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Subject: VHF Handbooks & Contests

Committee: C5

Summary:

VHF/UHF/Microwave contests play an important role in supporting activity in bands where spectrum pressures are greatest. Whilst C5 has formed a Contest Working group, a key aspect of its operation has not been implemented as originally envisaged. This proposal emphasises and clarifies the need for a separate Contesting Handbook.

Background

The 2017 IARU Region1 Conference approved a change of the structure of C5 in which contest matters were moved into a separate working group based on Recommendation LA17_C5_Rec_27:

It is recommended that a Contest working Group is formed with the following terms of reference.

The C5 Contest Working Group Terms of Reference included:-

Objectives

1. Organisation and conduct of IARU-Region 1 VHF/UHF/SHF contests including:

Responsibility

5) To maintain an appropriate 'Contesting Handbook' that would be the master reference for the Organisation and Rules of IARU Region-1 VHF/UHF/SHF Contests - including any directly associated procedures and items such as log file formats

It was a clear intention of this recommendation that a new separate Contest Handbook should be created and maintained by the Contest working group. This inherently meant the separation and removal of all such contest content from the VHF Managers Handbook.

The benefits of this separation are:-

- It assists the efficient working of the Contest Working Group
- The remaining VHF Manager Handbook content would then become a more stable and smaller document - independent of any updates or changes required for contesting which can cause unhelpful updates to issue numbers, page/section numbers etc

- Both documents would be easier to maintain and update as separate entities (with independent version numbers, update times etc)
- It would separate contests from the VHF Managers Handbook which has a pseudo-regulatory status and is referred to by CEPT and some national regulators

It is disappointing that although the first draft of the Contest Handbook was prepared before the end of 2017, just after the Conference; the C5-Chair did not comply with this aspect of the LA17_C5_Rec_27 recommendation to implement this and deferred the matter by 18 months to the Vienna meeting.

We also note the recent C5-Chair proposal in: VIE-19 C5-003 Rev1 and Handbook draft v8.12. Whilst this draft does create a dedicated contest section – it does not fully separate it out, for ease-of-use by the working group. It is also presented in such a negative way that it appears to be not the preference.

Proposals

- That the latest draft (v8.12a) has its Contest section fully separated out as the initial basis of a standalone 'Contesting Handbook' document as originally envisaged by LA17_C5_Rec_27
- The Contesting Handbook would include contest rules, procedures, reference information (such as the EDI format), contest manager contact info, useful dates, contest-related changes archive/history etc
- That the Contest Handbook is the responsibility of the CWG Chair
- That the CWG may be expanded if the CWG Chair needs support either to maintain the Contest Handbook or other contest related matters (eg for software/adjudication experts, ATV contests etc)
- That the v8.12 draft of VHF Manager Handbook be up-issued with all such contest material removed - as this will now be in the new separate 'Contesting Handbook'

Financial Implications: None (for just this aspect of Contests)

Other Resources: RSGB is prepare to offer editorial support for the initial work