may pursue such arrangements in parallel with the assignment process, subject to applicable regulatory requirements.

URCA further recognises that active network sharing arrangements may have implications for the implementation of deployment commitments undertaken through the spectrum assignment process. Accordingly, any such arrangements should clearly establish the respective responsibilities of participating licensees and demonstrate how their applicable deployment, coverage, performance and resilience obligations will be satisfied. Participation in a sharing arrangement does not relieve a licensee of its regulatory obligations or confer spectrum rights upon an entity that has not received the requisite authorisation.

With respect to neutral-host and regulated wholesale network models, URCA reiterates that the current legislative and regulatory framework does not provide for the mandatory establishment of a single shared or wholesale mobile network. Any such arrangements would therefore need to be pursued on a voluntary and commercially led basis, subject to URCA's regulatory oversight. URCA considers that these models may warrant particular consideration in high-cost or underserved areas where conventional deployment arrangements are commercially challenging.

URCA also acknowledges the potential contribution of satellite-enabled backhaul and enterprise-hosted infrastructure to extending network coverage and improving resilience. Such arrangements may be accommodated where consistent with applicable licensing requirements and regulatory safeguards, including those concerning competition, network security and spectrum management.

URCA notes the CBL Group's concerns regarding the availability and pricing of on-island and inter-island transmission capacity, including submarine cable capacity, and the potential implications

for 5G deployment across the Family Islands. URCA recognises the importance of adequate transmission infrastructure in supporting the expansion of 5G services throughout The Bahamas.

In this regard, URCA notes that its 2025 annual plan includes the development of a Regulatory Framework for Submarine Communications Cable Systems and the review of the Infrastructure Sharing Regulations. These initiatives provide opportunities to consider relevant issues concerning submarine cable infrastructure, including its deployment, operation, resilience and protection, as well as applicable infrastructure access and sharing arrangements. Any matters concerning wholesale transmission capacity and associated access or pricing conditions would be considered separately, as appropriate, under the applicable regulatory framework, without prejudging the need for or outcome of any regulatory intervention.

Pending completion of the review of the Infrastructure Sharing Regulations, and without prejudging the outcome of that review, URCA considers that the interim principles proposed in the Consultation Document provide an appropriate basis for assessing infrastructure and network sharing arrangements associated with 5G deployment. These principles will guide URCA's assessment of relevant proposals, having regard to their implications for effective competition, independent network control, service differentiation, spectrum efficiency, resilience, security and demonstrable end-user benefits.

2.14.3 URCA's Decision

Having considered the submissions received, URCA confirms its decision to adopt the following approach to infrastructure and network sharing for 5G deployment in The Bahamas:

1. **Market-Led Deployment:** Market-led deployment by licensed mobile network operators will remain the primary approach to the initial rollout of 5G services.

2. **Voluntary Infrastructure Sharing:** URCA will facilitate voluntary passive and active infrastructure sharing, including RAN sharing, where technically and economically appropriate and consistent with applicable regulatory requirements. Such arrangements may be pursued in parallel with, or subsequent to, the initial spectrum assignment process.

3. **Regulatory Oversight:** Proposed infrastructure and network sharing arrangements will be assessed having regard to their implications for competition, independent network control, service differentiation, spectrum efficiency, resilience, security and consumer interests. Participating licensees will remain responsible for compliance with their respective licence conditions and spectrum obligations.

4. **Neutral-Host and Wholesale Network Models:** URCA will consider voluntary neutral-host and regulated wholesale network arrangements where justified by the circumstances, particularly in high-cost or underserved areas. Such arrangements will remain subject to applicable statutory and regulatory requirements.

5. **Interim Guiding Principles:** Pending completion of the review of the Infrastructure Sharing Regulations, URCA will apply the interim principles set out in Section 5.2 of the Consultation Document when assessing proposed infrastructure and network sharing arrangements associated with 5G deployment.

6. **Review of Infrastructure Sharing Regulations:** URCA will consider whether amendments to the Infrastructure Sharing Regulations are necessary to address emerging sharing models and associated regulatory considerations, including active RAN sharing and other collaborative deployment arrangements.

2.15 Responses to Question 14: Business Continuity and Network Resilience

Question 14:
(a) Do you agree/disagree with URCA's proposal to require a baseline backup power capability of at least eight (8) hours at all 5G base station sites, together with enhanced backup power requirements for designated critical network sites? (b) Do you agree/disagree with URCA's proposal that 5G networks be designed with redundancy and automatic failover capabilities? Please provide any comments on feasibility or technical implementation.

2.15.1 Summary of Stakeholder Views

The CBL Group agreed with the proposed eight-hour backup-power baseline but cautioned that operators cannot always control the performance of third-party backhaul providers or persistent failures of the electricity grid. It submitted that operators should be responsible for reasonable emergency preparedness rather than for correcting systemic failures outside their control.

GSOA supported robust backup-power requirements but emphasised that resilience also depends on backhaul and backbone diversity, including satellite-enabled solutions.

The Confidential Respondent strongly supported the eight-hour baseline and argued that enterprise S-NPN resilience should be assessed by reference to the host facility's wider generator, automatic transfer and fuel infrastructure rather than requiring stand-alone battery systems at every radio location.

BTC supported resilience obligations in principle while emphasising proportionality and practical implementation.

2.15.2 URCA's Analysis

BTC supported URCA's proposed resilience and backup power requirements, noting that four hours of backup power is consistent with common international practice and that its most critical network sites already exceed eight hours of backup capability. BTC nevertheless emphasised that enhanced backhaul resilience, particularly between islands, would require additional capital investment.

The CBL Group supported the proposed eight-hour backup power requirement but expressed concerns regarding the practical limitations of ensuring network redundancy where operators rely on third-party infrastructure providers. It argued that operators should not be held responsible for failures in third-party backhaul services or persistent deficiencies in the commercial electricity supply. The CBL Group considered that backup power requirements should be directed towards emergency preparedness rather than compensating for systemic electricity supply failures.

GSOA supported robust backup power requirements but emphasised that network resilience extends beyond site-level power availability. It advocated recognition of satellite-enabled backhaul and backbone connectivity as important components of network redundancy and continuity planning, particularly in remote and geographically isolated locations.

The Confidential Respondent supported the proposed eight-hour baseline but recommended that the resilience requirements applicable to private 5G networks take account of existing enterprise power and communications infrastructure. It argued that integrated generator systems, automatic transfer arrangements and fuel reserves should be recognised where they provide equivalent or superior backup capabilities. The Confidential Respondent also supported redundancy and automatic failover requirements, while recommending that existing enterprise resilience arrangements be recognised to avoid unnecessary duplication.

URCA notes the concerns raised regarding the operational and financial challenges associated with meeting network resilience obligations, particularly where licensees depend on third-party transmission infrastructure and the public electricity supply. URCA recognises that the availability and reliability of inter-island backhaul and supporting power infrastructure may affect the ability of licensees to maintain service continuity, particularly in the Family Islands.

URCA notes that licensees are already subject to obligations concerning network reliability, service continuity and outage management under their respective Individual Operating Licences (IOLs) and the Outage Reporting and Mitigation Regulations for the Electronic Communications Sector (ECS 07/2024). The resilience requirements established under the 5G spectrum assignment framework are intended to complement these existing obligations.

Accordingly, URCA considers that reliance on third-party infrastructure or services does not, of itself, relieve licensees of their responsibility to comply with applicable resilience and service continuity obligations. Licensees are expected to take reasonable and proportionate measures to identify and mitigate foreseeable risks associated with such dependencies, including appropriate backup power arrangements, network redundancy and contingency planning.

Where non-compliance involves failures of third-party infrastructure or the public electricity supply, URCA will consider the relevant circumstances, including the extent to which the failure was within the licensee's control, the measures taken to mitigate foreseeable risks, and the nature, duration and impact of the resulting service disruption. Any compliance assessment or

enforcement action will be undertaken in accordance with the applicable statutory, licensing and regulatory requirements, having regard to proportionality and procedural fairness.

URCA notes the Confidential Respondent's submission concerning the recognition of existing enterprise backup power arrangements for private 5G networks. URCA clarifies that the minimum backup power requirements established under the initial 5G spectrum assignment framework apply to licensees receiving spectrum through that process and are not intended to apply automatically to separately authorised private 5G networks. Any resilience requirements applicable to such networks will be considered in accordance with the relevant licensing and regulatory framework, having regard to the nature and purpose of the proposed deployment.

2.15.3 URCA's Decision

Having considered the submissions received, URCA confirms its decision to adopt the following business continuity and network resilience requirements for the initial deployment of 5G networks in The Bahamas:

1. **Minimum Backup Power:** All 5G base station sites deployed pursuant to spectrum assignments made under the initial 5G assignment process will be required to maintain backup power capability sufficient to sustain uninterrupted service for a minimum of eight (8) hours in the event of a commercial power outage.
2. **Critical Network Sites:** Enhanced backup power requirements will apply to sites designated by URCA as critical network sites, including those supporting traffic aggregation, core network connectivity, emergency communications or key population centres. The applicable requirements will be determined having regard to the operational importance of the relevant sites, technical feasibility and site-specific circumstances, and will be incorporated into the relevant licence conditions.
3. **Network Redundancy and Automatic Failover:** Licensees will be required to implement appropriate network redundancy and automatic failover capabilities, including redundant backhaul arrangements and routing protocols, to support service continuity during network or power disruptions.
4. **Existing Regulatory Requirements:** Licensees will remain subject to the applicable obligations under their Individual Operating Licences, the Outage Reporting and Mitigation Regulations for the Electronic Communications Sector, the Disaster Management Regulations for the Electronic Communications Sector and the Electronic Communications Tower Rules, as amended from time to time. These requirements will continue to apply alongside the resilience and business continuity obligations established under the 5G spectrum assignment framework.

2.16 Responses to Question 15: 5G Network and Supply-Chain Security

Question 15:
Do you agree/disagree with URCA's proposed operator network security obligations, security assurance and compliance mechanisms, measures relating to supply-chain risks and third-party dependencies, and proposed measures relating to Private 5G Network security?

2.16.1 Summary of Stakeholder Views

BTC supported URCA's proposed 5G network security framework, including the use of operator self-assessments supplemented by regulatory audits where appropriate. It considered this a proportionate and practical approach to security assurance.

The CBL Group acknowledged the importance of cybersecurity but considered that detailed security requirements should be developed through URCA's broader work on Guidelines for Cybersecurity of Electronic Communications Networks and Services. It cautioned that establishing separate requirements for 5G could create unnecessary duplication and inconsistencies with obligations applicable to other electronic communications networks. Pending completion of that work, the CBL Group recommended reliance on existing licence obligations and established industry practices.

The U.S. Embassy Nassau strongly supported URCA's proposed network security, assurance and supply-chain risk management measures but recommended that the Telecommunications Industry Association's SCS 9001 standard be made mandatory within the 5G framework. It emphasised the importance of zero-trust architecture, software and hardware provenance, software bills of materials and independent security assurance. Alternatively, it recommended NIST SP 800-161 Revision 1 as a framework for supply-chain risk management. The Embassy also encouraged consideration of accession to the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime.

The Confidential Respondent supported the application of baseline security requirements to private 5G networks, including alignment with ISO/IEC 27001 and relevant 3GPP standards. However, it emphasised that the security requirements applicable to Standalone Non-Public Networks (S-NPNs) should reflect their particular characteristics, including network isolation, interconnection arrangements, operational criticality and existing enterprise cybersecurity controls.

2.16.2 URCA's Analysis

URCA considers that the security of 5G networks is essential to ensuring the integrity, reliability and resilience of electronic communications infrastructure in The Bahamas. The increasing reliance of 5G networks on software-defined functions, virtualisation, cloud-based infrastructure and third-party service providers introduces additional security considerations that warrant

appropriate regulatory safeguards.

URCA notes the CBL Group's concerns regarding potential duplication or inconsistencies between the proposed 5G security requirements and the broader cybersecurity framework applicable to electronic communications networks and services. URCA considers, however, that the establishment of interim security requirements is necessary to ensure appropriate regulatory safeguards during the initial deployment of 5G networks. In this regard, URCA notes that the development of its proposed Guidelines for Cybersecurity of Electronic Communications Networks and Services remains subject to ongoing developments concerning the national cybersecurity legislative and policy framework.

Accordingly, URCA considers it appropriate to maintain the proposed interim requirements, which will complement existing licence obligations and provide a basis for regulatory oversight pending the development of the broader sectoral framework. URCA will ensure that any subsequent cybersecurity requirements are appropriately coordinated with existing obligations to avoid unnecessary duplication, inconsistencies or overlapping regulatory requirements.

With respect to operator network security, URCA maintains that licensees should implement appropriate measures to safeguard the confidentiality, integrity and availability of their networks throughout their operational lifecycle. Such measures should address, among other matters, access controls, authentication, encryption, protection of critical network functions, security monitoring and incident detection, having regard to internationally recognised standards and the characteristics of the relevant network.

Regarding security assurance and compliance, URCA considers that a proportionate, risk-based approach remains appropriate. This may include periodic self-assessments, independent audits, evidence of alignment with recognised security standards and other reasonable verification measures, having regard to the scale, complexity and criticality of the relevant deployment. URCA considers that these arrangements provide an appropriate basis for regulatory oversight without imposing uniform assurance requirements irrespective of network risk.

URCA notes the U.S. Embassy's recommendations concerning the Telecommunications Industry Association's Supply Chain Security Standard (TIA SCS 9001) and the National Institute of Standards and Technology's Special Publication 800-161 Revision 1 (NIST SP 800-161 Rev. 1). Having considered these frameworks, URCA recognises their relevance to supply-chain security, vendor assurance and the management of third-party risks. URCA further notes that the measures proposed in the Consultation Document already reflect several of the supply-chain security principles and practices addressed by these frameworks, including vendor due diligence, third-party risk management, access controls, vulnerability management and secure equipment and software lifecycle management. Accordingly, URCA does not consider that the wholesale adoption of either framework is necessary or appropriate at this stage. Rather, URCA considers that its proposed risk-based approach, informed by internationally recognised standards and

industry best practices, provides an appropriate and proportionate basis for addressing the security risks associated with the initial deployment of 5G networks in The Bahamas. URCA will continue to consider relevant international standards and assurance requirements as part of its broader work on the development of Guidelines for Cybersecurity of Electronic Communications Networks and Services.

URCA also notes the U.S. Embassy's recommendations concerning the adoption of Zero Trust Architecture (ZTA) principles and the use of Software Bills of Materials (SBOMs). URCA recognises that these measures may contribute to strengthening network security, particularly in relation to access management, software transparency and vulnerability management. However, URCA considers that their implementation should be informed by the nature, complexity and risk profile of the relevant network, rather than prescribed as uniform mandatory requirements under the initial 5G assignment framework. Accordingly, licensees may adopt such measures, where appropriate, as part of their broader cybersecurity and supply-chain risk management arrangements.

URCA has considered the U.S. Embassy's suggestion concerning accession to the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime. URCA clarifies that accession to international treaties is a matter for the Government of The Bahamas and falls outside the scope of the present 5G framework.

With respect to supply-chain security, URCA maintains that licensees should undertake appropriate due diligence and manage material risks associated with vendors, equipment suppliers and third-party service providers. Where such risks cannot be adequately mitigated through appropriate technical, contractual or organisational measures, restrictions on the deployment of affected equipment in critical network functions may be warranted, subject to applicable statutory and regulatory requirements. URCA reiterates that determinations concerning national-security policy, including the designation or exclusion of vendors on national-security grounds, remain matters for the Government.

Regarding private 5G networks, URCA acknowledges that security risks may differ according to the nature and scale of deployment. URCA therefore considers that the application of security requirements should take account of the extent of interconnection with public networks, the sensitivity of information processed, the criticality of supported services and the degree of operational reliance placed on the network. This approach allows appropriate recognition of existing enterprise security arrangements while maintaining necessary safeguards.

URCA considers that the foregoing approach provides an appropriate basis for securing the initial deployment of 5G networks while preserving consistency with existing regulatory obligations and the future development of a more comprehensive cybersecurity framework for the electronic communications sector.

2.16.3 URCA's Decision

Having considered the submissions received, URCA confirms its decision to adopt the 5G network security framework proposed under section 5.4 of the Consultation Document, subject to the clarifications and refinements set out below. The framework will operate alongside existing applicable licence obligations pending the development of URCA's broader Guidelines for Cybersecurity of Electronic Communications Networks and Services.

1. **Operator Network Security:** Licensees deploying 5G networks will be required to implement appropriate cybersecurity measures to safeguard the confidentiality, integrity and availability of their networks throughout the network lifecycle. These measures shall include appropriate controls relating to authentication, encryption, access management, protection and isolation of critical network functions, security monitoring and incident detection, having regard to internationally recognised standards and industry best practices, including relevant ISO/IEC standards, 3GPP security specifications and GSMA security guidance. In implementing these measures, licensees may have regard to Zero Trust Architecture (ZTA) principles, where appropriate. The applicable measures shall be proportionate to the scale, complexity and criticality of the network.
2. **Security Assurance and Compliance:** URCA will adopt a proportionate, risk-based approach to security assurance and compliance, which may include periodic self-assessments, independent audits or third-party assurance reports, evidence of alignment with internationally recognised security standards and other appropriate verification measures. Relevant reference frameworks may include ISO/IEC 27001, applicable NIST cybersecurity guidance and TIA SCS 9001, where appropriate. The scope, frequency and nature of assurance requirements will take account of the scale, complexity, criticality and risk profile of the relevant network. Licensees shall maintain appropriate documentation demonstrating compliance with applicable security obligations and provide such information to URCA upon request, subject to appropriate safeguards for confidential and commercially sensitive information. Certification to a particular security standard will not be mandatory as a condition of the initial 5G spectrum assignment.
3. **Supply-Chain Risk Management:** Licensees will be required to identify, assess and manage material security risks associated with equipment suppliers, vendors and third-party service providers. Appropriate risk-management measures shall include vendor due diligence, contractual safeguards addressing security responsibilities, audit rights and incident reporting, controls governing third-party access to network systems and sensitive data, vulnerability management, and secure equipment and software lifecycle management, including patching and end-of-life processes. Relevant risk-management measures may include the use of Software Bills of Materials (SBOMs), where appropriate. Due diligence shall also take account of material risks arising from applicable legal or

regulatory obligations that may expose networks or sensitive data to unauthorised or unmanaged access. In implementing these measures, licensees may have regard to internationally recognised frameworks, including NIST SP 800-161 Revision 1 and TIA SCS 9001, or equivalent approaches appropriate to their operations and risk profiles. Where equipment presents material risks to network security or integrity that cannot be adequately mitigated through appropriate technical, contractual or organisational measures, URCA will consider any appropriate regulatory response in accordance with its statutory powers and the applicable licensing and regulatory framework. Determinations concerning national-security policy, including the designation or exclusion of vendors on national-security grounds, remain matters for the Government.

4. **Private 5G Network Security:** Cybersecurity requirements for separately authorised private 5G networks will be considered having regard to the nature, scale and risk profile of the proposed deployment, including the extent of interconnection with public electronic communications networks and any implications for network security and resilience. Where warranted, appropriate security-related conditions may be incorporated into the relevant licence conditions, consistent with the applicable statutory and regulatory framework.

5. **Interim Regulatory Framework:** The foregoing requirements shall form part of the interim regulatory framework applicable to the initial deployment of 5G networks and shall operate alongside existing applicable licence obligations. The relevant security requirements will be incorporated into the applicable 5G spectrum licence conditions, with compliance subject to proportionate monitoring, verification and regulatory enforcement. URCA will ensure that the subsequent development of its Guidelines for Cybersecurity of Electronic Communications Networks and Services is appropriately coordinated with existing requirements to avoid unnecessary duplication or regulatory inconsistencies.

6. The requirements established in this Final Decision reflect the framework consulted upon under section 5.4 of the Consultation Document, as refined above. In the event of any inconsistency between the original consultation proposals and the requirements established in this Final Decision, the latter shall prevail.

2.17 Responses to Question 16: Site Approval and Small Cell Deployment

Question 16:
(a) Do you believe the current regulatory framework under the Electronic Communications Tower Rules, 2016 adequately supports early 5G deployment? (b) Do you agree with URCA's proposal to require licensee notification for small-cell installations that exceed certain power thresholds, are near sensitive locations, or involve large-scale deployment?

2.17.1 Summary of Stakeholder Views

The CBL Group considered that the existing regulatory framework under the Electronic Communications Tower Rules, 2016, is generally adequate to support the initial deployment of 5G networks, particularly as most installations are expected to utilise existing towers. It acknowledged that additional small-cell installations may be required and recommended a simplified regulatory approach under which installations below specified size thresholds could be exempted from the requirement to obtain URCA's consent under the Infrastructure Sharing Regulations.

2.17.2 URCA's Analysis

URCA notes the CBL Group's views concerning the adequacy of the existing regulatory framework to support the initial deployment of 5G networks. URCA considers that the Electronic Communications Tower Rules, 2016, provide an appropriate framework for the deployment and modification of tower-based infrastructure, including the installation of 5G radio access equipment on existing towers. Accordingly, URCA does not consider that amendments to the existing Tower Rules are necessary at this stage to facilitate the initial deployment of 5G networks.

URCA nevertheless recognises that the deployment of 5G networks may require greater network densification, including the installation of small cells on utility poles, buildings and other existing infrastructure. As outlined in the Consultation Document, such installations may fall outside the definition of an electronic communications tower under the existing Tower Rules. URCA therefore considers that a proportionate, risk-based regulatory approach is appropriate, having regard to the characteristics and potential impacts of different small-cell installations.

URCA notes the CBL Group's recommendation concerning the exemption of certain small-cell installations from consent requirements under the Infrastructure Sharing Regulations. URCA considers that the applicability of such requirements should be determined having regard to the nature of the proposed installation and the relevant provisions of the existing regulatory framework. URCA will consider whether any amendments or simplified regulatory arrangements are warranted for small-cell deployments as part of its planned review of the Infrastructure Sharing Regulations.

URCA further considers that the proposed notification requirement for certain small-cell installations provides an appropriate means of maintaining regulatory oversight while facilitating network deployment. In particular, notification requirements for installations exceeding specified power thresholds, located near sensitive areas or forming part of large-scale deployments will enable URCA to assess potential safety and regulatory concerns without imposing additional administrative requirements on all small-cell installations.

URCA emphasises that the proposed approach does not relieve licensees of their obligation to comply with applicable regulatory and safety requirements, including equipment type approval, radiofrequency exposure limits, structural safety requirements and the necessary permissions from property owners or infrastructure providers. Pending the development of the proposed Electromagnetic Field (EMF) Exposure Regulations, URCA will continue to assess compliance with applicable internationally recognised exposure standards, including relevant ICNIRP guidelines.

2.17.3 URCA's Decision

Having considered the submissions received, URCA confirms its decision to adopt the following approach to site approval and small-cell deployment for the initial rollout of 5G networks in The Bahamas:

1. **Existing Tower Regulatory Framework:** URCA considers that the existing Electronic Communications Tower Rules, 2016, provide an adequate regulatory framework to support the initial deployment of 5G networks in The Bahamas. Accordingly, URCA does not consider that amendments to the Rules are necessary at this stage specifically to facilitate 5G deployment. However, URCA will continue to assess the adequacy of the broader regulatory framework governing electronic communications towers and, where appropriate, make recommendations to the Government concerning any amendments considered necessary.
2. **Small-Cell Deployment:** URCA will adopt a proportionate, risk-based approach to small-cell installations, recognising that certain installations may fall outside the scope of the Electronic Communications Tower Rules. Such installations will remain subject to applicable equipment type-approval, safety, property access and infrastructure sharing requirements, as well as relevant radiofrequency exposure limits.
3. **Small-Cell Notification Requirements:** URCA will introduce a risk-based notification requirement for small-cell installations that exceed specified power thresholds, are located in proximity to sensitive locations, including schools, hospitals or airports, or involve large-scale deployments within a defined geographic area. The applicable thresholds, criteria and notification procedures will be developed having regard to relevant international standards and best practices, as well as the particular circumstances of The Bahamas. These requirements will be incorporated as licence conditions and communicated to licensees prior to their implementation.
4. **RF Exposure Compliance:** Pending the introduction of the proposed Electromagnetic Field (EMF) Exposure Regulations, URCA will continue to assess compliance with applicable RF exposure requirements by reference to internationally recognised standards and guidelines, including those established by the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP).

2.18 Responses to Question 17: Spectrum Use and Interference Management

Question 17:
Do you agree/disagree with URCA's approach to managing domestic and international interference through technical conditions such as guard bands, spectral masks and TDD synchronisation? Please provide your views on additional coordination mechanisms URCA should consider.

2.18.1 Summary of Stakeholder Views

GSOA supported URCA's proposed approach to domestic and international interference management, including the use of guard bands, spectral emission masks and Time Division Duplex (TDD) synchronisation. However, GSOA emphasised the importance of protecting existing Fixed-Satellite Service (FSS) operations in the 3700–4200 MHz band and recommended consideration of a 30–40 MHz guard band to mitigate potential out-of-band emissions from terrestrial 5G services. GSOA also identified alternative mitigation measures, including reduced transmission power, stricter emission masks, antenna configuration and site-specific coordination arrangements. It further emphasised the importance of consistency with the ITU Radio Regulations and applicable international coordination practices.

The CBL Group considered that URCA's existing interference-management arrangements could be improved and recommended a comprehensive review of its interference-management processes.

2.18.2 URCA's Analysis

URCA considers that effective management of domestic and international interference is essential to ensuring the efficient utilisation of radio frequency spectrum and the successful deployment of 5G services in The Bahamas. Accordingly, URCA maintains that appropriate technical conditions, including frequency and bandwidth limitations, guard bands, spectral emission masks and TDD synchronisation requirements, are necessary to minimise the risk of harmful interference between licensed operators and other authorised spectrum users.

URCA notes GSOA's concerns regarding the potential impact of 5G deployment on existing FSS operations in the 3700–4200 MHz band. URCA recognises the importance of protecting incumbent satellite services from harmful interference, particularly given their role in supporting communications connectivity and service resilience in The Bahamas. However, URCA does not consider that the adoption of a uniform 30–40 MHz guard band is warranted at this stage without further technical assessment of the relevant coexistence requirements. URCA considers that appropriate interference mitigation measures should be determined having regard to the characteristics of the relevant spectrum assignments, incumbent services, equipment specifications and applicable international standards.

In this regard, URCA notes the alternative mitigation measures identified by GSOA, including transmission power limitations, out-of-band emission controls and site-specific coordination arrangements. URCA considers that these measures may provide appropriate means of addressing potential interference risks, either individually or in combination, depending on the circumstances of the relevant deployment. URCA will therefore consider the need for such measures when establishing the technical conditions applicable to the initial 5G spectrum assignments.

URCA also notes the CBL Group's recommendation concerning a broader review of interference-management processes. URCA recognises the importance of maintaining effective arrangements for the identification, investigation and resolution of harmful interference. While URCA does not consider that a comprehensive review is a prerequisite to the initial deployment of 5G networks, it will continue to assess the effectiveness of its existing interference-management arrangements and consider improvements where warranted.

Regarding international coordination, URCA maintains that appropriate arrangements are necessary to minimise the risk of cross-border interference, particularly in low-frequency bands where radio signals may propagate over considerable distances, including across international waters. URCA will continue to engage with relevant regional and international authorities, having regard to the ITU Radio Regulations, applicable ITU-R Recommendations and relevant regional coordination practices.

2.18.3 URCA's Decision

Having considered the submissions received, URCA confirms its decision to adopt the following approach to spectrum use and interference management for the initial deployment of 5G networks in The Bahamas:

1. **Technical Spectrum Conditions:** URCA will establish appropriate technical conditions governing the use of spectrum assigned for 5G services, including frequency and bandwidth limits, guard bands, spectral emission masks and other measures necessary to minimise the risk of harmful interference. These requirements will be incorporated into the relevant spectrum licence conditions or associated regulatory instruments.
2. **TDD Synchronisation:** URCA will establish appropriate Time Division Duplex (TDD) synchronisation requirements for relevant 5G spectrum assignments to minimise interference between adjacent networks, having regard to applicable international standards and technical compatibility requirements.
3. **International Coordination:** URCA will continue to engage with relevant regional and international authorities to facilitate frequency coordination and minimise the risk of cross-border interference, consistent with the ITU Radio Regulations and applicable international coordination arrangements.

4. **Interference-Management Processes:** URCA will continue to assess the effectiveness of its existing interference-management arrangements and implement appropriate improvements, where warranted, to support the identification, investigation and resolution of harmful interference.

2.19 Responses to Question 18: Mitigation of Interference Near Airports

Question 18:
Do you agree/disagree with URCA's proposal to establish coordination zones and impose technical mitigations around airports to avoid interference with aircraft radio altimeters? Are there any specific power limits, exclusion distances, or coordination procedures URCA should adopt?

2.19.1 Summary of Stakeholder Views

BTC supported URCA's proposed coordination measures around airports but recommended greater clarity regarding the applicable power limits, exclusion zones and coordination procedures.

The CBL Group recommended that URCA draw upon established international practices, particularly those adopted in the United States, rather than developing a separate approach for The Bahamas. It further submitted that coordination would not be necessary where 5G spectrum assignments operate below 3.8 GHz.

GSOA supported URCA's proposal to establish coordination zones and technical mitigation measures around airports to protect aircraft radio altimeters from potential interference. It emphasised the importance of adopting appropriate safeguards at the outset of 5G deployment to avoid the need for subsequent restrictions or corrective measures.

2.19.2 URCA's Analysis

URCA considers that appropriate safeguards are necessary to minimise the potential risk of harmful interference between 5G networks and aircraft radio altimeters operating in the 4.2–4.4 GHz band. Given the importance of aviation safety, URCA maintains that the deployment of 5G services in proximity to airports should be subject to appropriate technical assessment and coordination arrangements.

URCA notes the CBL Group's recommendation concerning the application of established international practices, particularly those adopted in the United States. URCA recognises that international experience provides useful guidance in determining appropriate interference mitigation measures. However, URCA considers that the adoption of specific power limits, protection distances or other technical restrictions should be informed by the characteristics of the spectrum bands assigned for 5G services, relevant equipment specifications and the operational circumstances of airports in The Bahamas.

Regarding the CBL Group's submission that coordination would be unnecessary for 5G operations below 3.8 GHz, URCA considers that the frequency separation between terrestrial 5G services and aircraft radio altimeters is a relevant consideration in assessing interference risks. However, URCA does not consider that this factor alone provides a sufficient basis for excluding all such deployments from appropriate coordination requirements. The need for specific safeguards should be determined having regard to the relevant technical circumstances and applicable international guidance.

URCA also notes BTC's recommendation for greater clarity regarding the applicable technical requirements and coordination procedures. URCA considers that such requirements should be established in consultation with the Civil Aviation Authority Bahamas (CAAB), having regard to relevant international standards and best practices. This will ensure that appropriate safeguards are implemented while avoiding unnecessary restrictions on the deployment and use of 5G spectrum.

Accordingly, URCA maintains that a coordinated, risk-based approach to the deployment of 5G networks near airports is appropriate, with technical mitigation measures applied where warranted by the relevant interference assessments.

2.19.3 URCA's Decision

Having considered the submissions received, URCA confirms its decision to adopt the following approach to mitigating potential interference between 5G networks and aircraft radio altimeters in The Bahamas:

1. **Airport Coordination Zones:** URCA will establish appropriate coordination or exclusion zones around major airports, including Lynden Pindling International Airport and Grand Bahama International Airport, having regard to relevant technical assessments, international standards and the operational requirements of the affected airports.
2. **Coordination with Aviation Authorities:** Licensees will be required to coordinate with URCA and the Civil Aviation Authority Bahamas (CAAB) before activating 5G base stations within designated airport coordination zones, in accordance with the applicable coordination procedures.
3. **Technical Mitigation Measures:** URCA will establish appropriate technical mitigation requirements, where necessary, including transmission power limits, antenna tilt restrictions, guard bands or other measures to minimise the potential risk of harmful interference with aircraft radio altimeters.
4. **Implementation Requirements:** The applicable coordination zones, technical requirements and procedures will be developed in consultation with CAAB, having regard to relevant international standards and best practices, and will be communicated to

licensees through the relevant spectrum licence conditions or associated technical guidelines prior to implementation.

2.20 Responses to Question 19: Future-Proofing and Sustainability

Question 19:
Do you agree/disagree that 5G network deployments in The Bahamas should prioritise energy efficiency, environmental sustainability and readiness for future use cases (e.g. IoT, smart grids)? Please suggest any additional best practices URCA should consider encouraging or requiring through the licensing process.

2.20.1 Summary of Stakeholder Views

The CBL Group supported the general objectives of energy efficiency, environmental sustainability and future readiness but argued that these principles should generally be encouraged rather than imposed as rigid evaluation criteria because the appropriate solution depends on cost, site characteristics and customer demand.

The Confidential Respondent strongly supported sustainability as a 5G use case, including smart metering, environmental monitoring, HVAC telemetry and other resource-management applications.

BTC supported sustainability and requested measurable energy-efficiency criteria.

2.20.2 URCA's Analysis

URCA considers that energy efficiency, environmental sustainability and future-readiness are important considerations in the development of 5G networks in The Bahamas, particularly having regard to the country's geographic characteristics, energy costs and environmental vulnerabilities. URCA therefore maintains that licensees should seek to incorporate sustainable practices into their network deployment strategies while ensuring that their infrastructure is capable of supporting future technological developments and emerging applications.

URCA notes that the existing Individual Operating Licence (IOL) already establishes obligations concerning environmental protection and the adoption of energy-efficient technologies. In particular, Condition 20.5 requires licensees to implement organisational measures to minimise the adverse environmental impact of their operations, including the deployment of energy-efficient and renewable energy technologies where feasible. Accordingly, URCA does not consider it necessary to introduce additional prescriptive environmental or energy-efficiency obligations specifically for the initial deployment of 5G networks.

URCA further notes the CBL Group's concerns regarding the imposition of additional sustainability requirements and their inclusion in the spectrum assignment evaluation process.

URCA recognises that the feasibility and effectiveness of particular sustainability measures may vary depending on network architecture, geographic location, operational requirements and associated costs. URCA therefore considers that the existing licensing obligations, complemented by the encouragement of sustainable infrastructure deployment practices, provide an appropriate and proportionate regulatory approach at this stage.

Regarding BTC's recommendation concerning measurable energy-efficiency criteria, URCA recognises the potential value of such measures in assessing network sustainability. However, URCA considers that the establishment of measurable requirements would necessitate clearly defined assessment criteria, relevant technical standards and appropriate measurement methodologies, having regard to the operating circumstances of networks in The Bahamas. URCA therefore does not consider it necessary to establish additional mandatory energy-efficiency performance thresholds as part of the initial 5G regulatory framework.

With respect to the treatment of sustainability within the spectrum assignment process, URCA considers that applicants should be encouraged to demonstrate how their proposed network deployments incorporate energy efficiency, environmental sustainability and future-readiness objectives. However, having regard to the refined spectrum assignment approach discussed in Section 2.9, URCA does not consider it necessary to establish sustainability as a separate evaluation criterion. Rather, the initial assignment process will focus on the prescribed eligibility requirements and deployment commitments established under that framework.

URCA also recognises the potential for 5G networks to support environmental monitoring, resource management and other innovative applications, as highlighted by the Confidential Respondent. URCA considers that these enterprise-specific applications demonstrate the wider economic and social benefits associated with 5G but should be distinguished from the regulatory obligations and evaluation criteria applicable to national mobile network operators under the initial spectrum assignment framework. Such applications may nevertheless be relevant to the consideration of future private network initiatives and controlled testing activities.

2.20.3 URCA's Decision

Having considered the submissions received, URCA confirms its decision to adopt the following approach to future-proofing and sustainability in the initial deployment of 5G networks in The Bahamas:

1. **Energy Efficiency and Environmental Sustainability:** URCA will continue to promote energy efficiency and environmentally sustainable network deployment, consistent with the existing obligations under Condition 20 of the Individual Operating Licence (IOL). In particular, licensees are required to implement measures to minimise the adverse environmental impact of their operations, including the deployment of energy-efficient and renewable energy technologies where feasible. In deploying 5G networks, licensees

are also encouraged to utilise existing infrastructure and co-location arrangements where technically and economically appropriate.

2. **Future-Ready Network Development:** URCA will encourage licensees to incorporate appropriate network design and planning considerations that facilitate future technological developments and emerging applications, including Internet of Things (IoT), smart grids, connected health and other advanced digital services.
3. **Spectrum Assignment Considerations:** Applicants will be encouraged to demonstrate how their proposed network deployments incorporate energy efficiency, environmental sustainability and future-readiness objectives. However, these considerations will not constitute a separate evaluation criterion under the initial 5G spectrum assignment process.

2.21 Responses to Question 20: EMF Exposure and Public Health

Question 20:
(a) Do you agree with URCA's proposal to require compliance with internationally recognised EMF exposure limits (e.g. ICNIRP), as well as to mandate EMF site assessments, signage and public disclosure upon request?

(b) Please also share your views on URCA's proposed public education campaign on EMF and 5G safety and any additional measures URCA should consider.

2.21.1 Summary of Stakeholder Views

The CBL Group supported compliance with internationally recognised EMF exposure standards. However, it considered that an extensive public education campaign was unnecessary, suggesting instead that URCA publish a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document on its website to provide information concerning EMF exposure and 5G.

2.21.2 URCA's Analysis

URCA recognises that the deployment of 5G infrastructure may give rise to public concerns regarding electromagnetic field (EMF) exposure and its potential implications for health and safety. URCA considers that compliance with internationally recognised exposure limits, supported by appropriate monitoring and public information measures, is essential to ensuring that 5G networks are deployed in a manner consistent with applicable health and safety requirements.

URCA notes that the existing IOL already establishes obligations concerning public health and safety, including safeguards against radiation hazards associated with electronic communications equipment. In particular, Condition 20.1 requires licensees to implement appropriate technical and organisational measures to safeguard life, property and the environment, while Condition

20.3 requires compliance with applicable health, safety and environmental laws. These provisions provide an existing regulatory basis for addressing relevant health and safety considerations associated with network deployment.

Nevertheless, URCA considers that the introduction of 5G warrants greater clarity regarding the technical standards and compliance arrangements applicable to EMF exposure. Accordingly, URCA maintains its proposal that 5G licensees comply with internationally recognised exposure limits, including those established by the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP), pending the introduction of the proposed EMF Exposure Regulations. URCA further considers that appropriate site assessments, signage and the availability of relevant compliance information are necessary to support regulatory oversight and public confidence.

As outlined in its 2026 Annual Plan, URCA intends to develop EMF Exposure Regulations to establish a comprehensive regulatory framework governing EMF exposure from electronic communications networks and equipment. URCA considers that the proposed interim requirements will provide appropriate safeguards during the initial deployment of 5G networks, pending the introduction of that framework. In implementing these measures, URCA will seek to ensure consistency with existing licence obligations and avoid unnecessary duplication.

Regarding public education, URCA notes the CBL Group's recommendation that information concerning EMF exposure and 5G safety be made available through its website rather than undertaking an extensive public awareness campaign. URCA recognises the value of providing accessible, evidence-based information to address public concerns and promote informed understanding of 5G technology. URCA considers that its public education activities should be proportionate and may include FAQs, explanatory materials and other targeted communication initiatives, drawing upon information published by internationally recognised scientific and public health bodies.

URCA therefore maintains that a combination of internationally recognised exposure standards, appropriate compliance measures and accessible public information provides a suitable approach to addressing EMF exposure and public health considerations during the initial deployment of 5G networks in The Bahamas.

2.21.3 URCA's Decision

Having considered the submissions received, URCA confirms its decision to adopt the following approach to EMF exposure and public health for the initial deployment of 5G networks in The Bahamas:

1. **EMF Exposure Standards:** Pending the introduction of the proposed EMF Exposure

Regulations, licensees assigned 5G spectrum will be required to ensure that radiofrequency emissions from their networks and associated equipment comply with internationally recognised EMF exposure limits, including those established by ICNIRP.

2. **EMF Compliance and Reporting:** Licensees will be required to undertake EMF compliance assessments for new 5G sites and provide the results to URCA upon request. Licensees will also be required to display appropriate safety signage where necessary and cooperate with URCA in addressing public inquiries or complaints concerning EMF exposure.
3. **Public Information and Awareness:** URCA will undertake appropriate public education and awareness initiatives to provide accessible, evidence-based information concerning EMF exposure, applicable safety standards and 5G technology. These initiatives may include FAQs, informational materials and other targeted communication activities, in coordination with relevant public health authorities where appropriate.
4. **Regulatory Implementation:** The applicable interim EMF compliance requirements will be reflected in the relevant licence conditions or associated technical guidelines, pending the development and implementation of the proposed EMF Exposure Regulations.

2.22 Responses to Question 21: Implementation Timeline and Next Steps

Question 21:
Do you agree/disagree with URCA's proposed timeline and staged approach for finalising the 5G regulatory framework and initiating spectrum assignment, with an overall target of launching 5G services by the end of 2026? Please provide any comments on the feasibility of the proposed milestones or suggest any adjustments URCA should consider.

2.22.1 Summary of Stakeholder Views

The CBL Group considered that the proposed timeline for introducing 5G services by the end of 2026 was unrealistic, having regard to the time required for spectrum assignment, equipment procurement, network deployment, testing and commissioning. It recommended allowing a minimum period of six to nine months following the assignment of spectrum before commercial launch, suggesting that the third quarter of 2027 would be a more achievable target. The CBL Group also recommended that URCA provide operators with sufficient time to explore potential Radio Access Network (RAN) sharing arrangements before proceeding with spectrum assignment.

The Confidential Respondent supported URCA's objective of facilitating the introduction of 5G services by the end of 2026 and recommended that arrangements for private 5G trials be advanced in parallel with the national spectrum assignment process.

2.22.2 URCA's Analysis

URCA recognises the importance of establishing a clear and achievable implementation timetable to facilitate the timely introduction of 5G services in The Bahamas. URCA also recognises that the implementation of the regulatory framework requires a number of preparatory steps, including finalisation of the spectrum assignment arrangements, relevant licensing conditions and any necessary Government approvals.

URCA notes the CBL Group's concerns regarding the feasibility of the proposed implementation timeline, particularly the time required for equipment procurement, network deployment, testing and commissioning following the assignment of spectrum. URCA recognises that these activities may require appropriate lead times and will take such considerations into account when establishing the implementation timetable. However, URCA does not consider it appropriate to prescribe a uniform period between spectrum assignment and commercial launch. Rather, URCA will determine the applicable implementation and deployment requirements having regard to the objectives of the 5G regulatory framework, the circumstances of the proposed deployments and the need to facilitate the timely introduction of 5G services in The Bahamas.

URCA further recognises that the indicative milestones outlined in Section 7 of the Consultation Document require adjustment, having regard to the time taken to complete the consultation process and finalise the regulatory framework. Accordingly, URCA considers it appropriate to adopt a revised implementation approach that identifies the principal regulatory steps required to facilitate the initial assignment of 5G spectrum, with the detailed application and assignment timetable to be communicated through the ITA.

As part of the implementation process, URCA will publish a 5G Spectrum Band Plan to give effect to the spectrum-related decisions arising from this consultation. URCA notes that the Consultation Document expressly identified the frequency bands proposed for the initial deployment of 5G services, including the proposed spectrum configurations and associated technical considerations, and provided stakeholders with an opportunity to comment on these proposals. Accordingly, URCA considers that the publication of the Band Plan will constitute an implementation measure intended to formalise and provide greater clarity on the spectrum arrangements determined through this consultation, rather than the introduction of new regulatory proposals requiring a separate consultation process. The Band Plan will therefore reflect the relevant decisions set out in this SoR, providing regulatory certainty concerning the frequency bands and spectrum configurations applicable to 5G deployment in The Bahamas.

URCA further considers that the initial 5G spectrum assignment process need not await the completion of all related regulatory initiatives. Work concerning infrastructure sharing, EMF exposure and cybersecurity may continue in parallel with the spectrum assignment process, provided that the applicable regulatory and licensing arrangements are sufficient to support the initial deployment of 5G services. In relation to private 5G networks, URCA intends to facilitate

initial deployments through controlled trials, whether under the proposed regulatory framework for controlled testing in the Electronic Communications Sector (Innovation Reef), subject to the outcome of the relevant consultation process, or through other appropriate regulatory arrangements in accordance with the applicable legal framework. The outcomes of these trials will inform URCA's consideration of a longer-term regulatory approach to private 5G networks.

Accordingly, URCA considers that a revised, phased implementation approach will provide an appropriate balance between facilitating timely spectrum assignment, ensuring regulatory certainty and allowing operators sufficient time to prepare for commercial deployment.

2.22.3 URCA's Decision

Having considered the submissions received, URCA confirms its decision to adopt the following approach to implementing the 5G regulatory framework and facilitating the initial assignment of 5G spectrum in The Bahamas:

1. **Publication of the 5G Spectrum Band Plan:** URCA will publish a 5G Spectrum Band Plan reflecting the outcomes of this consultation, identifying the frequency bands designated for 5G deployment, the relevant spectrum configurations and the intended use of the applicable frequency ranges.

2. **Finalisation of Spectrum Assignment Arrangements:** URCA will finalise the necessary arrangements for implementing the initial 5G spectrum assignment process, including the applicable licensing conditions, spectrum fees and any required Government approvals. URCA will also progress its ongoing assessment of spectrum utilisation in the 3.4–3.6 GHz band and determine any appropriate reconfiguration or migration measures necessary to facilitate the availability of spectrum for 5G deployment, having regard to existing assignments, applicable legal requirements and the outcomes of its technical and regulatory assessments.

   Where 5G spectrum is assigned to holders of existing Individual Spectrum Licences (ISLs), the assignments will remain valid for the unexpired duration of the respective licences, subject to applicable statutory and licensing requirements. Where a new ISL is required, URCA will determine the appropriate licence term in accordance with the Comms Act and the NSP 2026 - 2029, including the minimum five-year term prescribed under section 26(7) of the Comms Act, except for licences allocating spectrum intended for temporary use or for testing or trialling new technology.

3. **Commencement of Spectrum Assignment Process:** URCA intends to issue the ITA for the initial assignment of 5G spectrum during the first quarter of 2027, subject to the completion of the necessary preparatory steps.

   The ITA and accompanying documentation will specify the applicable application

procedures, eligibility requirements, submission deadlines, evaluation criteria, scoring methodology, including applicable weightings and tie-breaking arrangements, procedures for determining spectrum block preferences, and timetable for the assignment process.

Before applicants submit binding commitments, the ITA package will also set out the material assignment parameters, including the designated Family Islands and applicable coverage thresholds, rollout milestones, geographic assessment grid and measurement methodologies, usable bandwidth and technical restrictions applicable to each frequency block, any applicable spectrum holding limits, spectrum fees and charging arrangements, and the circumstances, methodology and terms governing performance bonds, including their reduction, release and forfeiture.

The ITA package will further specify the procedures for determining operator-specific rollout obligations and the commencement dates from which applicable deployment and compliance milestones will be calculated. It will also include the proposed spectrum licence or licence amendments, as appropriate, specifying the applicable assignment duration, technical conditions, and deployment, coverage, performance, resilience and compliance obligations, before applicants are required to submit binding commitments.

URCA will provide prospective applicants with a reasonable opportunity to submit written requests for clarification concerning the ITA and accompanying documentation before the deadline for binding applications. The ITA will specify the applicable procedures and timelines for submitting clarification requests and receiving responses. Clarifications of general applicability, and any material amendments to the assignment documentation, will be communicated to all prospective applicants on a transparent and non-discriminatory basis, with appropriate adjustments to application deadlines where necessary.

4. **Deployment and Commercial Launch:** Following completion of the spectrum assignment process, URCA will proceed with the award of spectrum rights and the issuance or amendment of the relevant spectrum licences, as appropriate, in accordance with the applicable statutory and regulatory requirements. The licences will establish the applicable deployment and coverage obligations, including relevant implementation milestones, having regard to the objectives and requirements of the 5G regulatory framework and the need to facilitate the timely introduction of 5G services in The Bahamas.
5. **Supporting Regulatory Initiatives:** URCA will continue to advance related regulatory initiatives, including the review of the Infrastructure Sharing Regulations, development of EMF Exposure Regulations, cybersecurity measures, private 5G arrangements and public education initiatives, in parallel with the spectrum assignment and deployment process.

2.23 URCA's Overall Assessment of the Proportionality of the 5G Regulatory Framework

URCA has considered the cumulative effect of the adopted spectrum charges, minimum baseline requirements, geographic coverage and rollout obligations, network performance and resilience requirements, performance bonds, and applicable compliance and enforcement measures. URCA recognises that these requirements, when considered collectively, have implications for the capital investment, operating expenditure and overall financial commitments associated with 5G deployment. Accordingly, URCA has assessed the cumulative regulatory burden against the anticipated public benefits of the framework, including improved geographic coverage, enhanced service quality, greater network resilience and more efficient utilisation of radio spectrum.

In assessing the proportionality of the framework, URCA has had regard to the need to promote investment and sustainable network deployment while securing meaningful and enforceable commitments from licensees. In particular, URCA has adopted a spectrum pricing approach that does not seek to maximise revenue or extract the full economic value of the spectrum. Rather, the adopted spectrum charges are intended to promote efficient spectrum utilisation while facilitating investment in 5G infrastructure and supporting national connectivity objectives. URCA considers this approach particularly important given the substantial capital investment required for 5G deployment, and the additional costs associated with extending coverage to less commercially attractive areas.

URCA has also considered the phased deployment timetable, opportunities for infrastructure and network sharing, and the flexibility afforded under the enhanced commitment framework. These arrangements are intended to provide licensees with reasonable opportunities to manage their investment and implementation costs, including through the efficient use of existing infrastructure and appropriate sharing arrangements, while ensuring that the minimum baseline requirements and any additional commitments undertaken remain enforceable. The phased approach also recognises the practical challenges associated with extending advanced mobile networks across the archipelagic geography of The Bahamas.

Additionally, URCA has considered the broader fiscal and policy measures introduced by the Government of The Bahamas to encourage investment in electronic communications infrastructure. These include the customs-duty relief for telecommunications equipment announced in the 2022/2023 Budget, subject to the applicable customs legislation and tariff classifications, and the reductions in the Communications Licence Fee available to qualifying licensees under the Communications Act (Amendment to Schedule 3) Order, 2022 and URCA's Guidance Note for Reductions in the Communications Licence Fee (ECS 04/2023). Eligibility for such reductions remains subject to the applicable qualifying investment, application and verification requirements. While these measures do not eliminate the investment and compliance costs associated with the framework, they form part of the broader investment

environment and may assist eligible licensees in reducing the financial burden associated with the deployment and expansion of electronic communications networks.

Having regard to these considerations, URCA considers that the overall framework strikes an appropriate and proportionate balance between the financial and regulatory obligations imposed on licensees and the public benefits expected from the deployment of 5G networks. In reaching this conclusion, URCA has had regard to the electronic communications policy objectives established under section 4 of the Comms Act, particularly the promotion of investment and innovation, sustainable competition, the optimal use of radio spectrum, affordable access to high-quality electronic communications networks and services throughout The Bahamas, and public safety and security.

URCA has also had regard to the Government's strategic aims and policy objectives under the ECSP 2024–2027, particularly those relating to the deployment of emerging technologies, the expansion of advanced broadband connectivity, investment in 5G networks, and improvements in network quality and resilience. Consistent with the regulatory principles established under section 5 of the Comms Act, including the requirement to have due regard to the costs and implications of regulatory measures and to ensure that such measures are efficient, proportionate, transparent, fair and non-discriminatory, URCA considers that the cumulative requirements of the adopted framework are justified by their intended objectives. URCA therefore considers that the framework provides an appropriate basis for facilitating nationwide 5G deployment, securing meaningful public benefits and supporting sustainable investment in the electronic communications sector.

3. Conclusion and Next Steps

The publication of this SoR represents an important milestone in URCA's efforts to facilitate the introduction of 5G services in The Bahamas. The consultation process has provided stakeholders with an opportunity to comment on the proposed regulatory framework, including spectrum availability and configuration, assignment arrangements, deployment obligations, and the technical and regulatory considerations associated with the introduction of 5G services.

Having carefully considered the submissions received, URCA has adopted a regulatory framework designed to facilitate the timely and efficient deployment of 5G networks, promote investment and innovation, and support the broader objectives of the ECSP 2024–2027. The framework reflects the particular circumstances of the Bahamian electronic communications market, including its existing market structure, archipelagic geography, and the need to balance network development with proportionate and enforceable regulatory requirements.

Following publication, URCA will undertake the necessary regulatory, technical and administrative measures to give effect to the decisions set out in this document. These will include finalising and publishing the 5G Spectrum Band Plan and progressing the necessary

international coordination activities and technical assessments relating to the proposed n71 and n78 assignments. URCA will also determine the appropriate technical measures to facilitate coexistence with existing authorised services, including satellite operations, having regard to the applicable international and domestic regulatory requirements.

URCA will prepare and finalise the ITA and accompanying documentation, which will set out the applicable spectrum assignment procedures, eligibility requirements, evaluation criteria, deployment obligations, technical and operational conditions, and other material requirements governing the initial 5G spectrum assignment process. The ITA package will also include the proposed spectrum licence terms and conditions, as appropriate, setting out the obligations applicable to successful applicants, including requirements relating to deployment, coverage, network performance, resilience and regulatory compliance.These documents will be made available to prospective applicants sufficiently in advance of the submission deadline to afford them a reasonable opportunity to review the requirements, submit written requests for clarification and receive URCA's responses before submitting binding commitments. Subject to completion of the necessary preparatory measures and any required Government approvals, URCA intends to issue the ITA during the first quarter of 2027.

In parallel, URCA will continue to advance complementary regulatory initiatives concerning infrastructure sharing, electromagnetic field (EMF) exposure, cybersecurity and other matters relevant to the development of advanced electronic communications networks. URCA will also undertake appropriate consumer education and public awareness initiatives to promote understanding of 5G technology, its potential benefits and applications. These initiatives will seek to support informed consumer understanding and realistic expectations concerning the capabilities and performance of 5G services.

URCA also intends to facilitate controlled trials of private 5G networks, subject to the applicable licensing, spectrum authorisation, international coordination and regulatory requirements, including through any relevant arrangements developed following the upcoming public consultation on Regulatory Framework for Controlled Testing in the Electronic Communications Sector in The Bahamas (Innovation Reef) or other appropriate regulatory mechanisms. These trials will inform future decisions concerning spectrum access and assignment arrangements for private 5G networks, without prejudging the designation of specific frequency bands for permanent use.

URCA remains committed to facilitating the deployment of 5G services in The Bahamas in a manner that supports sustainable investment, competition, innovation and improved connectivity for consumers and businesses throughout the country. URCA will monitor the implementation of the adopted framework, including compliance with applicable deployment, coverage, performance and resilience obligations, and assess the need for further regulatory

measures having regard to deployment experience, technological developments, market conditions and the applicable Government policy framework.

Annex A — Minimum Baseline Requirements for Initial 5G Spectrum Assignment

A.1 Purpose and Application

This Annex establishes the mandatory minimum baseline requirements applicable to applicants seeking an initial assignment of 5G spectrum in the n71 and n78 bands.

Applicants shall demonstrate the technical, financial and organisational capability to satisfy the applicable baseline requirements and deliver any enhanced commitments undertaken pursuant to Annex B. Successful applicants shall be bound by the requirements incorporated into their respective spectrum licences.

Minimum baseline requirements shall be assessed on a pass/fail basis. Applicants must satisfy each applicable qualification criterion and may not offset non-compliance with a baseline requirement by undertaking enhanced commitments.

Unless otherwise specified, deployment periods shall commence from the effective date of the relevant spectrum grant. Technical specifications, assessment methodologies, reporting obligations and verification procedures shall be specified in the ITA and applicable licence conditions.

A.2 Mandatory Minimum Baseline Requirements Schedule

Parameter	Minimum baseline requirement	Application-stage assessment and post-deployment verification
Downlink / uplink data rates	Network capability of at least 100 Mbps downlink and 50 Mbps uplink in designated urban or high-demand areas.	Application: Network design, equipment specifications, RF planning, capacity modelling and anticipated loading demonstrate capability. Post-deployment: Measure at representative locations under ITA-prescribed loading, band configuration and architecture. Not a nationwide or cell-edge guarantee.
End-to-end latency	End-to-end latency of 30 ms or better during initial Non-Standalone (NSA) deployment within designated assessment areas.	Application: Network architecture, routing assumptions and latency modelling shall demonstrate the capability to meet the requirement within the designated assessment areas. Post-deployment: Compliance shall be verified in accordance with the measurement methodology specified in the ITA. Any separate latency requirement for Standalone (SA) deployment must be established by URCA.
Network availability	At least 99.9% annual average network availability, excluding qualifying force-majeure events.	Application: Review availability modelling, proposed redundancy, monitoring and maintenance arrangements. Post-deployment: Verify annual availability using the ITA methodology, in addition to existing outage-reporting obligations.
New Providence population coverage	At least 90% outdoor population coverage within 18 months.	Application: Review predicted coverage maps, propagation modelling, site plans and funded rollout milestones. Post-deployment: Verify outdoor population coverage against ITA criteria at the 18-month milestone.
Grand Bahama population coverage	At least 80% outdoor population coverage within 24 months.	Application: Review predicted coverage maps, propagation modelling, site plans and rollout milestones. Post-deployment: Verify outdoor population coverage against ITA criteria at the 24-month milestone.

Parameter	Minimum baseline requirement	Application-stage assessment and post-deployment verification
Family Island deployment	Each operator shall undertake initial deployment of 5G services to at least two (2) designated Family Islands within thirty-six (36) months. Qualifying 5G coverage shall be achieved across designated areas in all major Family Islands identified in the ITA within forty-eight (48) months, in accordance with operator-specific rollout obligations. Infrastructure or network-sharing arrangements may support compliance, subject to applicable regulatory requirements.	Application: Assess rollout plans, feasibility and resources. The ITA will specify designated areas, coverage thresholds and procedures for determining operator-specific obligations. Post-deployment: Verify each operator's approved coverage and milestones, including through authorised sharing arrangements. Obligations remain individually enforceable.
Geographical coverage capability	Network designed to provide qualifying 5G service within designated geographic grid areas.	Application: Assess predicted grid coverage, propagation assumptions and engineering plans. The ITA will specify grid size, signal thresholds and required proportion of covered grid squares before binding applications. Post-deployment: Verify achieved coverage against the grid definitions, signal thresholds and methodology specified in the ITA.
High-density capability	Capability to support high device densities in designated high-traffic locations, consistent with relevant IMT-2020 objectives.	Application: Assess network dimensioning, capacity modelling and equipment specifications. Post-deployment: Verify capacity against objective, ITA-defined metrics having regard to deployed architecture and spectrum.
Network architecture	Initial NSA deployment permitted; SA transition may occur as network readiness and applicable requirements evolve.	Application: Review proposed architecture, interoperability and upgrade plan. Post-deployment: Verify conformity with approved architecture and licence conditions. No automatic SA deadline or unspecified performance uplift.
Baseline network resilience	At least eight (8) hours of backup power at 5G base-station sites, with appropriate redundancy/failover for critical network functions.	Application: Review site power designs, equipment specifications, resilience plan and failover design. Post-deployment: Verify installed backup capability and operational arrangements through testing or inspection; more stringent disaster management or enhanced commitments continue to apply.
Network and supply-chain security	Appropriate cybersecurity governance, network-security controls, vendor/supply-chain risk management and implementation arrangements consistent with the framework under Question 15.	Application: Applicants shall demonstrate appropriate cybersecurity governance, risk assessment, network-security controls, vendor due diligence and implementation plans consistent with section 2.16.3. URCA shall assess the adequacy of the proposed arrangements rather than require full operational compliance before deployment. Post deployment: URCA shall verify compliance with the applicable security obligations through proportionate, risk-based assurance measures, including self-assessments, reporting, independent audits or other appropriate verification measures. Non-compliance may result in regulatory action, including enforcement measures, in accordance with the Comms Act and applicable licence conditions.
Health and safety	Compliance with applicable EMF, equipment safety and other health and safety requirements, including operative interim 5G conditions.	Application: Review proposed compliance processes, relevant equipment certifications and safety plans. Post-deployment: Verify actual compliance by inspection, testing or other applicable regulatory procedures.

Parameter	Minimum baseline requirement	Application-stage assessment and post-deployment verification
Technical, financial and organisational capability	Sufficient capacity to deploy, operate and maintain the network, meet all baseline requirements and deliver accepted enhanced commitments.	Application: Assess business/deployment plans, expertise, financial projections, statements and financing evidence; this is a qualification criterion. Post-deployment: Monitor delivery against binding licence milestones and accepted commitments; additional assurances may be required where justified.
Spectrum configuration	Capability to deploy using the offered n71/n78 blocks in accordance with applicable technical conditions.	Application: Assess equipment/band compatibility, spectrum engineering and technical implementation plan. Post-deployment: Verify use of assigned frequencies and compliance with final band plan and licence restrictions.

A.3 Infrastructure and Network Sharing

Applicants may rely on infrastructure or network-sharing arrangements approved by URCA, where required, to satisfy applicable minimum baseline requirements, subject to relevant regulatory requirements and safeguards. Arrangements may include passive infrastructure sharing, active network sharing or appropriate infrastructure-hosting arrangements. Supporting technologies, including satellite backhaul, may also be used where the resulting 5G service satisfies the applicable technical and performance requirements.

Each successful applicant shall remain individually responsible for its assigned deployment commitments and licence obligations. Shared infrastructure or supporting technologies shall not automatically substitute for terrestrial 5G deployment requirements.

A.4 Assessment, Monitoring and Enforcement

URCA shall assess each applicant's ability to meet the applicable minimum baseline requirements as a condition of qualification. The ITA shall specify the required evidence, technical definitions, assessment methodologies and supporting documentation.

Following assignment, successful applicants shall implement their approved deployment plans and comply with performance, coverage, resilience and security obligations in their respective licences. URCA may monitor and verify compliance through reporting, technical assessments, inspections, audits and other proportionate measures. Non-compliance may result in regulatory action, including enforcement measures, in accordance with the Comms Act and applicable licence conditions.

A.5 Family Island Deployment Obligations

The requirement to extend qualifying 5G coverage to all designated major Family Islands is a national deployment objective to be implemented through individually attributable and enforceable obligations of successful applicants.

URCA may approve complementary geographic deployment schedules, provided they collectively meet the published national coverage requirements. Each approved schedule shall identify the

assigned areas, coverage thresholds and milestones and form part of the relevant spectrum licence. The collective objective shall not create automatic joint liability between operators.

The definitive island list, coverage thresholds, assignment procedure and national deadline shall be published before binding applications are submitted.

Annex B — Enhanced Commitment Framework and Spectrum Allocation Priority

B.1 Purpose and Application

Applicants satisfying the mandatory minimum baseline requirements established under Annex A shall undertake at least one prescribed enhanced commitment from the categories and levels specified in this Annex.

Applicants may select commitments across multiple categories, taking account of their deployment strategies, operational capabilities and investment priorities. Points shall be awarded only for the highest qualifying level within each category; points for different levels in the same category shall not be accumulated. Points may be accumulated across different categories, up to a maximum of 27 points.

Each enhanced commitment must exceed the applicable Annex A baseline. All commitments accepted by URCA, whether or not material to allocation priority, shall be incorporated into the relevant spectrum licences and shall be binding and enforceable.

B.2 Enhanced Coverage Commitments

Level	Prescribed commitment	Verification / qualification
Level 1	At least a five (5) percentage-point increase above the applicable outdoor population coverage baseline in either New Providence or Grand Bahama.	Application: identify the island(s), predicted population coverage, network design and deployment schedule. Post-deployment: Verify enhanced coverage using Annex A methodology and applicable licence deadlines.
Level 2	At least a five (5) percentage-point increase above the applicable outdoor population coverage baseline in both New Providence and Grand Bahama.	Application: Submit predicted coverage maps, network design and schedules for both islands. Post-deployment: Verify enhanced coverage using Annex A methodology and applicable licence deadlines.
Level 3	Level 2 plus accelerated Family Island coverage and/or additional qualifying coverage in designated underserved areas beyond Annex A obligations.	Application: Identify additional or accelerated areas, coverage forecasts and schedule. Post-deployment: Verify against the acceleration periods or additional coverage thresholds specified in the ITA and licence.

For enhanced Family Island coverage commitments, the ITA shall specify the qualifying requirements for accelerated deployment or additional geographic coverage beyond the applicable minimum baseline obligations. URCA shall ensure that enhanced commitments are assessed against clearly defined baseline requirements to avoid awarding points for coverage already required under Annex A.

B.3 Enhanced Network Performance Commitments

Level	Prescribed commitment	Verification / qualification
Level 1	User-experienced performance of at least 120 Mbps downlink and 60 Mbps uplink in designated urban or high-demand areas.	At application: demonstrate feasibility through radio planning, link budgets, equipment specifications and capacity modelling. After deployment: verify through representative testing under ITA loading, band configuration and architecture conditions.
Level 2	Level 1 plus end-to-end latency of 25 ms or better for NSA deployment and 15 ms or better following SA deployment, where technically applicable.	At application: provide Level 1 evidence, proposed core and backhaul arrangements and latency-budget modelling. After deployment: verify against the reference points, architecture and methodology prescribed in the ITA.
Level 3	Levels 1 and 2 plus a prescribed high-density capacity commitment at designated sites.	At application: provide supporting evidence for Levels 1 and 2 and site-level capacity plans showing cells, spectrum and expected capacity. After deployment: verify against the locations, capacity metric and testing conditions prescribed in the ITA.

B.4 Enhanced Network Resilience Commitments

Level	Prescribed commitment	Verification / qualification
Level 1	At least 24 hours of backup power at 50% or more of active 5G sites, with redundancy for specified core network elements.	At application: provide site power design, proposed site counts and redundancy arrangements. After deployment: inspect and audit qualifying active sites and power systems under the ITA definitions.
Level 2	At least 48 hours of backup power at 70% or more of active sites, enhanced transmission and core redundancy, and MTTR of 24 hours or less for defined major outages.	At application: provide Level 1 evidence, diverse routing diagrams and restoration plans covering spares, field resources and refuelling. After deployment: verify via inspections, outage reports and restoration records under ITA event definitions and exclusions.
Level 3	Level 2 plus at least 72 hours of backup power at designated critical sites, geographically diverse core/backhaul redundancy and MTTR of 12 hours or less for defined priority restoration events.	At application: provide Level 2 evidence and critical-site power and geographic diversity plans. After deployment: inspect designated critical sites and review relevant outage and restoration records. Obligations apply in addition to Annex A and existing disaster-management requirements.

B.5 Enhanced Commitment Scoring and Allocation Priority

Where qualifying applicants seek the same available frequency block, URCA shall calculate each applicant's aggregate score using the following point allocations:

Enhanced commitment category	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Enhanced Coverage	4	8	12
Enhanced Network Performance	3	6	9
Enhanced Network Resilience	2	4	6
Maximum available score			**27**

Only the highest qualifying commitment level within a category attracts points. Scores from separate categories may be added; the maximum available aggregate score is 27 points. Each scored commitment must be supported by satisfactory evidence of deliverability and shall be binding if accepted.

Competing frequency-block preferences shall be resolved sequentially as follows:

a) **Total score:** the applicant with the higher aggregate enhanced commitment score receives priority.

b) **Enhanced Coverage:** if total scores are equal, the applicant with the higher Enhanced Coverage score receives priority.

c) **Enhanced Network Performance:** if the tie remains, the applicant with the higher Enhanced Network Performance score receives priority.

d) **Enhanced Network Resilience:** if the tie remains, the applicant with the higher Enhanced Network Resilience score receives priority.

e) **Supervised random draw:** any remaining tie shall be determined in accordance with the procedure prescribed in the ITA.

These criteria determine priority only between competing preferences for the same frequency block and do not displace Annex A qualification criteria or any applicable statutory and licensing requirements.

B.6 Assessment, Monitoring and Enforcement

At application, URCA shall assess whether the technical, financial and organisational evidence reasonably demonstrates the applicant's ability to deliver each enhanced commitment for which points are claimed. Points shall be awarded only for qualifying commitments supported by adequate evidence.

Following assignment, each successful applicant shall meet its accepted enhanced commitments in accordance with the relevant licence milestones. URCA shall verify compliance through reporting, technical measurements, inspections, audits and other measures specified in the ITA and licence conditions. Non-compliance may result in proportionate regulatory action, including enforcement where warranted.

Annex C — Procedures for the Initial 5G Spectrum Assignment Process

C.1 Purpose and Application

This Annex sets out the principal procedures through which URCA will implement the initial managed competitive assignment of 5G spectrum in the n71 and n78 bands. The process incorporates the mandatory minimum baseline requirements established in Annex A and the enhanced commitment scoring and allocation priority framework established in Annex B.

Applicants shall submit a single application containing the information required to assess their qualification, proposed Family Island deployment responsibilities, enhanced commitments and spectrum block preferences. The process shall comprise successive administrative, qualification, scoring and allocation steps; it shall not constitute separate application rounds.

The assignment process shall be conducted in accordance with the Comms Act and the procedures specified in the ITA.

C.2 Spectrum Assignment Procedure

Stage 1: Issuance of the Invitation to Apply

URCA shall issue the ITA to eligible mobile network operators following completion of the necessary preparatory arrangements and receipt of any required statutory approvals or determinations. The ITA shall specify:

a) the n71 and n78 frequency blocks available, technical parameters and any applicable spectrum holding limits with reference to the 5G Band Plan;
b) the mandatory minimum baseline requirements and evidence needed to establish qualification under Annex A;
c) the closed list of designated major Family Islands, qualifying geographic coverage thresholds, the national deployment deadline and the objective procedure for determining individually attributable baseline deployment obligations;
d) the prescribed enhanced commitment categories and levels, qualifying accelerated deployment or additional geographic coverage thresholds, numerical scores and tie-breaking rules established in Annex B;
e) the sequence for confirming individual Family Island baseline responsibilities before enhanced coverage commitments are scored, including treatment of overlaps, unassigned areas and any permitted clarification;
f) the application forms, evidence requirements, submission deadlines, assessment criteria and assignment timetable;
g) the applicable spectrum fees, payment arrangements and relevant licensing terms; and
h) the procedure for resolving competing spectrum preferences, including the opportunity to propose alternative block preferences and any supervised random draw.

The ITA shall establish clear and objective procedures for determining individual Family Island deployment obligations and assessing enhanced commitments before applications are submitted. URCA shall evaluate applications against the published requirements and shall not introduce or materially alter the applicable qualification or scoring criteria after the application deadline.

Stage 2: Submission of Applications

Each applicant shall submit a single application comprising the following information:

a) **Spectrum Preferences:** The spectrum blocks requested in each band and, where applicable, a ranked order of permissible alternative preferences.

b) **Mandatory Minimum Baseline Requirements:** Evidence of technical, financial and organisational capability to satisfy Annex A, including projected coverage, performance, resilience, network and supply-chain security arrangements, and the proposed implementation timetable. Applicants shall submit Family Island deployment proposals identifying designated locations, qualifying service areas, milestones and supporting resources in accordance with the ITA.

c) **Enhanced Commitments:** The commitment level offered within each selected Annex B category, together with supporting evidence of feasibility and deliverability. Applicants may select commitments across multiple categories and are not required to nominate a single priority commitment. Only the highest qualifying level in each category shall attract points; points may be accumulated across categories.

d) **Supporting Information:** The network designs, deployment and financing plans, relevant guarantees or assurances where reasonably required, and other evidence specified in the ITA.

Enhanced offers and spectrum preferences shall be binding when submitted, subject only to clarifications or variations expressly permitted under the published procedures. Any enhanced commitment accepted by URCA shall be incorporated into the relevant spectrum licence.

Stage 3: Administrative Review

URCA shall review applications for completeness, timely submission, required supporting documentation and compliance with the prescribed administrative procedures.

Where an application contains omissions or deficiencies, URCA may invite clarifications or outstanding information within a specified period under the ITA. Any such opportunity shall be administered transparently and equally and shall not permit material improvements to enhanced offers or revisions of spectrum preferences after the submission deadline, except as expressly

allowed by the published procedures. Failure to remedy material deficiencies may result in rejection.

Stage 4: Qualification Assessment and Confirmation of Baseline Obligations

URCA shall assess whether each administratively compliant applicant has demonstrated the capability to satisfy all applicable mandatory minimum baseline criteria under Annex A, including its technical, financial, organisational, deployment, coverage, performance, resilience and security obligations.

Each applicant shall submit a proposed Family Island deployment schedule demonstrating its ability to satisfy the minimum geographic coverage requirements established under Annex A within the prescribed timeframe. Applicants may rely on approved infrastructure or network-sharing arrangements to fulfil these requirements, subject to applicable regulatory conditions and safeguards. Each successful applicant shall remain individually responsible for meeting its deployment and coverage obligations under its spectrum licence.

URCA shall assess enhanced geographic coverage commitments against the minimum baseline requirements established under Annex A. Only commitments that exceed these requirements, whether through accelerated deployment or additional qualifying geographic coverage, shall be eligible for enhanced coverage points. Applicants shall not be permitted to materially amend their enhanced commitments after the application deadline, except as expressly permitted under the published procedures. All accepted baseline and enhanced deployment commitments shall be incorporated into the relevant spectrum licences and shall be independently enforceable.

Only applicants demonstrating compliance with the mandatory minimum baseline requirements established under Annex A and offering at least one qualifying enhanced commitment under Annex B shall proceed to the spectrum block allocation stage. Where an enhanced commitment does not satisfy the prescribed qualification criteria, no points shall be awarded for that commitment.

Where an applicant fails to demonstrate compliance with an applicable mandatory qualification requirement or at least one qualifying enhanced commitment, URCA may afford the applicant a reasonable opportunity to clarify or provide supporting information within a specified period. Such clarification shall not permit the applicant to materially amend its application or enhance its competitive commitments after the submission deadline. Where the applicant fails to satisfy the applicable requirements following this process, the application shall be rejected and excluded from further consideration.

Stage 5: Enhanced Commitment Scoring and Spectrum Block Allocation

URCA shall assess each qualifying applicant's enhanced commitments against its confirmed Annex A baseline obligations and the prescribed technical, financial and other qualification requirements in Annex B. No enhanced coverage points shall be awarded for geographic

deployment already required as part of the applicant's individual baseline. The highest qualifying commitment level in each category shall be scored, and the points across categories added to obtain the applicant's aggregate score, up to the maximum of 27 points.

Following the assessment of qualifying enhanced commitments, URCA shall determine the allocation of available frequency blocks having regard to applicants' stated spectrum preferences and their aggregate enhanced commitment scores. For the avoidance of doubt, each applicant's aggregate enhanced commitment score shall apply to the determination of its block preference priority in both the n71 and n78 bands.

Where qualifying applicants request different available frequency blocks, URCA shall allocate the respective blocks in accordance with their preferences, subject to applicable technical, regulatory and licensing requirements.

Where qualifying applicants request the same frequency block, priority shall be accorded to the applicant with the highest aggregate enhanced commitment score. Where applicants achieve equal aggregate scores, the tie-breaking criteria established in Annex B shall apply.

An applicant that does not receive its first-choice frequency block shall be considered for its next available permissible preference, in accordance with the procedures specified in the ITA. Where an applicant's stated preferences cannot be accommodated, URCA may consider an alternative permissible allocation in accordance with the published assignment procedures.

All allocations shall remain subject to the applicable statutory, technical and licensing requirements. An applicant's aggregate enhanced commitment score shall not, of itself, confer an entitlement to spectrum assignment.

Stage 6: Determination and Notification of Spectrum Awards

Following completion of qualification, scoring and block allocation, URCA shall determine proposed assignments in accordance with the applicable statutory and regulatory requirements. URCA shall notify successful applicants of:

a) the spectrum bands and frequency blocks proposed to be assigned;

b) the applicable spectrum fees and payment requirements;

c) the mandatory baseline obligations, including individually assigned Family Island milestones;

d) the accepted enhanced commitments, applicable reporting and verification requirements and other relevant licence conditions; and

e) the timetable and procedure for acceptance and completion of outstanding statutory or administrative requirements.

Notification of a proposed award shall not dispense with any outstanding statutory, licensing or administrative requirement.

Stage 7: Acceptance of Spectrum Award and Licence Issuance

Successful applicants shall confirm acceptance of the notified spectrum award, including applicable fees and licence conditions, within ten (10) business days of notification or such longer period as URCA may determine under the published assignment procedures. Applicants shall satisfy applicable payment and documentary requirements within the prescribed period.

Subject to completion of all applicable requirements, URCA shall issue or vary the relevant spectrum licences to incorporate the individual minimum baseline obligations, all accepted enhanced commitments, implementation milestones, monitoring and verification arrangements, and applicable enforcement provisions.

Failure to accept an award or complete the required steps within the prescribed period may be dealt with in accordance with the procedures set out in the ITA and applicable law.