FAQs for commercial licensees

The following document has been developed to support commercial licence holders consider their renewal offers.

This document will be updated occasionally. This version is current as at 27 October 2026

If you have any questions regarding your specific offer document please contact the project team at CrownSpectrum@mbie.govt.nz.

Responding to the offer

1. **How do I respond to my offer?**

Please refer to the offer document for instructions on how to respond. Your offer document includes a schedule to capture your response for each licence you have been offered, and your response must be received by Wednesday 28 April 2027.

The offer document is protected, which means that the only changes you can make to it are to fill out the form in Schedule 1.

2. **The offer document is jumping around when I am working in it, why is this?**

The protection settings on the offer document may mean that, when you click through it, you are directed to those parts of the document which can be changed (i.e. Schedule 1). If you are encountering this issue, we have provided you with a PDF template document which replicates the same terms and conditions found in your personalised offer document.

3. **How do I sign the document?**

You may type your name or upload an image of your signature. We will accept your signature in either form. If we are unsure of the validity of your signature, we will contact you.

4. **Can I have a list of my licences outside of the Offer Document to review?**

Yes, we are happy to provide an unprotected list of licences for you to review. Please contact us at CrownSpectrum@mbie.govt.nz

5. **Can I have more time to consider my offer?**

The six-month window for you to consider the offer is fixed. If there is a particular circumstance that may impact your ability to respond please reach out to CrownSpectrum@mbie.govt.nz as soon as possible.

6. **Can I transfer my offer to somebody else?**

The offer document deals with the transferability of the offer. Please reach out to CrownSpectrum@mbie.govt.nz if you would like to discuss this.

7. **I don't understand why I have been contacted about this offer?**

The email addresses for licence renewal notifications have been drawn from the Register of Radio Frequencies. These offers require action within a specified timeframe, so if you are not sure why you have received this offer or how to action it, please reach out to CrownSpectrum@mbie.govt.nz.

8. **What should I do if I think there is an error with my offer?**

Please reach out to CrownSpectrum@mbie.govt.nz.

9. **The details which are included in the offer, e.g. transmission site, name of the licensee has changed. How can I update this information?**

Please reach out to CrownSpectrum@mbie.govt.nz in the first instance. As the licence you have been offered replicates your current licence, if the details of your current licence have changed you are likely to need to engage an Approved Radio Engineer to modify it. We can provide you with guidance around this process, or refer to PIB 59.

10. **What happens to my ability to continue broadcasting if I decline the offer?**

You retain the right to continue broadcasting until the end of 2 April 2031 under the terms of your current licence. Spectrum associated with licences for the 2031-2051 period which are declined in the renewal offer process will be made available to the market again by RSM.

Offer information

11. **How has the licence which is being offered to me been created?**

The specifications of the licence being offered to you for the 2031-2051 period exactly duplicates the current specifications of the licence which expires in 2031. If there are any errors in the current licence, these will also be duplicated in the future renewal licence. Please contact CrownSpectrum@mbie.govt.nz if you think there is an error in the licence being offered to you.

12. **When you indicate the final Licence Agreement terms may change, what kinds of changes are you expecting?**

Before licence agreements are finalised with purchasers, we may make changes to the template licence agreement that we have presented as part of the offer process. These changes might relate to regulatory developments, minor or administrative changes, or to account for licence modifications made ahead of settlement.

In addition, the licence agreement terms presented as part of this offer relate to licence renewals only. In due course, when the moratorium on new licences is lifted, licensees will also be able acquire licences outside of the renewal process. Such licences will have slightly different terms addressing, for example, purchase by auction, implementation requirements and the interaction between implementation requirements and ongoing use requirements.

Ultimately we expect that each licensee will have one Licence Agreement with MBIE, under which terms related to licence renewals and licences acquired outside of the renewal process are dealt with.

13. What is the RRF?

The Register of Radio Frequencies (RRF) is New Zealand's official database of radio spectrum rights and licences. It is accessible here rrf.rsm.govt.nz

Pricing of licences

14. How has my licence been priced?

Cabinet has agreed that renewal offers will be priced at $29 million in total for the current licence set.

For the purposes of renewal offers, this overall price has been apportioned to individual licences based on a per-capita rate, determined by individually modelling each licence coverage area to determine its **primary population coverage**.

The **primary population coverage** reflects the population served within the first contiguous coverage area from a transmission site, defined by the minimum usable field strength (MUFS) of 66 dBµV/m. It does not include all population that may be reached by the licence.

Population counts have been derived from coverage areas modelled using the technical parameters recorded for each licence in the Register of Radio Frequencies. Coverage modelling was undertaken using a consistent engineering methodology, including the models and settings specified in PIB 39 and current mapping, terrain and geographic datasets. The modelled primary coverage areas were then combined with up-to-date census population numbers and meshblocks to calculate the population served by each licence. This approach provides a consistent and transparent basis for population estimates across all licences.

The specific licence details included in the Register of Radio Frequencies (including location, power, antenna height, frequency, and antenna pattern) have been used in this modelling process.

The per-capita rate for AM licences is $0.041 and for FM licences is $0.427.

The minimum price charged for a licence as part of this renewal process is $1,000 (exc GST). This is less than the minimum price charged in the 2011 renewal process, which was $1,200 (exc GST).

For consistency and transparency, the same pricing approach has been used for all licences as part of this renewal process.

15. There was an error with the population coverage estimate provided to me last year. How can I be sure the revised population coverage estimate is correct?

Alongside the 2025 consultation document, licensees could request estimated population counts that were based on historic data, adjusted for population growth. RSM was alerted to gaps in this data by licensees during the consultation process.

Those consultation estimates have not been used in the process of developing population counts for offers.

The population counts used in offers reflect the population served by licences derived using the methodology outlined above.

16. Are there any additional costs associated with accepting a licence offer?

The renewal price set out in the offer document relates only to the cost of the licence.

Additional charges which are the responsibility of the purchaser include annual licence fees.

The purchaser is also responsible for any costs related to assessing and considering the offer, e.g. legal or approved radio engineer costs.

17. Why do my different licences at the same transmission site cost different amounts?

The specific licence details included in the Register of Radio Frequencies (including location, power, antenna height, frequency and antenna pattern) have been used. This means that each licence has been priced individually. Differences in e.g. transmit power, antenna height, or antenna pattern can result in differences in population coverage and therefore price.

18. Can I pay for my renewal offer in instalments?

No, the structure of the licence agreement is for each Tenure Period to be paid for at the relevant time.

19. Can I pay for the full 20 year right?

No, the structure of the licence agreement is for each Tenure Period to be paid for at the relevant time, alongside meeting other conditions such as ongoing use.

Ongoing Use in the Offer Document and Licence Agreement

20. Why have you introduced an ongoing use requirement for licences?

Spectrum licences for broadcasting are a finite resource. In some areas there is insufficient availability of licences to meet market demand, and so we want to ensure that all licences are being used.

In 2025, as part of our public consultation process related to the duration of licences, we asked about a process whereby non-use would trigger a right for the Crown to take back licences. While Cabinet has ultimately decided to provide licences for a 20-year period as part of the renewal process, there was general support amongst respondents for some kind of repercussion for non-use. The introduction of the 5-year Tenure Period created the opportunity for non-use to be addressed as part of the transition from one Tenure Period to the next.

The Licence Agreement sets out an ongoing use requirement for licences, which will be tested by MBIE ahead of each Tenure Period, but remains in place throughout the life of the Licence. This Ongoing Use requirement excludes reasonable outages (such as for repair, maintenance and construction), and the Licence Agreement also includes provision for force majeure events.

21. Why is there an ongoing use requirement for renewals when this isn't a requirement of my current licence?

Current licences do not have any ongoing use requirements after they have been implemented. If you are not currently using your licence to broadcast, you are able to continue to hold that licence until the end of the current term (2 April 2031), but you will not be able to meet the ongoing use pre-settlement condition.

Spectrum that is not renewed will be made available to the market again.

This ongoing use requirement for the renewal was also present in the 2011 process.

22. What about implementation requirements?

Current licences have an implementation requirement, which requires licensees to get their broadcasting operations underway within 21 months of the licence commencing.

We are intending to retain implementation requirements for new licences, but as the draft Licence Agreement relates only to licences being offered for renewal, the implementation requirement terms aren't relevant. These terms will be addressed through licence agreements signed at the point when those licences are acquired (outside of the renewal process).

Licence modifications

23. What should I do if I want to make changes to the licences included in my offer?

If you want to make changes to a licence (e.g. transmission site, antenna height) before you accept an offer, please reach out to CrownSpectrum@mbie.govt.nz in the first instance. Your renewal offer may need to be re-issued after the licence modification process is complete if there are any changes to the details set out in Schedule 1 of your offer.

24. Can I make changes once I've accepted an offer?

The offer document outlines the change process where a modification to a licence is made after an offer has been accepted.

25. What happens to the renewal licence if I make changes to my current licence?

Under the rules of PIB 59, any modifications to a current licence in Management Rights 206/207 must also be made to the associated renewal licence in Management Rights 553/554 where an offer has not been declined. This means that RSM will not progress any licence modifications to current licences without that modification being mirrored in the renewal licence.

Future availability of licences

26. When will the former Youth Block be available?

RSM is working towards allocating the former Youth Block in 2027. Further information will be made available through RSM's website and Business Update.

27. When will any licences which are declined be available?

RSM will make spectrum associated with licences which are declined available again to the market, after the offer window closes in April 2027. Further information will be made available through RSM's website and Business Update.

28. How can I buy a new licence?

There is currently a moratorium on new commercial licence applications, which is expected to be lifted in early 2027. Further information will be made available through RSM's website and Business Update.

29. Will I be able to follow which offers have been accepted and declined?

RSM will publish offers which have been declined following the end of the offer window. Further information will be made available through RSM's website and Business Update.

30. Will the 4 x 5-yearly payment structure be available for new licences?

RSM is currently progressing the development of a payment structure for new licences. Unlike renewal licences, new licences may be contested through auction, which will influence the final price that is associated with a new licence.

31. Why aren't there more broadcasting licences available?

The availability of broadcasting licences is constrained by the amount of spectrum available for this purpose, and the amount of transmitters that can be accommodated without causing interference to other broadcasters.

Other broadcasters

32. I am an iwi or community broadcaster. When can I expect to receive my renewal information?

Te Puni Kōkiri will lead work on the renewal of spectrum for iwi radio broadcasting ahead of 2031, which will consider sector views on the best use of spectrum for iwi radio broadcasting and spectrum which has previously been put aside for a national Māori radio service.

Iwi who are holders of iwi radio licences are also able to obtain separate commercial licences.

For further information, you can email Te Puni Kōkiri .

For community licence holders

Spectrum licences will continue to be available for community broadcasters from 2031.

More information about the framework and related updates: Community radio broadcasting licences – Ministry for Culture and Heritage.

If you have any questions about community licences, email the Ministry for Culture and Heritage.

33. What is the status of Local Commercial FM licences?

The LCFM licence type will be retired in 2031. Current licence-holders will be able to transition to either a community or commercial licence. Licensees will have six-months to consider this offer.