



Media Release - 9 July 2009

ComReg publishes discussion document on Next Generation Broadband

The Commission for Communications Regulation (ComReg) has today published a wide-ranging discussion document entitled *Next Generation Broadband in Ireland*. The document offers perspectives on the range of policy, technical and regulatory issues which can support a timely and efficient move towards the increased availability of high speed next generation broadband services in the market.

The Department of Communications, Energy & Natural Resources' paper *Next Generation Broadband: Gateway to a Knowledge Ireland* recognises the critical role of high speed broadband services in attaining the Government's twin goals of becoming a 'Smart Economy' and a 'Knowledge Society'. The ComReg discussion paper looks in detail at the range of factors which can enable or inhibit the development of these networks, and at the costs and benefits to be expected. It also examines how Next Generation Broadband (NGB) is being deployed in some other leading economies – whether by the principal fixed telecoms company, alternative fixed telecoms operators, or cable and wireless operators - and it considers what incentives and safeguards are needed to ensure that Ireland derives maximum benefit from the eventual move to NGB here.

Next Generation Broadband in Ireland sets out the regulatory levers available to ComReg which can influence next generation broadband developments and the circumstances within which such regulatory options may be appropriate. These include innovative use of spectrum, appropriate access and pricing regimes and consumer protection measures.

ComReg Chairman, John Doherty, Chairperson said “*As the Communications Regulator, we are committed to regulatory certainty, technology neutrality and a level playing field. These are the surest ways to encourage efficient investment and innovation in next generation broadband. High-speed communications infrastructure and services have a key part to play in supporting Ireland's economic recovery and in acting as a driver for our future competitiveness and growth. All stakeholders need to work closely*

together over the coming months, with a real sense of urgency, to overcome the challenges to developing high speed broadband networks.”

Through a series of questions set out in the paper, ComReg invites views from all stakeholders on the analysis and issues as presented and intends to take such feedback into consideration when framing its broader regulatory approach on NGB issues.

The Document 09/56 is available in the Publications section of www.comreg.ie and the closing date for receipt of comments is 21 August, 2009.

Notes for Editors

- 1. Next Generation Broadband: Gateway to a Knowledge Ireland:** In June 2009, the Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources (DCENR) issued its paper “*Next Generation Broadband: Gateway to a Knowledge Ireland*” which sets out the policy framework for developments in this area. The document is available on the DCENR website www.dcenr.gov.ie.
- 2. Building Ireland’s Smart Economy:** The Government’s Framework for Sustainable Economic Renewal, *Building Ireland’s Smart Economy*, was published in December 2008. The paper identifies a range of inter-linked policies covering areas such as sustainability, innovation, competitiveness and productivity that will position Ireland as a leading economy. In doing so, it recognises that broadband is a key enabling infrastructure for the knowledge-intensive services and activities on which future prosperity will increasingly depend. The document is available on the Department of the Taoiseach’s www.taoiseach.gov.ie.

ENDS

Issued By Tom Butler
Public Affairs Manager, ComReg
Ph: 01 804 9639 Mobile: 087 2536358 **tom.butler@comreg.ie**