



## Response to Ofcom Consultation: The Future Use of 169 MHz Ex ERMES Band

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### Background

JFMG Ltd is the dedicated band manager for programme-making, entertainment, special events and related activities. It is a privately owned company created specifically to ensure continued and equitable spectrum access to all areas of the programme-making industry.

JFMG has successfully coordinated the use of spectrum, issued licences and collected licence fees on behalf of Ofcom since 1997. The spectrum managed ranges from 47MHz to 48GHz and requires expert knowledge of the specific bands, their uses and their compatibility with other radio services. In the UK, the professional use of radio for programme making and entertainment purposes is referred to as Programme Making and Special Events (PMSE).

As the dedicated band manager JFMG Ltd facilitates the successful running of events, provides on-site consultancy services and is committed to leading the industry through the transitional period ahead.

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### Response

***Question: Do you have any comments on this proposal or on the potential for use of PMR and PMSE systems in the high power part of the ex-ERMES band?***

The current temporary PMSE assignments in the ex-ERMES band are for short range communications to handheld mobiles. There are limited alternative options in VHF spectrum and JFMG would hope that following the consultation compatible temporary assignments can continue be made in this band. The propagation characteristics, radiated power limits and bandwidth of the ex-ERMES band however also make it particularly attractive to other PMSE applications, for which spectrum is similarly scarce.

One specific application is point-to-point audio links as typically used for news reporting from vehicles to receivers on fixed infrastructure. Valuable wideband audio link channels are being lost in Band III for new DAB services and as yet no alternative suitable spectrum has been identified. Alternative options in the frequency range 450-470MHz are limited due to existing assignments and Band I is also being explored as a potential solution. New equipment employing robust digital modulation techniques is currently being developed for wideband audio links.

Making the ex-ERMES band available to PMSE and wideband audio links in particular would be very timely and of great benefit to Programme Makers despite the proposed maximum licence period of six months. Greater security of tenure would make the band more attractive to Programme Makers, particularly those looking to invest in receiver infrastructure.

Access to the band, managed by JFMG, would be a very valuable addition to PMSE.