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New Local Licences available for Wireless Broadband

ComReg today announced the introduction of a new licensing scheme for local area broadband fixed wireless access (BFWA) services, as a further stimulus to the development of broadband in Ireland. From this Friday, applicants can apply for licences on a first come, first served basis, for the provision of broadband wireless services in specific locations.

Licences will be offered initially in two frequency bands, namely 10 GHz and 26 GHz. Applicants will be invited to apply for licences for up to 2 x 28 MHz of spectrum for use in an area of the applicants choice. Locations will be defined by reference to a service area around a central point, which will typically correspond to the location of a central base station transmitter. Detailed guidelines and an application form for the 10 GHz and 26 GHz licences will be available on the ComReg website from Friday, 21st March 2003.

Future initiative will depend on interest levels

ComReg is also considering a further local area licensing initiative at a later date in the 3.5 GHz frequency band. This will provide a larger coverage area (up to 15 km radius) and will be particularly suited to serving rural or suburban areas. As spectrum availability is more limited in the 3.5 GHz band, it would be helpful for ComReg to be able to gauge the likely demand for services in this band prior to introducing the licensing regime.

Expressions of interest are therefore invited from anyone interested in providing wireless broadband services in the 3.5 GHz band.

Ireland was one of the first countries in Europe to license national broadband wireless networks and more recently has pioneered the introduction of low cost, licence-exempt BFWA in the 5 GHz band. This latest development provides local operators with the opportunity for cost effective rollout of high quality broadband services and should provide a significant boost to the availability of broadband in Ireland.

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