DSA Global Summit

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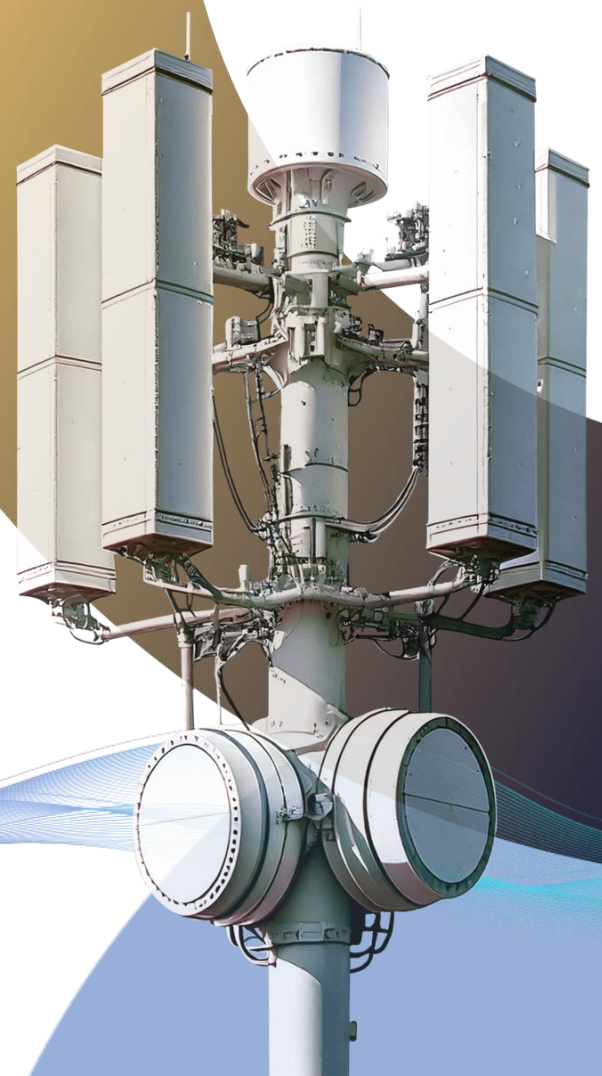
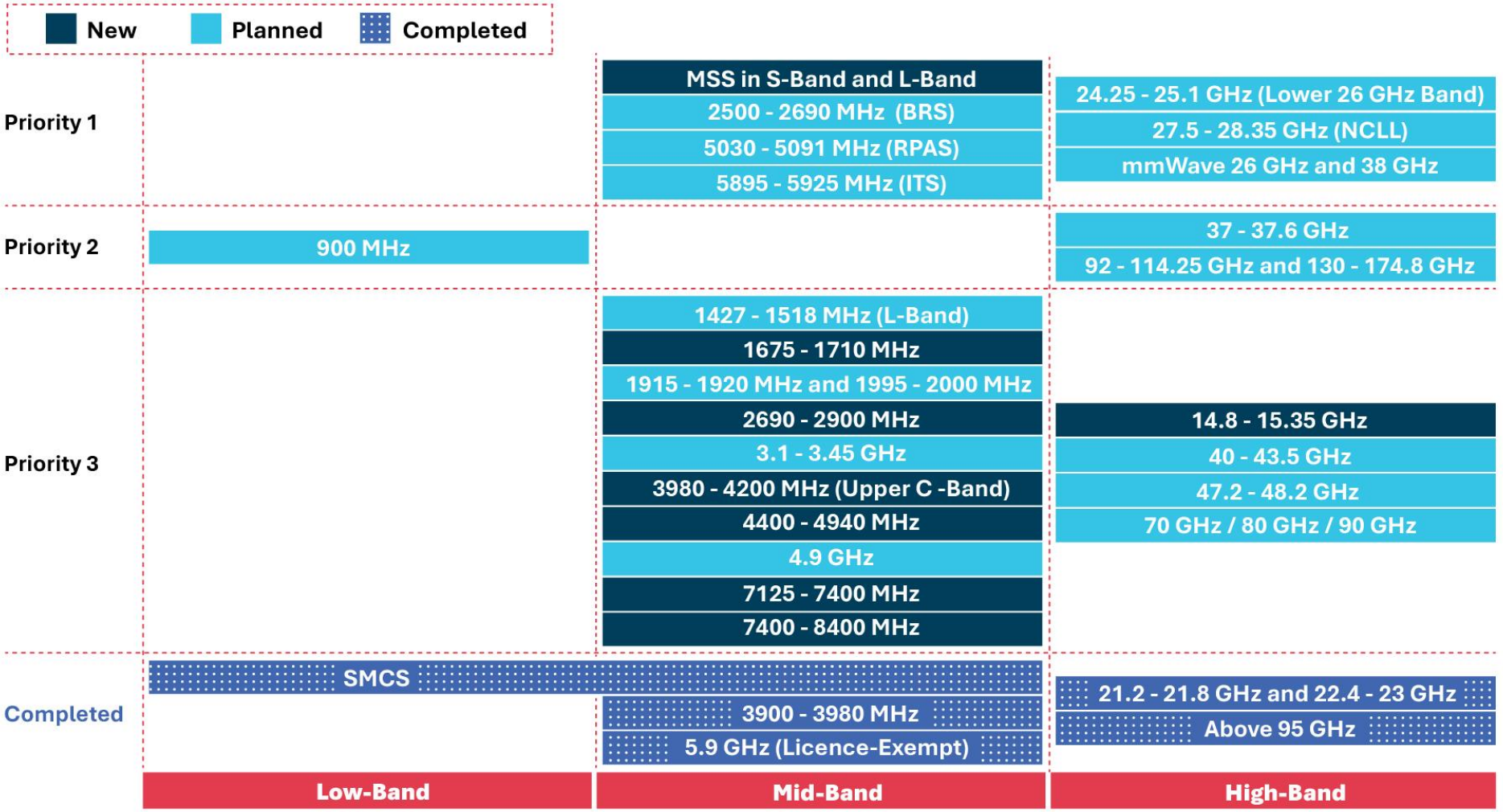


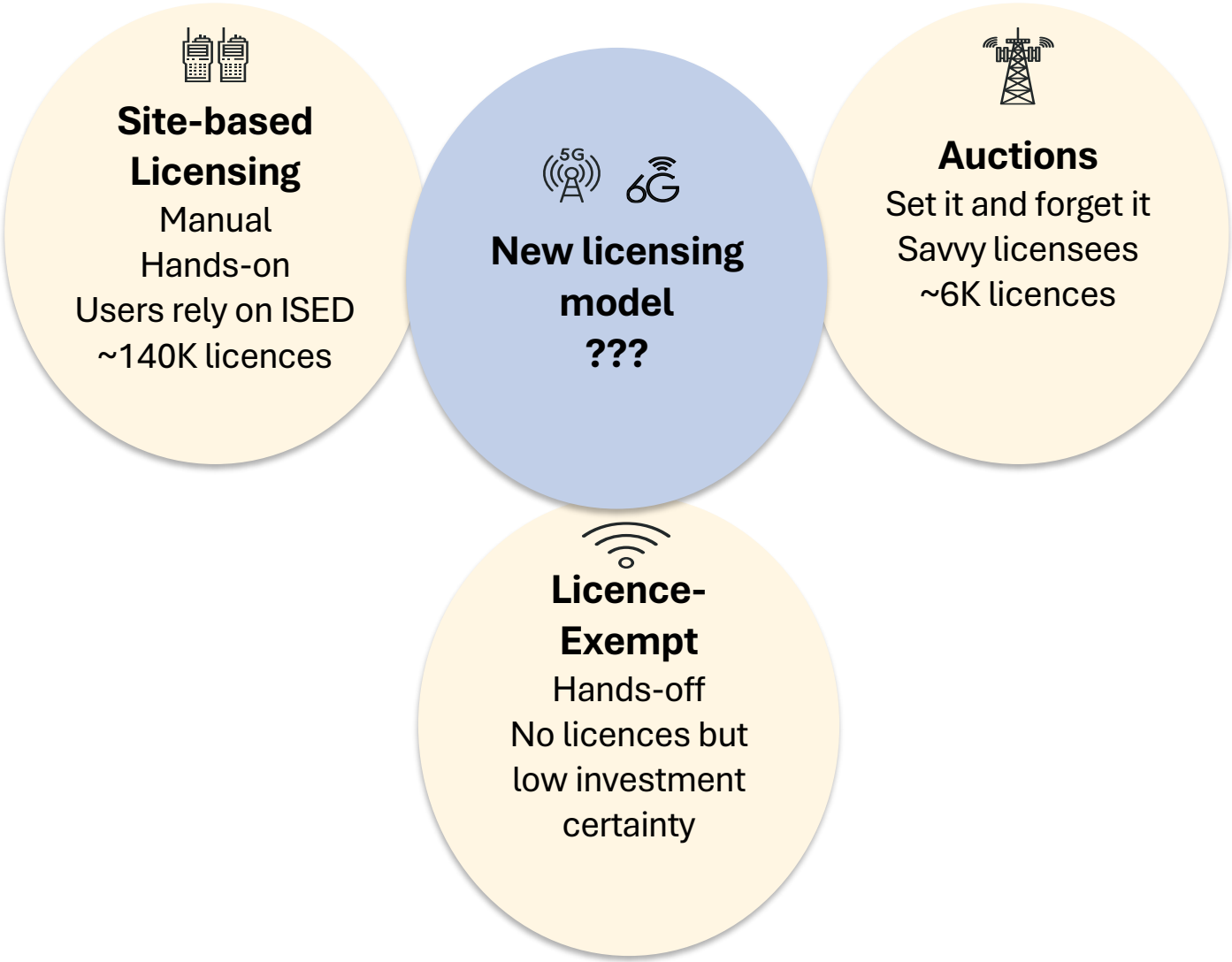
ISED Spectrum Priorities 2023-2027



Setting the stage…

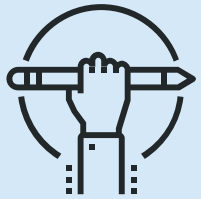
Innovative use cases are not well served by traditional licensing models

- Increasing spectrum demand vs limited supply
- Increasing # of applications vs limited # of people to treat them
- Customizable areas vs large pre-determined areas in our system
- **<u>Focus on Automation</u>**



The New NCLL Framework

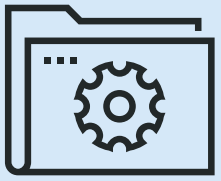
The non-competitive local licensing (NCLL) framework is a new approach in Canada to licensing spectrum that enables smaller users to access 5G spectrum quickly and easily in very localized areas that best suit their business case.



Small customizable licence areas

Annual or Temporary Licences

Simple and strong deployment requirements



Simple licence application process

Manual to automated…

MAPPED LEGACY PROCESS

Manual ISED centric

- **Applications submitted via email**
- **Manual work by ISED officers:**
  - Intake and triage of application
  - Review of application completeness
  - Data entry of application
  - Rule (interference) check
- **Long turn-around times** - weeks to months
- **Limited transparency** – applicants had to email for updates

NEW NCLL PROCESS

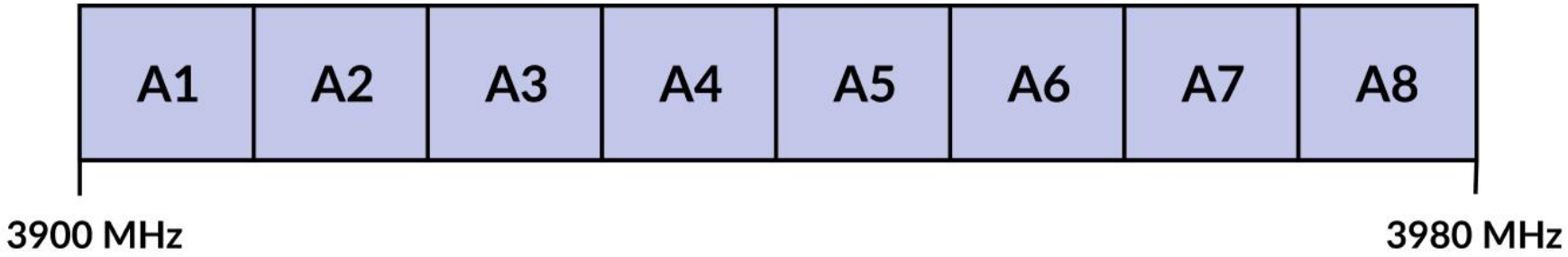
Automated applicant centric

- **Online self-serve portal**
- **Automated validation for application completeness**
- **Automated rule checking**
- **Instant invoicing**
- **Real time tracking for applicant**
- **Full process typically takes one week, if required can be reduced to 24 hours**

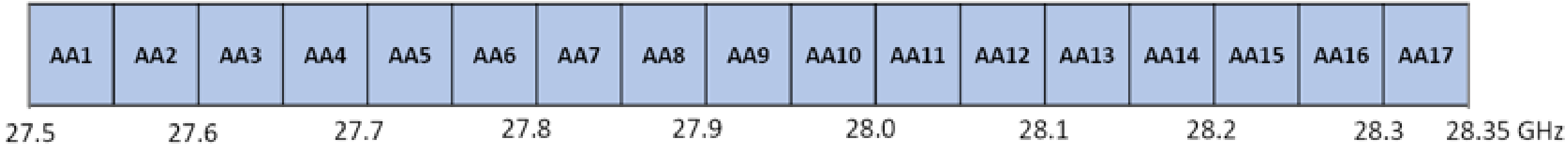
Application submitted → Overnight processing → Invoice sent next day→ Licence issued same day upon payment

NCLL Bands

Launched May 2025



Scheduled to Launch in Nov/Dec 2026



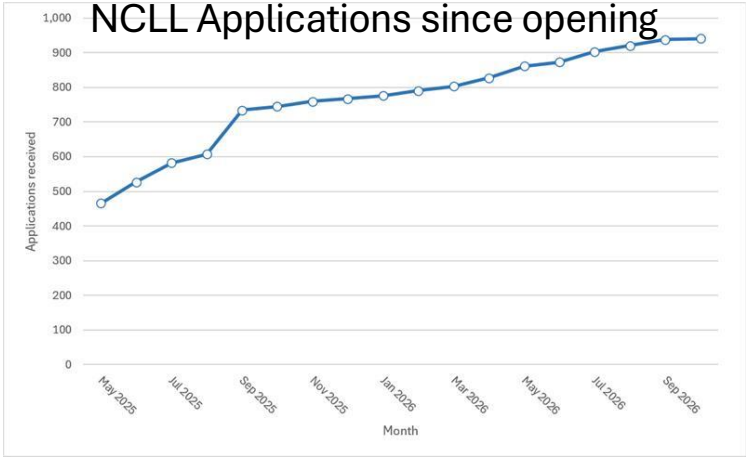
Outcomes so far…

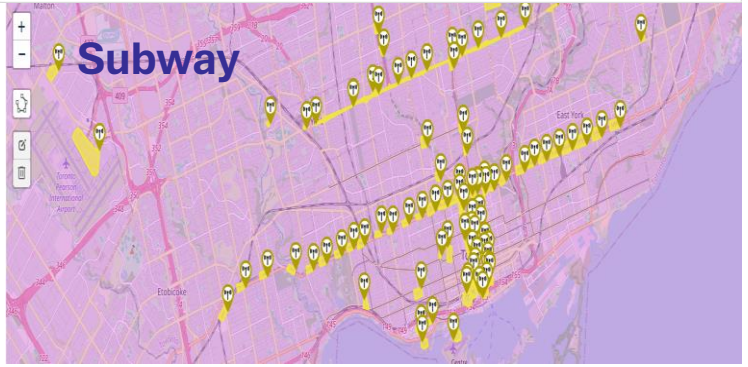
Expected:

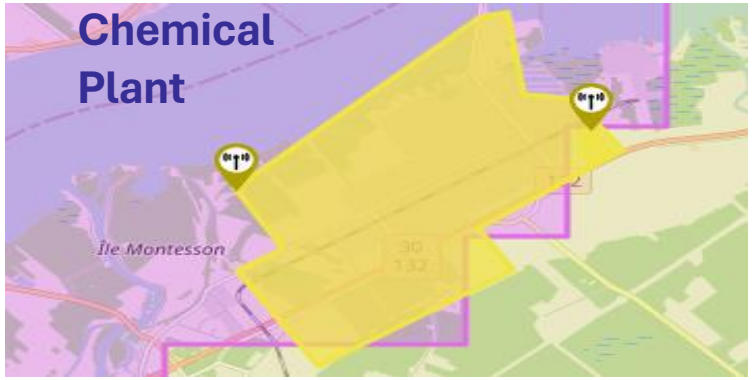
- We received close to 400 NCLL applications in the first week
- Licensees from a broad variety of sectors including transport (subways, railways and airports), mining, forestry sites, venues, factories, hospitals and government agencies
- 90% automatically authorized and invoices issued
- Stakeholders requesting that we relax the rules

Unexpected:

- Seems to be driving a 3rd party market of:
  - Private network design and support firms
  - Equipment providers
  - R&D for automated operations
- A few technical glitches and data problems that led to denial of licences
- Limitations from the policy that only showed up when people were applying
- The interesting approaches that people would use to meet the rules







Tradeoffs, risks and benefits...

Benefits of automating

- Access to spectrum is quicker and therefore put to use more efficiently.
- The customizable areas allows for a better use of the spectrum overall.
- Shifting resources to where it matters.
- More autonomy for licensees.

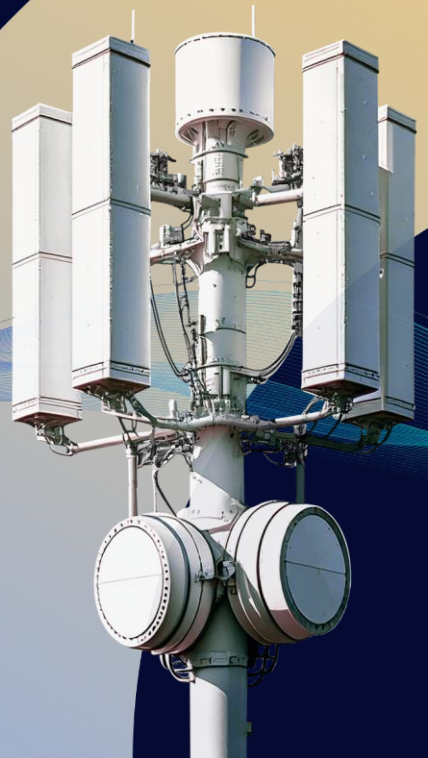
Tradeoffs and Risks

- It's not perfect, there are some technical limitations.
- Does not maximize use of all spectrum in every area – have to sacrifice some efficiency.
- Exceptions still have to be dealt with manually.

Future phases…

- Apply NCLL framework and process to other spectrum bands
- Apply lessons learned to automate other spectrum licensing processes
- Explore automating some exceptions
- Use AI for internal and external chat bots and maybe to manage licensing and compliance in the future

Questions?



Non-competitive local licensing

Easy access to spectrum