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ComReg announcement on GSM 1800 MHz radio spectrum

The Commission for Communications Regulation (ComReg) today issued its response to a second consultation on facilitating broadband wireless access services in the spectrum licensed to GSM1800 MHz mobile telecom operators.

Both the original proposal (ComReg 03/13) to allow mobile operators to use up to 20% of their GSM 1800 MHz frequency assignments to provide broadband wireless access services and the revised proposals (ComReg 03/63) which removed the requirement for fixed antennas on customer premises, gained only qualified support.

In each case, the few respondents in favour sought additional requirements which would have resulted in a service which was indistinguishable in key aspects from a mobile telecommunications service, for which other licensing arrangements already apply. All other respondents who replied were opposed even to the modified proposal put forward in ComReg 03/63.

Taking account of the responses and relevant EU and national legislation under which ComReg is obliged to issue any rights for spectrum use in an objective, transparent, non-discriminatory and proportionate manner, ComReg has decided not to proceed with the specific proposal for GSM1800 spectrum as outlined in Document 03/63.

Chairperson of ComReg, Etain Doyle said, “the Commission will continue to look for opportunities to facilitate the delivery of broadband wireless access services, and wishes to leave open the possibilities outlined in the original paper (ComReg Document 03/13) for fixed wireless access service in the GSM1800 MHz band, and for alternative technologies in the licensed 3G spectrum as set out in the second consultation ComReg Document 03/63.”

Any mobile operator should contact ComReg about their interest and the matter will be reviewed, subject to consultation as appropriate.

Furthermore, interested parties are reminded that a 3G licence is available for the 'core' 3G bands. Should there be sufficient interest ComReg would open a consultation on the matter.

Finally, ComReg notes that convergence of services and applications is becoming a reality. At this point in time, however, the various markets, e.g., fixed, mobile, etc., are still clearly distinguishable. ComReg will look at this issue again in the future as part of its ongoing work on the market and regulatory implications of convergence and technological developments.

The response is available from the ComReg web site (www.comreg.ie) in document 03/104.

ENDS

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