QUESTION ITU-R 266/5

Introduction of digital voice communications in the VHF  
maritime frequency channels

(2025)

The ITU Radiocommunication Assembly,

considering

*a)* that the radio spectrum is a limited resource;

*b)* that with a continued increase in demand for maritime spectrum there is a requirement to identify criteria under which digital voice communications can be accommodated and as a result of this carry out relevant sharing studies;

*c)* that in order to carry out these studies protection criteria for existing and future planned systems need to be known, but for the digitization of maritime systems there are no relevant Recommendations or studies that give neither implementation nor protection criteria;

*d)* that initial studies were initiated on the issue of possible digitization of parts of the VHF maritime frequency band;

*e)* that maritime systems often provide safety of life functions;

*f)* that some frequencies in the bands used by the maritime mobile service (MMS) in RR Appendix **18** are allocated to the fixed and mobile services on a co-primary basis;

*g)* that a need exists to protect existing and planned in-band and adjacent-band services with no additional regulatory or technical constraints on these co-primary incumbent services when considering any potential modifications to MMS channeling arrangements,

decides that the following Questions should be studied

1 What are the technical and operational characteristics and possibilities for expansion of the number of VHF maritime voice channels based on the implementation of digital technology?

2 What are the most appropriate ways for more efficient use of current frequencies used by VHF maritime voice channels by using digital technology?

3 What are the technical and operational criteria to establish the seamless migration or coexistence of current analogue voice channels VHF channels next to digital channels?

further decides

1 that the results of the above studies should be included in Recommendations and/or Reports;

2 that the above studies should be completed by 2027.

Category: S2