

METHODS AND APPARATUS FOR FLEXIBLE FORWARD-LINK AND REVERSE-LINK HANDOFFS

BACKGROUND

I. Field

[0001] The present invention relates generally to communications, and more specifically to techniques for handoffs in a communication system.

II. Background

[0002] Communication systems are widely deployed to provide various communication services such as voice, packet data, and so on. These systems may be time, frequency, and/or code division multiple-access systems capable of supporting communication with multiple users simultaneously by sharing the available system resources. Examples of such multiple-access systems include Code Division Multiple Access (CDMA) systems, Multiple-Carrier CDMA (MC-CDMA), Wideband CDMA (W-CDMA), High-Speed Downlink Packet Access (HSDPA), Time Division Multiple Access (TDMA) systems, Frequency Division Multiple Access (FDMA) systems, and Orthogonal Frequency Division Multiple Access (OFDMA) systems.

[0003] A communication system may employ a handoff scheme to allow a moving access terminal to stay in communication with serving access points or sectors. There is therefore a need in the art for techniques to efficiently select reverse-link (RL) and/or forward-link (FL) serving sectors and indicate such choices for RL and/or FL handoffs in a communication system.

SUMMARY

[0004] Techniques for efficiently selecting reverse-link (RL) and/or forward-link (FL) serving sectors and indicating such choices for RL and /or FL handoffs in a communications system are disclosed. The disclosed embodiments provide for methods and systems for selecting serving sectors for handoff in a communication system. According to one aspect, the method includes monitoring an indicia of transmit power on a plurality of RL control channels directed to a plurality of sectors, and selecting one of the sectors as a candidate for a handoff. The disclosed embodiments also provide for methods and systems for indicating selected serving sectors for handoff in a

communication system. According to one aspect, the method includes sending a first signal to a first sector to designate the first sector as a serving sector for a forward-link handoff, and sending a second signal to a second sector to designate the second sector as a serving sector for a reverse-link handoff.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

- [0005] The features and nature of the present invention will become more apparent from the detailed description set forth below when taken in conjunction with the drawings in which like reference characters identify correspondingly throughout and wherein:
- [0006] FIG. 1 shows a wireless communication system;
- [0007] FIG. 2 shows one embodiment for selecting a serving sector for reverse-link handoff;
- [0008] FIG. 3 shows another embodiment for selecting a serving sector for reverse-link handoff;
- [0009] FIG. 4 shows one embodiment for selecting a serving sector for forward-link handoff;
- [0010] FIG. 5 shows one embodiment for indicating a selected serving sector for forward-link and reverse-link handoffs;
- [0011] FIGs. 6 and 7 show embodiments for indicating selected serving sectors for forward-link and reverse-link handoffs;
- [0012] FIG. 8 shows one embodiment for indicating a selected serving sector for forward-link and reverse-link handoffs;
- [0013] FIG. 9 shows one embodiment for indicating selected serving sectors for forward-link and reverse-link handoffs;
- [0014] FIG. 10 shows one embodiment for indicating a selected serving sector for forward-link and reverse-link handoffs;
- [0015] FIG. 11 shows one embodiment for indicating selected serving sectors for forward-link and reverse-link handoffs;
- [0016] FIGs. 12-14 show embodiments for indicating selected serving sectors for forward-link and reverse-link handoffs; and
- [0017] FIG. 15 shows a block diagram of an access point and an access terminal.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0018] The word “exemplary” is used herein to mean “serving as an example, instance, or illustration.” Any embodiment or design described herein is “exemplary” and is not necessarily to be construed as preferred or advantageous over other embodiments or designs.

[0019] An “access terminal” refers to a device providing voice and/or data connectivity to a user. An access terminal may be connected to a computing device such as a laptop computer or desktop computer, or it may be a self contained device such as a personal digital assistant. An access terminal can also be called a subscriber unit, mobile station, mobile, remote station, remote terminal, user terminal, user agent, or user equipment. An access terminal may be a subscriber station, wireless device, cellular telephone, PCS telephone, a cordless telephone, a Session Initiation Protocol (SIP) phone, a wireless local loop (WLL) station, a personal digital assistant (PDA), a handheld device having wireless connection capability, or other processing device connected to a wireless modem.

[0020] An “access point” refers to a device in an access network that communicates over the air-interface, through one or more sectors, with the access terminals. The access point acts as a router between the access terminal and the rest of the access network, which may include an IP network, by converting received air-interface frames to IP packets. Access point also coordinates the management of attributes for the air interface.

[0021] FIG. 1 shows a wireless communication system 100 with a number of access points 110 that support communication for a number of wireless access terminals 120. An access point is a fixed station used for communicating with the terminals and may also be called an access point, a base transceiver station (BTS), a Node B, or some other terminology. An access terminal may be fixed or mobile and may also be called AT, a mobile station (MS), a mobile equipment (ME), a user equipment (UE), a wireless device, a subscriber unit, or some other terminology. The terminals may be dispersed throughout the system. Each AT may communicate with any number of terminals at any given moment depending on various factors such as, for example, the numbers of terminals within the coverage area of the AT, the available system resources, the data

requirements of the terminals, and so on. A system controller 130 may provide coordination and control for the access points.

[0022] During handoff, an AT has an active set of sectors which includes the current FL and RL serving sector and the set of potential sectors that the AT can handoff to. The AT has a number of dedicated RL control channels assigned to each sector in the active set. Several embodiments are disclosed in the following sections for using the closed-loop power control on such control channels to characterize the RL quality for each sector in the active set. The disclosed embodiments provide for characterizing the relative performance of several reverse-links (RL) and/or forward links (FL), select RL and/or FL serving sectors, and indicate such selections for RL and/or FL handoffs.

RL Serving-Sector Selection

[0023] In one embodiment, an indicia of the transmit power on the power-controlled reverse-link control channels may be monitored to characterize the reverse-link channel condition. According to a first embodiment, the AT follows the "up/down" power control commands from the sectors to independently characterize the corresponding control channels. The power-control commands adjust the RL control channel transmit power such that each control channel achieves the same performance at the targeted sector. The AT selects the RL serving sector based on the transmit power needed on the control channel. For example, consider an AT with an active set of two sectors, as shown in FIG. 2. The power control commands from first sector 202 adjust the transmit power on first control channel 204 sent to first sector 202 to achieve a certain target level of performance, e.g., carrier power over interference power, erasure rate, error rate, etc. Similarly, the power control commands from second sector 206 adjust the transmit power on second control channel 208 sent to second sector 206 to achieve the same target level of performance as achieved at first sector 202. The AT then looks at the transmit powers for first control channel 204 and for second control channel 208 to determine the relative performance of the RL channels. Alternatively, the AT may observe the filtered or averaged transmit power on a control channel over time, or a combination of the instantaneous and average powers. If the transmit power needed for first control channel 204 is less than the transmit power needed for second control channel 208, then first control channel 204 would be a better RL channel. The AT may

then indicate its desire to use first sector 202 as a RL serving sector, as discussed later herein.

[0024] According to a second embodiment, the AT may use the transmit power on the RL control channels and follow an “or-of-downs” power control policy. The “up” or “down” power control commands adjust the RL control channel transmit power such that a target performance is achieved at the RL serving sector. The AT selects a RL serving sector based on comparing an (filtered) estimate of the rate or percentage of “down” commands from each sector in the active set. The sector with the highest percentage of down commands corresponds to the strongest RL channel. For example, consider the AT with active set size of two, as shown in FIG. 3. According to one embodiment, if either sector sends a “power down” command, on 304 or 308, then the AT reduces the transmit power on both control channels 302, 306 to the same level, and if both sectors send “power up” commands, one 304 and 308, then the AT increases the transmit power on both control channels 302, 306 to the same level. Alternatively, one control channel 310 (shown in broken line) may be sent to some or all sectors, which may be decoded by the respective sectors. If the current (filtered) value of power down commands shows that first sector 302 has sent 50% power down commands while second sector 306 has sent 0% power down commands, or 100% power up commands, then first sector 302 has a stronger RL channel than second sector 306, and the AT indicates its desire to use first sector 302 as the RL serving sector, as discussed later herein.

[0025] According to a third embodiment, a combination of the above two embodiments may be used. The current RL control channel is power controlled to an RL serving sector level of performance according to the first embodiment, and the other control channels are power controlled according to the second embodiment. The RL channel quality is characterized by a combination of the (filtered) RL transmit power and the (filtered) percentage of power down commands. The RL with the smallest control channel transmit power corresponds to the desired RL channel, and the percentage of power down commands may be used as a tie breaker between links of equivalent transmit power.

[0026] According to a fourth embodiment, in the second embodiment (FIG. 3) some of the power control commands may be used to power control the control channel to meet a desired performance at a specific sector or a subset of sectors, and the filtered values

of some of the power control commands may be used to determine a desired RL serving sector.

[0027] According to a fifth embodiment, the AT may transmit a signal, such as a pseudo-random noise (PN) sequence, at a specified power level and a specified time, and monitor the feedbacks received from the sectors. Each sector in the active set measures the received power of the signal or PN sequence. The received powers are then pooled in a common area, either at an AP through the backbone network or at the AT through feedback transmissions. The received power levels, or filtered values of the received power levels over time, are compared to find the strongest received power. The strongest received power corresponds to the strongest RL channel. If the information is known at the AT, then the AT indicates the strongest RL as its desired serving sector. If the information is known at the access point, then the AP indicates the serving sector either by sending an explicit message to the AT or by making a RL channel assignment to the AT on the corresponding RL serving sector.

FL Serving-Sector Selection

[0028] In a first embodiment, a forward-link (FL) serving sector is chosen based on the highest received power levels of similar pilot signals that an access terminal (AT) receives from a plurality of sectors. In a second embodiment, the FL sector is chosen based on the highest received power levels of the pilot signals that an AT receives from a plurality of sectors having acceptable RL control channel performance, e.g., erasure rate. For example, consider an AT with an active set of three sectors, as shown in FIG. 4. Assume the received power levels of the pilot signals that the AT receives are in the descending order of 20 mW from first sector 402, 10 mW from second sector 404, and 5 mW from third sector 406, and the erasure rates indicated by the sectors, or calculated at the AT based on the erasure indicators received on the forward links of the three sectors, are also in the descending order of 100% at first sector 402, 80% at second sector 404, and 50% at third sector 406. For an erasure rate/indicator threshold of 85%, second sector 404 would be selected as a desired FL serving sector.

[0029] The above disclosed embodiments provide for independently characterizing the reverse-link and forward-link channel quality, allowing disjoint handoffs, where the reverse-link and forward-link have different serving sectors, which may occur at different times and/or situations.

Indicating the desired RL/FL Serving Sectors

[0030] After selecting the desired RL and/or FL serving sectors for RL and/or FL handoffs, respectively, the access terminal (AT) may indicate the desired forward-link and reverse-link serving sectors for FL and/or RL handoffs. In one embodiment, the AT may use the dedicated reverse-link control channels to indicate the desired serving sectors for RL and/or FL handoff. An AT may have at least a pair of dedicated RL control channels sent on the RL to each sector in the AT's active set, where the AT's active set may include all sectors that the AT may consider for both FL and RL handoff. For example, if the AT has an active set size of two, then it has a pair of control channels to sector 1 and another pair of control channels to sector 2. According to one embodiment, the first dedicated RL control channel may be the channel quality indicator (CQI) channel, which indicates the forward-link (FL) channel quality, and the second dedicated RL control channel may be the REQ channel, which indicates a request for a RL data channel assignment. Alternatively, other RL control channel signals indicating information such as channel quality, data request, access request, state transition request, keep alive, acknowledgements, data packet headers, etc, may be used. During handoff, when the active set size is greater than one, these control channels may indicate the AT's desired serving sector for FL and/or RL handoff. In one embodiment, the CQI channel is used by the AT to indicate a desired serving sector change for FL traffic, and the REQ channel is used by the AT to indicate a desired serving sector change for the RL traffic, as disclosed below. In one embodiment, both RL control channels may be sent in one transmission. In one embodiment, an AT may use one RL control channel and an FL/RL indicator to identify the desired FL/RL serving sector. For example, a two-bit indicator may be used, where one bit indicates the desired FL serving sector and the other indicates the desired RL serving sector.

[0031] According to a first embodiment of indicating the desired serving sector, a specific control channel is sent to the desired serving sector, and the specific control channels on other sectors are erased. For example, consider an AT with an active set size of three, as shown in FIG. 5. Initially, the AT's FL 502 and RL 504 traffic are being served by first sector 506. During this time, the AT sends a first signal 514, e.g., CQI, and a second signal 516, e.g., REQ, to first sector 506, and erases such transmissions to second sectors 510 and third sector 512. Later, based on the AT's

handoff algorithm, the AT decides to switch the FL serving sector to second sector 510, but keep the RL serving sector at first sector 506. The AT stops sending CQI to first sector 506 and starts sending CQI 602 to second sector 510, indicating the desired FL serving sector, while during this time the AT continues sending REQ 516 to first sector 506, as shown in FIG 6. Later, the AT desires to switch the RL serving sector from first sector 506 to third sector 512, this is indicated by stopping transmission of REQ to first sector 506 and starting transmission of REQ 702 to third sector 512, as shown in FIG. 7.

[0032] According to a second embodiment of indicating the desired serving sector, a specific value for each control channel is reserved and communicated to the target serving sector. The value may be reserved when the AT has an active set size greater than one. If the value is reserved when the AT has an active set size greater than one, and later the AT's active set size changes to one, the reserved value may be used for a different purpose, e.g., as another CQI or REQ value. According to one embodiment, some control channels, e.g., CQI and/or REQ, of four bits may be used, while their first 15 values (0000 through 1110) may be used for actual values and their last value (1111) may be used as the reserved value. Other sizes may be used for the control channels, e.g., CQI and REQ, and the reserved value. For example, consider an AT that has an active set size of three and is initially served by first sector 802 in FIG. 8. During this time, the AT sends the actual CQI and REQ values 804 (e.g., some or different values from 0000 through 1110, based on desired level of granularity) to first sector 802, while sending the reserved CQI and REQ values 806 (e.g., 1111) to second sectors 808 and third sector 810, as shown in FIG. 8. When the AT decides to switch the FL serving sector to second sector 808, the AT indicates this choice by sending the actual CQI value 902 (e.g., a value from 0000 through 1110) to second sector 808, and sending the reserved CQI value 912 (e.g., 1111) to first sectors 802 and third sector 810. During the FL handoff, the AT continues sending the actual REQ value 904 to first sector 802 and reserved REQ values 906 to the second and third sectors to indicate that the AT wants to continue sending RL transmissions to first sector 802, as shown in FIG. 9.

[0033] According to a third embodiment of indicating the desired serving sector, a separate number of bits are reserved for each control channel. These bits may be reserved when the AT's active set size is greater than one, allowing for more values for CQI and REQ when the AT's active set size is one. According to one embodiment, a 3-bit control channel, e.g., CQI and/or REQ, may be used, while a separate 1-bit value

may be used as a reserved value. Other sizes may be used for control channels, e.g., CQI and REQ, and the reserved value. Consider the example where the AT has an active set size of three and is initially served by first sector 1002, as shown in FIG. 10. During this time, the AT sends the CQI and REQ values (e.g., same or different values from 000 through 111, based on desired level of granularity) along with the reserved values of "1" to first sector 1002, while sending the CQI and REQ values (e.g., values from 0000 through 111) along with reserved values "0" to second sectors 1008 and third sector 1010, as shown in FIG. 10. When the AT decides to switch the FL serving sector to sector 1008, the AT indicates this choice by sending the CQI value (e.g., from 000 through 111) along with the reserved value "1" to second sector 1008, and sending the CQI value (e.g., from 000 through 111) along with reserved value "0" to first sector 1002 and third sector 1010. During the FL handoff, the AT continues sending the REQ value (e.g., from 000 through 111) along with reserved value "1" to first sector 1002 and REQ values (e.g., same or different values from 000 through 111) along with reserved value "0" to second sector 1008 and third sector 1010 to indicate that the AT wants to continue receiving RL transmissions from first sector 1002, as shown in FIG. 11.

[0034] According to a fourth embodiment, the AT indicates a desired FL/RL serving sector for a FL/RL handoff by sending a specific reserved access sequence to the desired sector. The desired serving sector may belong to an asynchronous group of sectors, i.e., a group of sectors in the active set that may not have been time synchronized with other sectors in the active set. In one embodiment, the target sector may provide fine timing synchronization information to the AT after receiving the reserved access sequence. Consequently, during an asynchronous handoff, a full-blown access procedure may not be needed, because the target serving sector holds some information, e.g., MAC-ID, about the AT, e.g., as a result of having received the reserved access sequence and/or fine timing synchronization. For example, the AT may be currently in FL communication with a first sector 1202, as shown in FIG. 12. Before handing off to a second serving sector, the AT sends the reserved access sequence 1302 to the second sector 1304 to indicate it as a desired serving sector, as shown in FIG. 13, and then the AT hands off to the target serving sector 1404, as shown in FIG. 14. In the case of asynchronous handoff, the AT hands off to the target serving sector 1404, as shown in FIG. 14, after achieving (fine timing) synchronization with the target sector

1404. According to a fifth embodiment, a combination of the above four embodiments may be used to indicate a desired serving sector. For example, the FL serving sector selection may use embodiment three with a reserved bit, while the RL serving sector selection may use embodiment one erasing all but the desired serving sector control channels.

[0035] Therefore, reverse-link control channels may be used by the access terminal to indicate the desired serving sector for the forward-link and/or reverse-link handoffs. This scheme allows for fast handoff between serving sectors without requiring expensive (in terms of air resources and time) higher layer signaling.

[0036] The disclosed embodiments may be applied to any one or combinations of the following technologies: Code Division Multiple Access (CDMA) systems, Multiple-Carrier CDMA (MC-CDMA), Wideband CDMA (W-CDMA), High-Speed Downlink Packet Access (HSDPA), Time Division Multiple Access (TDMA) systems, Frequency Division Multiple Access (FDMA) systems, and Orthogonal Frequency Division Multiple Access (OFDMA) systems.

[0037] FIG. 15 shows a block diagram of an access point 110x and an access terminal 120x, which are one of the access points and one of the terminals, respectively, in FIG. 1. For the reverse link, at terminal 120x, a transmit (TX) data processor 1514 receives traffic data from a data buffer 1512, processes (e.g., encodes, interleaves, and symbol maps) each data packet based on a selected coding and modulation scheme, and provides data symbols. A data symbol is a modulation symbol for data, and a pilot symbol is a modulation symbol for pilot (which is known *a priori*). A modulator 1516 receives the data symbols, pilot symbols, and possibly signaling for the reverse link, performs OFDM modulation and/or other processing as specified by the system, and provides a stream of output chips. A transmitter unit (TMTR) 1518 processes (e.g., converts to analog, filters, amplifies, and frequency upconverts) the output chip stream and generates a modulated signal, which is transmitted from an antenna 1520.

[0038] At access point 110x, the modulated signals transmitted by terminal 120x and other terminals in communication with access point 110x are received by an antenna 1552. A receiver unit (RCVR) 1554 processes (e.g., conditions and digitizes) the received signal from antenna 1552 and provides received samples. A demodulator (Demod) 1556 processes (e.g., demodulates and detects) the received samples and provides detected data symbols, which are noisy estimate of the data symbols

transmitted by the terminals to access point 110x. A receive (RX) data processor 1558 processes (e.g., symbol demaps, deinterleaves, and decodes) the detected data symbols for each terminal and provides decoded data for that terminal.

[0039] For the forward link, at access point 110x, traffic data is processed by a TX data processor 1560 to generate data symbols. A modulator 1562 receives the data symbols, pilot symbols, and signaling for the forward link, performs OFDM modulation and/or other pertinent processing, and provides an output chip stream, which is further conditioned by a transmitter unit 1064 and transmitted from antenna 1552. The forward-link signaling may include power control commands, timing synchronization information, etc. generated by a controller 1570 for all terminals transmitting on the reverse link to access point 110x. At terminal 120x, the modulated signal transmitted by access point 110x is received by antenna 1520, conditioned and digitized by a receiver unit 1522, and processed by a demodulator 1524 to obtain detected data symbols. An RX data processor 1526 processes the detected data symbols and provides decoded data for the terminal and the forward-link signaling. Controller 1530 receives the power control commands and controls data transmission and transmit power on the reverse link to access point 110x. Controllers 1530 and 1570 direct the operation of terminal 120x and access point 110x, respectively. Memory units 1532 and 1572 store program codes and data used by controllers 1530 and 1570, respectively.

[0040] The signaling transmission techniques described herein may be implemented by various means. For example, these techniques may be implemented in hardware, software, or a combination thereof. For a hardware implementation, the processing units used to process (e.g., compress and encode) signaling may be implemented within one or more application specific integrated circuits (ASICs), digital signal processors (DSPs), digital signal processing devices (DSPDs), programmable logic devices (PLDs), field programmable gate arrays (FPGAs), processors, controllers, micro-controllers, microprocessors, other electronic units designed to perform the functions described herein, or a combination thereof. The processing units used to decode and decompress the signaling may also be implemented with one or more ASICs, DSPs, and so on.

[0041] For a software implementation, the signaling transmission techniques may be implemented with modules (e.g., procedures, functions, and so on) that perform the functions described herein. The software codes may be stored in a memory unit (e.g.,

memory unit 1532 or 1572 in FIG. 15) and executed by a processor (e.g., controller 1530 or 1570). The memory unit may be implemented within the processor or external to the processor.

[0042] The previous description of the disclosed embodiments is provided to enable any person skilled in the art to make or use the present invention. Various modifications to these embodiments will be readily apparent to those skilled in the art, and the generic principles defined herein may be applied to other embodiments without departing from the spirit or scope of the invention. Thus, the present invention is not intended to be limited to the embodiments shown herein but is to be accorded the widest scope consistent with the principles and novel features disclosed herein.

CLAIMS

1. A method of selecting a reverse-link (RL) serving sector for RL handoff in a communication system, comprising:
 - monitoring an indicia of transmit power on a plurality of RL control channels directed to a plurality of sectors; and
 - selecting one of the sectors as a candidate for a RL handoff, wherein the candidate comprises a sector associated with the lowest amount of RL transmit power and the highest rate of transmit power “down” commands.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein the indicia comprises an amount of RL transmit power, and the candidate comprises a sector associated with the lowest amount of RL transmit power.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein the indicia comprises a rate of transmit power “up” or “down” commands send by the plurality of sectors, and the candidate comprises a sector associated with the highest rate of transmit power “down” commands.
4. The method of claim 1, wherein the indicia comprises an amount of RL transmit power on some RL control channels and a rate of transmit power “up” or “down” commands send by the plurality of sectors on some RL control channels.
5. A method of selecting a reverse-link (RL) serving sector for RL handoff in a communication system, comprising: sending a signal to a plurality of sectors; receiving feedbacks from the sectors in response to the signal; and selecting one of the sectors as a candidate for a RL handoff based on the received feedbacks, wherein the candidate comprises a sector associated with the lowest amount of RL transmit power and the highest rate of transmit power “down” commands.

6. The method of claim 5, wherein the signal comprises a channel quality indicator (CQI) and the feedbacks comprise erasure indicators, and the candidate comprises a sector associated with the lowest erasure rate.
7. A method of selecting a reverse-link (RL) serving sector for a RL handoff in a communication system, comprising:
 - sending a signal to a plurality of sectors;
 - measuring a received power of the signal at the sectors; and
 - selecting one of the sectors as a candidate for a RL handoff based on the measured received power, wherein the candidate comprises a sector associated with the lowest amount of RL transmit power and the highest rate of transmit power "down" commands.
8. The method of claim 7, wherein the candidate comprises a sector with highest received power.
9. The method of claim 7, wherein the signal comprises a pseudo-random noise (PN) sequence.
10. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
 - monitoring a level of received power of a first signal being sent by a plurality of sectors;
 - monitoring a level of performance for a second signal being sent to the plurality of sectors; and
 - selecting one of the sectors as a candidate for a FL handoff, based on the level of the received power and the level of performance.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein the candidate comprises a sector with highest level of received power and acceptable level of performance.
12. The method of claim 11, wherein level of performance comprises erasure rate.
13. The method of claim 10, wherein the first signal comprises a pilot signal and the second signal comprises channel quality indicator (CQI) signal.
14. A method for indicating a selected serving sector out of a plurality of sectors for handoff in a communication system, comprising:
 - sending a first signal to a first sector, wherein sending the first signal comprises sending an actual channel quality indicator (CQI) and a second signal to remaining sectors, indicating the first sector for a forward-link handoff; and
 - sending a third signal to a second sector, wherein sending the third signal comprises sending an actual request (REQ) and a fourth signal to remaining sectors, indicating the second sector for a reverse-link handoff.
15. The method of claim 14, wherein sending the second signal comprises sending a reserved channel quality indicator (CQI) and sending the fourth signal comprises sending a reserved request (RLQ).
16. The method of claim 14, wherein sending the first signal comprises sending the channel quality indicator (CQI) along with a reserved bit "1", sending the second signal comprises sending the channel quality indicator (CQI) along with a reserved bit "0", sending the third signal comprises sending the request (REQ) along with a reserved bit "1", and sending the fourth signal comprises sending the a request (REQ) along with a reserved bit "0".

17. An apparatus for selecting a reverse-link (RL) serving sector for RL handoff in a communication system, comprising:

means for monitoring an indicia of transmit power on a plurality of RL control channels directed to a plurality of sectors; and

means for selecting one of the sectors as a candidate for a RL handoff, wherein the candidate comprises a sector associated with the lowest amount of RL transmit power and the highest rate of transmit power "down" commands.

18. The apparatus of claim 17, wherein the indicia comprises an amount of RL transmit power, and the candidate comprises a sector associated with the lowest amount of RL transmit power.

19. The apparatus of claim 17, wherein the indicia comprises a rate of transmit power "up" or "down" commands send by the plurality of sectors, and the candidate comprises a sector associated with the lowest rate of transmit power "down" commands.

20. The apparatus of claim 17, wherein the indicia comprises an amount of RL transmit power on some RL control channels and a rate of transmit power "up" or "down" commands send by the plurality of sectors on some RL control channels.

21. An apparatus for selecting a reverse-link (RL) serving sector for RL handoff in a communication system, comprising:

means for sending a signal to a plurality of sectors;

means for receiving feedbacks from the sectors in response to the signal; and

means for selecting one of the sectors as a candidate for a RL handoff based on the received feedbacks, wherein the candidate comprises a sector associated with the lowest amount of RL transmit power and the highest rate of transmit power "down" commands.

22. The apparatus of claim 21, wherein the signal comprises a channel quality indicator (CQI) and the feedbacks comprise erasure indicators, and the candidate comprises a sector associated with the lowest erasure rate.

23. An apparatus for selecting a reverse-link (RL) serving sector for a RL handoff in a communication system, comprising:

means for sending a signal to a plurality of sectors;

means for measuring a received power of the signal at the sectors; and

means for selecting one of the sectors as a candidate for a RL handoff based on the measured received power, wherein the candidate comprises a sector associated with the lowest amount of RL transmit power and the highest rate of transmit power "down" commands.

24. The apparatus of claim 23, wherein the candidate comprises a sector with highest received power.

25. The apparatus of claim 23, wherein the signal comprises a pseudo-random noise (PN) sequence.

26. The apparatus of claim 17, further comprising:

means for monitoring a level of received power of a first signal being sent by a plurality of sectors;

means for monitoring a level of performance for a second signal being sent to the plurality of sectors; and

means for selecting one of the sectors as a candidate for a FL handoff, based on the level of the received power and the level of performance.

27. The apparatus of claim 26, wherein the candidate comprises a sector with highest level of received power and acceptable level of performance.
28. The apparatus of claim 27, wherein level of performance comprises erasure rate.
29. The apparatus of claim 26, wherein the first signal comprises a pilot signal and the second signal comprises channel quality indicator (CQI) signal.
30. An apparatus for indicating a selected serving sector out of a plurality of sectors for handoff in a communication system, comprising:
- means for sending a first signal to a first sector , wherein sending the first signal comprises means for sending an actual channel quality indicator (CQI) and a second signal to remaining sectors, indicating the first sector for a forward-link handoff; and
 - means for sending a third signal to a second sector, wherein sending the third signal comprises means for sending an actual request (REQ) and a fourth signal to remaining sectors, indicating the second sector for a reverse-link handoff.
31. The apparatus of claim 30, wherein means for sending the second signal comprises sending a reserved channel quality indicator (CQI), and means for sending the fourth signal comprises means for sending a reserved request (REQ).
32. The apparatus of claim 30, wherein means for sending the first signal comprises means for sending the channel quality indicator (CQI) along with a reserved bit "1", means for sending the second signal comprises means for sending the channel quality indicator (CQI) along with a reserved bit "0", means for sending the third signal comprises means for sending the request (REQ) along with a reserved bit "1", and means for sending the fourth signal comprises means for sending the request (REQ) along with a reserved bit "0".

33. Computer-readable medium embodying means for implementing a method of selecting a reverse-link (RL) serving sector for RL handoff in a communication system, the method comprising:

- monitoring an indicia of transmit power on a plurality of RL control channels directed to a plurality of sectors; and

- selecting one of the sectors as a candidate for a RL handoff, wherein the candidate comprises a sector associated with the lowest amount of RL transmit power and the highest rate of transmit power "down" commands.

34. The medium of claim 33, wherein the indicia comprises an amount of RL transmit power, and the candidate comprises a sector associated with the lowest amount of RL transmit power.

35. The medium of claim 33, wherein the indicia comprises a rate of transmit power "up" or "down" commands send by the plurality of sectors, and the candidate comprises a sector associated with the lowest rate of transmit power "down" commands.

36. The medium of claim 33, wherein the indicia comprises an amount of RL transmit power on some RL control channels and a rate of transmit power "up" or "down" commands send by the plurality of sectors on some RL control channels.

37. A computer-readable medium embodying means for implementing a method of selecting a reverse-link (RL) serving sector for RL handoff in a communication system, the method comprising:

- sending a signal to a plurality of sectors;

- receiving feedbacks from the sectors in response to the signal; and

- selecting one of the sectors as a candidate for a RL handoff based on the received feedbacks, wherein the candidate comprises a sector associated with the lowest amount of RL transmit power and the highest rate of transmit power "down" commands.

38. The medium of claim 37, wherein the signal comprises a channel quality indicator (CQI) and the feedbacks comprise erasure indicators, and the candidate comprises a sector associated with the lowest erasure rate.

39. A computer-readable medium embodying means for implementing a method of selecting a reverse-link (RL) serving sector for a RL handoff in a communication system, the method comprising:

- sending a signal to a plurality of sectors;
- measuring a received power of the signal at the sectors; and
- selecting one of the sectors as a candidate for a RL handoff based on the measured received power, wherein the candidate comprises a sector associated with the lowest amount of RL transmit power and the highest rate of transmit power "down" commands.

40. The medium of claim 39, wherein the candidate comprises a sector with highest received power.

41. The medium of claim 39, wherein the signal comprises a pseudo-random noise (PN) sequence.

42. The medium of claim 33, the method further comprising:

- monitoring a level of received power of a first signal being sent by a plurality of sectors; monitoring a level of performance for a second signal being sent to the plurality of sectors; and selecting one of the sectors as a candidate for a FL handoff, based on the level of the received power and the level of performance.

43. The medium of claim 42, wherein the candidate comprises a sector with highest level of received power and acceptable level of performance.
44. The medium of claim 43, wherein level of performance comprises erasure rate.
45. The medium of claim 42, wherein the first signal comprises a pilot signal and the second signal comprises channel quality indicator (CQI) signal.
46. A computer-readable medium embodying means for implementing a method for indicating a selected serving sector out of a plurality of sectors for handoff in a communication system, the method comprising:
- sending a first signal to a first sector, wherein sending the first signal comprises sending an actual channel quality indicator (CQI), and a second signal to remaining sectors, indicating the first sector for a forward-link handoff; and
 - sending a third signal to a second sector, wherein, sending the third signal comprises sending an actual request (REQ), and a fourth signal to remaining sectors, indicating the second sector for a reverse-link handoff.
47. The medium of claim 46, wherein sending the second signal comprises sending a reserved channel quality indicator (CQI) and sending the fourth signal comprises sending a reserved request (REQ).
48. The medium of claim 46, wherein sending the first signal comprises sending the channel quality indicator (CQI) along with a reserved bit "1", sending the second signal comprises sending the channel quality indicator (CQI) along with a reserved bit "0", sending the third signal comprises sending the request (REQ) along with a reserved bit "1", and sending the fourth signal comprises sending the request (REQ) along with a reserved bit "0".

49. A processor programmed to execute a method of selecting a reverse-link (RL) serving sector for RL handoff in a communication system, the method comprising:

monitoring an indicia of transmit power on a plurality of RL control channels directed to a plurality of sectors; and

selecting one of the sectors as a candidate for a RL handoff, wherein the candidate comprises a sector associated with the lowest amount of RL transmit power and the highest rate of transmit power "down" commands.

50. A processor programmed to execute a method of selecting a reverse-link (RL) serving sector for RL handoff in a communication system, the method comprising:

sending a signal to a plurality of sectors;

receiving feedbacks from the sectors in response to the signal; and

selecting one of the sectors as a candidate for a RL handoff based on the received feedbacks, wherein the candidate comprises a sector associated with the lowest amount of RL transmit power and the highest rate of transmit power "down" commands.

51. A processor programmed to execute a method of selecting a reverse-link (RL) serving sector for a RL handoff in a communication system, the method comprising:

sending a signal to a plurality of sectors;

measuring a received power of the signal at the sectors; and

selecting one of the sectors as a candidate for a RL handoff based on the measured received power, wherein the candidate comprises a sector associated with the lowest amount of RL transmit power and the highest rate of transmit power "down" commands.

52. The processor of claim 49 further comprising:

monitoring a level of received power of a first signal being sent by a plurality of sectors;

monitoring a level of performance for a second signal being sent to the plurality of sectors; and

selecting one of the sectors as a candidate for a FL handoff, based on the level of the received power and the level of performance.

53. A processor programmed to execute a method for indicating a selected serving sector out of a plurality of sectors for handoff in a communication system, the method comprising:

sending a first signal to a first sector, wherein sending the first signal comprises sending an actual channel quality indicator (CQI) and a second signal to remaining sectors, indicating the first sector for a forward-link handoff; and

sending a third signal to a second sector, wherein sending the third signal comprises sending an actual request (REQ) and a fourth signal to remaining sectors, indicating the second sector for a reverse-link handoff.