



Commission for
Communications Regulation

Update on the Multi-Band Spectrum Award process

Information Notice

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An Coimisiún um Rialáil Cumarsáide
Commission for Communications Regulation

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1 Update on the Multi-Band Spectrum Award process

- 1.1 Since the final results of the auction aspect of the Multi-Band Spectrum Award (MBSA) process were announced by ComReg in December 2012 (see ComReg Document 12/131¹), two further stages of the MBSA process have now been completed. These are:
- the **Notification and Grant Stage**: which comprised of the notification and grant of Preparatory Licences and Liberalised Use Licences to the Winning Bidders² and the amendment of the Existing GSM Licences in accordance with the outcome of the MBSA process; and
 - the **Transition Phase for Time Slice 1**: in which the Existing GSM Licensees were required to alter their respective networks to operate on the new frequency assignments as determined by the MBSA process.
- 1.2 In relation to the **Notification and Grant Stage**, a Liberalised Use Licence with a commencement date of 1 February 2013 was issued to each of the four Winning Bidders on 31 January 2013. Within each Liberalised Use Licence the commencement date of the spectrum rights for each Spectrum Block awarded in the MBSA process was set out noting that the commencement date of certain Spectrum Blocks was not specified at that time as these were dependent upon the prior completion of the relevant Transition activities.
- 1.3 In relation to the **Transition Phase for Time Slice 1**, the Transition activities of the Existing GSM Licensees were completed in April 2013 in a timeframe that was broadly in line with, or in advance of, the timeframes set out by ComReg in its Transition Project Plan (see ComReg Document 13/19).³ Table 1 below summarises the Transition completion dates achieved by each of the Existing GSM Licensees.⁴

¹ ComReg Document 12/131 - Frequency Arrangements and Results of the Multi-Band Spectrum Award Process - published 5 December 2012

² The Winning Bidders in the MBSA process were:

- Vodafone Ireland Ltd (Vodafone);
- Telefónica Ireland Ltd (Telefónica);
- Meteor Mobile Communications Ltd (Meteor); and
- Hutchison 3G Ireland Ltd (H3GI).

³ ComReg Document 13/19 - ComReg's Transition Project Plan for Time Slice 1 of the Multi-Band Spectrum Award (MBSA) process – published 25 February 2013.

⁴ Liquidated Damages provision for delayed completion of Transition activities was not required.

Table 1: Transition completion dates achieved by the Existing GSM Licensees

Existing GSM Licensee	Transition completion date - 900 MHz band	Transition completion date - 1800 MHz band
Vodafone	No Transition required	31 January 2013
Telefónica	19 April 2013	10 April 2013 ⁵
Meteor	4 April 2013	No Transition required

- 1.4 As the relevant Transition activities for Time Slice 1 have now been completed, the Liberalised Use Licences of the Winning Bidders have been amended to reflect that all liberalised spectrum rights of use awarded are now licensed in accordance with the outcome of the MBSA process.⁶ In addition, all of the remaining GSM licences have been amended to operate on the new frequency assignments determined by the MBSA process. Details regarding Liberalised Use Licences and GSM Licences are available on ComReg's website.⁷
- 1.5 All three spectrum bands (800 MHz, 900 MHz and 1800 MHz) licensed via the MBSA process are particularly suitable for the provision of high quality mobile services by virtue of their propagation properties which enable wide area coverage and effective in-building penetration.
- 1.6 ComReg notes that improved 3G services are already being provided to consumers using spectrum rights of use awarded in the MBSA process. ComReg welcomes such improvements and also looks forward to the introduction of new advanced services using the Long Term Evolution (LTE) (or so called "4G") technology.

⁵ On 29 March 2013 Telefonica completed its transition activities to make Block 1800/L available for Meteor.

⁶ See ComReg Document 12/131 - Frequency Arrangements and Results of the Multi-Band Spectrum Award Process - published 5 December 2012

⁷ See:

- http://www.comreg.ie/radio_spectrum/search.541.874.10031.0.rslicensing.html (Liberalised Use Licences); and
- http://www.comreg.ie/radio_spectrum/search.541.874.10003.0.rslicensing.html (GSM Licences)