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ComReg consults on new initiatives to promote wireless research and development in Ireland

The Commission for Communications Regulation (ComReg) has today launched a public consultation on a series of initiatives aimed at encouraging the testing and development of new and innovative wireless technologies and services in Ireland.

Ireland has a proven reputation for innovation in communications technology and with greater availability of radio spectrum than other European countries is ideally placed to support wireless technology and service trials.

The new proposals are intended to make the existing test licensing regime more attractive to those involved in wireless research and development and to encourage developers to choose Ireland as their preferred location for trialling new technologies or services in Europe. ComReg is also proposing to introduce a new class of trial licence to cater for public trials of novel or innovative radio services.

The proposed test licensing scheme could be used by companies in Ireland to develop new technologies for a wide range of applications such as wireless broadband access and advanced mobile systems.

ComReg Chairperson John Doherty said: “a thriving academic and industrial research base and relative abundance of radio spectrum makes Ireland the ideal location for developers to work on the next generation of radio technology. By adopting a flexible and proactive regulatory approach, we seek to encourage wireless innovators to locate in Ireland and to enhance our reputation as a premier location for communications research.”

The consultation highlights examples of emerging wireless technologies such as “WiMax” and Ultrawideband (UWB), where access to frequencies will be essential to support product development and innovation and where Ireland could play a leading role in supporting such activity. The document also seeks ways to promote awareness of wireless development opportunities in Ireland and explores options such as a dedicated wireless development park.

Notes for Editors

1. In order to encourage technology innovation and development, ComReg operates a dedicated licensing regime for the testing of new radiocommunications equipment and services. ComReg is proposing a number of changes to the existing test licensing regime to reflect more fully the needs of the wireless communications sector in Ireland. The possibility of a new category of trial licence to permit service trials that involves third party customers (prohibited under the test licence regime) is also being considered.
2. ComReg is proposing to extend the duration of radio test licences to twelve months and permit renewals where appropriate. Trial licences would also be of twelve months duration but would not be renewable, since long-term provision of public services should be carried out under a full operational licence. A fixed fee of €500 per test or trial licence is proposed.
3. WiMax” is a technology standard currently under development for metropolitan area networks, providing a low-cost approach to broadband wireless access that can operate in various licensed and licence-exempt bands in the 2 – 11 GHz range. Ultrawideband (UWB) technology provides a means of wireless conveying by wireless large amounts of data over very short distances using very low power signals that are spread over a very wide bandwidth. UWB is likely to require extensive technical trials to ensure compatibility with existing wireless services.

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