



**International Amateur Radio Union Region 1 Interim Meeting – Vienna Austria
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Source: Verleijen Jacques ON4AVJ Chairman C5

Subject: VHF Handbooks & Contests

Committee: C5

Summary

This document is a response to the document VIE19 C5-026, which sets out the RSGB view of the way ahead on the VHF Handbook.

Background

It is worth reminding ourselves what was discussed in Landshut in 2017 about the VHF Handbook. Two papers were presented and the minutes of C5 read as follows:

8.a. New VHF Handbook (LA_C5_05)

This paper was presented by ON4AVJ. He got the task of revising the handbook in the Vienna Interim meeting. He found a collection of recommendations but which were ordered in an unstructured way. He questioned who the readers of the VHF handbook were meant to be?

He then wondered why Radio Amateurs were the primary customers? Cascading communications down through VHF managers was outdated, they needed practical information quickly. This kind of information was also needed by regulators, hardware and software developers etc. but without losing the reason for historical changes.

He proposed removing 'managers' from the title, making it more relevant to all and separating the information into four sections of ;

- General Information - Technical references
 - Information for VHF Managers and Member Societies - Historical Information
- The new manual was available on the Wiki.*

8.b. New VHF Handbook (LA_C5_15)

The RSGB had been working in parallel with ON4AVJ and proposed splitting the handbook into four different areas:

- VHF Managers Handbook
- VHF Contesting Handbook - VHF Operating Handbook
- VHF contact information and supplement (optional).

The separation of parts would allow the contest working group to be able to modify their section without affecting others. Users would have easier access to the information they needed to operate.

The paper goes beyond rewriting the document and tries to provide forward direction as well.

A vote was held by shown of hands on the principle of splitting the Handbook into parts. This principle was agreed.

There was disagreement on how this work should go forward. ON4AVJ proposed two votes. The first to decide whether to use the old handbook or the version he was asked to provide at Vienna. The second vote to decide to choose between the two layouts at the next interim conference.

ARI understood that in Vienna there was a vote for a change and there should be no return to the 'old version'.

*Vote on accepting LA_C5_05 Votes recorded;
For: 27 Against: 1
Abstain: 0*

*Vote on accepting paper LA_C5_15
Votes recorded; For: 22
Against: 3 Abstain: 3*

So two recommendations, which can be seen as mutually contradictory, were approved. Neither of these proposals were carried forward to the final Plenary at the Conference, but they have formed the basis of work done since the Landshut Conference on the Handbook

In VHF newsletter 80, the alternative version of the handbook was proposed, with another partition, as we decided in Landshut 2017. I think that I did what was asked of me. The document VIE19 C5-003 places the decision about the final format of the VHF handbook in the hand of the Interim meeting.

You can perhaps now see why paper 26 is unnecessary. The Landshut decisions speak of sectionalising the Handbook and retitling it. That is what has been done.

The argument of publishing contest matters separately is not relevant. What is relevant is the way how contest matters are handled, and this is done by the contest working group.

Arguments about ease of update are, to my mind, irrelevant in considering the way ahead. We are in the world of Microsoft Word and other tools

A VHF handbook is not just about content, but needs also to be a pleasant document that is readable and where the users can find the information they need in a user-friendly way with a consistent layout. That is, I think, the great difference between the versions 7.x and 8.x. We also need to make the question of cross-referencing easy to handle.

Proposal

See proposal VIE19_C5-003

ANNEX 1

Document VIE 19 C5-026

comments from ON4AVJ in red

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

All contest items are in a separate part in version 8.12. The full responsibility of the contest part is in hands of the Contest working group. If you want a separate files instead of sections this can be done in 5 minutes. **But this is not only valid for the contesting section of the manual!**

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.

This is the personal interpretation of the author.

The benefits of this separation are:-

- It assists the efficient working of the Contest Working Group
The working group is doing its work, and this is published in a consistent lay-out.
- 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
Microsoft Word is capable to handle this
- Both documents would be easier to maintain and update as separate entities (with independent version numbers, update times etc).

It is perfectly possible to make 4 or 5 different files instead of 1; but what is the added value from this?

- 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

If our handbook has a pseudo regulatory status, I would invite all MS to read also the operational and technical sections, especially those about digital communications. If our regulators should take this as a rule, we are back to the middle ages.

This is clearly mentioned by OeVSV in document VIE19_C5-013.

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.

The contest rules were finished in January 2018 by the contest working group and published. See VHF newsletter 76. They were integrated in both versions (8.02 and 8.12).

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.

This was not the outcome from the GC in Landshut, who did not take a formal decision about the VHF handbook, as explained in VIE-19 C5-003 and in this paper. The GC C5 asked to bring forward another layout and we would decide in Vienna 2019. That is what has been done.

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
LA17_C5_Rec_27 is completely executed but in one file instead of in different files.
- 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
Done.
- That the Contest Handbook is the responsibility of the CWG Chair
Done. The Contest Working group did their job well and all their requirements were integrated in both versions.
- 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

There is no need for help.