CSMAC Lessons Learned Meeting Summary
December 13, 2013

Background

The Commerce Spectrum Management Advisory Committee (CSMAC) advises the Assistant Secretary for Communications and Information at NTIA on a broad range of spectrum policy issues. Committee members offer expertise and perspective on reforms to enable new technologies and services, including reforms that expedite the American public's access to broadband services, public safety, and long-range spectrum planning.

The CSMAC created five working groups to consider ways to facilitate the transition of the 1695–1710 MHz and 1755–1850 MHz bands for commercial wireless uses. Working groups consisted of federal agency stakeholders, industry members, and NTIA and FCC staff liaisons.

From May 2012 to August 2013, the working groups organized, developed work plans, convened face-to-face and teleconference meetings, drafted and edited reports, provided updates to the full CSMAC through the member liaisons, and delivered final reports and recommendations for consideration by the Committee.

NTIA convened a meeting on December 13, 2013 to discuss ''lessons learned'' from the CSMAC working group process in order to identify recommended best practices for future improvement and to incorporate them appropriately into NTIA processes.[1]

Recommended Best Practices

Lessons-learned participants were generally positive regarding the working group process as a whole. Much of the discussion focused on information sharing. As a result of the meeting, participants suggested a number of lesson-learned ideas and recommended best practices, which are summarized and categorized into major themes below. NTIA will address these lessons learned/best practices suggested by the CSMAC working group participants and indicate actions that will be taken based on them.

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[1] The Lessons Learned meeting agenda and transcript are available at http://www.ntia.doc.gov/meetings/CSMAC. Page and line references in the following list, refer to the locations within the transcript.

LESSONS LEARNED/BEST PRACTICE

1. **Cooperation and Collaboration**

- Early collaboration (such as meetings and phone calls) and engagement between industry, private sector, and Federal Government participants was a productive approach and helped moved the process along in a meaningful way. (page 14, line 17)
- Collaboration across the working groups could be improved, especially information that was already in the public domain. A lot of useful information was shared, although it might have been helpful in instances that these subgroups could reach into the other working groups to pull in some of the experts to assist in other working groups.(page 91, line 15)

2. **Defining Tasks**

Tasks must be clearly defined right from the start to avoid confusion. Establishing work plans, timelines, and direction from NTIA needed to be more clearly defined as it seemed the federal agencies were moving in a different direction then others (for example, access to all 1755-1850 MHz vice only access to 1755-1780 MHz; relocation versus sharing approach). (page 39, line 15)

- The Fast Track Report/Feasibility Study was a starting point for the federal agencies, but the tasking directions changed. In some instances, the framework document appeared non-negotiable and there should be some flexibility to move in a different direction if it makes more sense; and not based on some kind of an arbitrary set of terms of engagement set at the beginning of the process. (page 17, line 1)

3. **Technical Parameters and Data Improvements**

- One technical working group that provides the technical details for all the other working groups makes sense in order to use the same data to develop a consensus. (page 19, line 5)
- More latitude on analysis procedures and methodologies was needed. To facilitate consensus, mutual agreement on modeling and technical approaches and parameters was needed. (page 23, line 7)
- Technical data and run studies were performed by non-federal stakeholders much quicker. (page 21, line 1)
- Online portals and tools facilitated collaboration, exchange, and reviews. More consistent and straightforward use of them was needed. (page 41, line 15)

4. Time and Resource Commitments

- Some of the working groups did not completely finish the required analysis and conclusions. More guidance to define what is required in the given timeframe and milestones were needed to keep groups on track. (page 31, line 15)
- To keeps things moving along, there should be some sort of escalation process for resolution by NTIA when barriers are identified. (page 40, line 15)
- In order to not reargue points from previous meetings for people that missed these meetings, there should be some sort of organized meeting notes (minutes or documentation) for them to read, look, and understand what has been going on if they missed a previous meeting(s). (page 53, line 18)
- The time and resources needed to be dedicated to this work was an issue because of other responsibilities by members from their day jobs. Also ensuring that groups can leverage the work of others for efficiency would help with time and resource issues. (page 98, line 14)
- The DOD vetting of information for public release slowed the process down and DOD engineers had to be mindful of not releasing sensitive/classified information. Perhaps reducing the size of groups so as not to consider them as open and public would help. The speed of releasing information and data to the public from the DOD (not knowing who was on the phone for example) was an issue and has to be factored into the process and timelines. (page 90, line 3)

5. Organization and Participation

- The organization within each one of the working groups was very positive. It was important to have an NTIA contact and the federal agent that actually had a stake in the outcome of the working group as the co-chair helped bridge their interest with the industry interest. The federal agency representative also had the knowledge of system use and operation that provided a cohesive working group. (page 70, line 2)
- The overall process and architecture from the oversight group, the co-chairs, the CSMAC liaisons overseeing all the work, the co-chairs from both industry and the federal government (and sub-working groups) was for the most part fair and balanced. However, in some cases better leadership and stakeholder participation and buy-in could have led to better results. (page 70, line 18)
- The roles and assignments of the CSMAC, CSMAC working groups, NTIA and FCC and even DOD needs to be clearly defined so as not to cause confusion, help with expectations, and lessen change of direction at the endpoint. (page 199, line 19)

6. Trusted Agent and Information Sharing

- Information sharing would be having industry members with the appropriate clearances. If some government entity possesses sensitive or classified information and there is an established need to know by that commercial entity, then it would seem relevant that the federal agency sponsor industry members. (page 80, line 22)
- The concept of the trusted agent needs to be figured out up front in the next process as this issue had taken a long time. (page 81, line 17)
- Perhaps NTIA or DOD or DOJ can sponsor the clearances. (page 81, line 14)
- There needs to be a common understanding on DOD information sharing and what information should be shared. The DOD understands that industry needs a certain amount of information to make a solid business decision, but the DOD has to protect the data and information. The DOD is looking at this from a grander scale when it comes to sharing, to figure out what that grander scale of sharing information is going to look like or result in. (page 83, line 14)
- The current NDA process that is in place is not a sustaining process, where there are only a limited number of industry folks sharing information.(page 86, line 9)
- Perhaps looking at the FACA and the process may help in order to have closed and classified meetings as other agencies with FACAs do. (page 93, line 5)
- Export control and ITAR should also be looked at in this process (having people dial in from outside the US, non-US citizens in the room is a concern) (page 93, line 17)
- Consider having NTIA and FCC as trusted agents for the federal and non-federal entities or an individual contractor. There are different ways to approach this, but the conversation on how best to do it needs to continue. Perhaps the trusted agent can serve as the main focal point for analysis methodologies and parameters. This trusted agent can then establish trust between all parties, and then the DOD or the government can run the analyses while safeguarding the data so that both sides are comfortable that there is mutual trust. This approach may facilitate sharing more easily. (page 103, line 3)

7. Production, Process, and Output

- Interim reports for the CSMAC along the way would inform members of progress sooner rather than later. (page 35, line 12)
- With the formal report writing, it would have been helpful in identifying up front in terms of who is in charge and providing a framework for all of the working groups if there are multiple working groups. Clearly identifying report writers would make it clear as to what people are signing up for right up front, as opposed to finding out later in the process. (page 115, line 18)
- There were things that were discussed in some working groups that would have been of benefit to look at further, but were never done. Perhaps some sort of follow-on effort could be established. (page116, line 114)