



**The Role of the UK Space Agency
Science and Technology Committee
Inquiry
comments from BT**

27 August 2010

Introduction

1. BT has a continuing interest in a healthy and competitive UK space industry as it relies on space to:
 - provide satellite communication solutions to extend reach for some of our business customers — such as customised VSAT and mobile products;
 - provide satellite broadband access in the UK and around the world where satellites can offer our customers the best solution in terms of cost and capability;
 - provide new and innovative services that use (and sometimes rely on) space capability e.g. resource tracking, mobile data services, disaster recovery solutions and wide area distribution of media content; and
 - extend services to other countries which rely on satellite communications for their international links.
2. While BT believes there are significant growth opportunities in new space areas such as earth observation and satellite navigation, it also considers that satellite communication will continue to be the dominant growth area in terms of the value of space to UK citizens, businesses and employment for many years to come. It is, therefore, crucial that the UK Space Agency role's fully reflects this in its allocation of scarce public resources. The UK's satellite communications industry must be enabled to innovate and thrive in an increasingly competitive international environment.
3. BT notes that the UK Space Agency has only recently been established and so is neither fully resourced nor yet capable of discharging its mission. At this crucial phase in its development it is important that it is set up with the appropriate role and resources to achieve its stated mission, and this should be done within an appropriately rapid time frame. UK space strategy currently lacks a single, strong focal point and funding often appears to be in ad-hoc manner. BT hopes that the UK Space Agency will fulfil that role.

Comments on specific questions

4. BT has limited visibility of progress of the workings of the Agency over the last six months and hence our comments concentrate on Questions 4 and 5.

Question 4 - What should the UK Space Agency's priorities be for the next five years?

5. A key priority to address the space growth agenda is to fully support R&D through the ARTES programme and a targeted national programme.
6. Within Government, the UK Space Agency should champion the space industry in terms of regulation and access to space spectrum which is under severe competitive pressure. It must ensure that whatever regulation is imposed on the satellite industry does not impede its growth and, instead, encourages innovation and strengthens the UK's position on an increasingly competitive international scene.

Question 5 - Is the UK Space Agency adequately funded?

7. The UK is leading in developing new services and commercial models and this source of national advantage should be encouraged. BT does not believe that Government funding should be provided for major satellite communication infrastructure programmes that could unduly distort the market from what end users need and are prepared to purchase.
8. BT believes the UK Space Agency needs adequate resources to deliver a “more muscular” approach to its dealings with international organisations like the European Space Agency and the European Union. The UK is often the voice of reason in these organisations and its voice must be heard more effectively.
9. In order to discharge the regulatory role outlined above, the UK Space Agency must have its own expertise on these matters and work closely with those in industry who will be willing to support with additional advice and expertise.

*BT Group plc
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