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For immediate release

ComReg Media Release

Five Winning Bidders in ComReg's 3.6 GHz Band Spectrum Award

ComReg has today published the results of its 3.6 GHz spectrum award. The 3.6 GHz band has been identified by the Radio Spectrum Policy Group (RSPG) as a primary band suitable for the introduction of 5G in Europe.

The Award, which was conducted by auction, resulted in the successful assignment of all 350 MHz of spectrum. The spectrum was offered in 594 lots spread over nine regions (four rural and five urban), assigned on a contiguous basis.

The Auction resulted in five Winning Bidders:

- **Imagine Communications Ireland Ltd**, currently the largest Wireless Internet Service Provider (WISP) obtained spectrum rights of use for **60 MHz in each of the rural regions**;
- **Airspan Spectrum Holdings Ltd**, a new entrant and the UK arm of a US global provider of 4G broadband wireless systems and solutions. Airspan's products serve operators and markets such as smart utilities, transportation and public safety in both licensed and licence exempt frequency bands. Airspan obtained **25 MHz in the rural regions and 60 MHz in the cities**;
- **Vodafone Ireland Ltd**, a mobile network operator with circa 2.3 million mobile subscribers (38.5% market share) and circa 268,00 fixed broadband subscribers (19.7% market share) obtained **85 MHz in rural regions and 105 MHz in the cities**;
- **Three Ireland Hutchison Ltd**, a mobile network operator with circa 2.08 million mobile subscribers (35% market share) obtained **100 MHz nationally**; and
- **Meteor Mobile Communications Ltd**, a mobile network operator and a wholly owned subsidiary of Eircom Group which has circa 1.08 million mobile subscribers (18 % market share). Eircom Group has circa 444,000 fixed broadband subscribers (32.6% market share). Meteor obtained **80 MHz in the rural regions and 85 MHz in the cities**.

The 3.6 GHz band is currently used for the provision of fixed wireless access services to about twenty five thousand customers, predominantly in rural areas. Imagine Communications Ireland Limited, by far the largest provider of fixed wireless access services in the 3.6 GHz band, holding 80% of the existing licences in the band, has secured sufficient spectrum so as to be in a position to maintain and enhance services.

All spectrum rights of use licences will run for 15 years, expiring on 31 July 2032. **Winning bidders will pay in excess of €78m**, comprising €60.5m in upfront fees and circa €17.7m in

spectrum usage fees to be paid over the 15 year duration of the licences. Full details are set out at Annex 1.

Given the quantum of spectrum in the 3.6 GHz band, the EC preferred Time Division Duplex (TDD) channelling arrangement and developments at European level generally, the 3.6 GHz Band could be suitable for addressing mobile capacity constraints, introducing new 5G services, and being a core band for providing and improving fixed wireless broadband services particularly in rural areas.

The release of the 3.6 GHz band has **increased the amount of harmonised spectrum for mobile, nomadic and fixed wireless broadband services by 86%** and places ComReg at the vanguard of Europe, having awarded 350 MHz of the band in full accordance with the harmonisation Decision, **fully ready for any future 5G deployment**.

Commenting on the award, ComReg Chairperson Gerry Fahy noted that *“the result of the 3.6 GHz award represents a very good outcome for consumers, service providers and ComReg. All 350 MHz of available spectrum, across the entire country, has been assigned at an important time as demand for wireless communications services continues to grow. Continuity for existing services has been underpinned and the possibility of new services has been significantly enhanced. In particular the characteristics of this band, coupled with its 5G potential, should ensure Ireland is well positioned to benefit from new technology and service enhancements in the years to come. The outcome also produced new market entry with the potential for increased investment and innovation thereby enhancing competition and customer outcomes.”*

For further information, please see ComReg’s Information Notice 17/38 published alongside this Media Release.

Notes for Editors

The Radio Spectrum Policy Group (RSPG) is a high-level advisory group that assists the European Commission in the development of radio spectrum policy. <http://rspg-spectrum.eu/about-rspg/>

The results outlined above are preliminary and are subject to the conclusions of the negotiation phase of the Award which may affect some frequency assignments as set out in Annex 7 of the accompanying Information Notice (ComReg document 17/38).

The spectrum usage fees of €17.7m, referred to above and to be paid over the life of the licences, will be indexed to CPI and paid annually over the duration of the Award. Figures set out do not assume any adjustment and are presented as indicative.

Annex 1 – Results of the 3.6 GHz Band Spectrum Award

Region	Airspan Holdings Ltd	Spectrum Imagine Communications Ireland Ltd	Meteor Communications Ltd	Mobile Three (Hutchison) Ltd	Ireland Vodafone Ltd	Ireland
Borders Midlands and West	25 MHz	60 MHz	80 MHz	100 MHz	85 MHz	
South West	25 MHz	60 MHz	80 MHz	100 MHz	85 MHz	
East	25 MHz	60 MHz	80 MHz	100 MHz	85 MHz	
South East	25 MHz	60 MHz	80 MHz	100 MHz	85 MHz	
Dublin City and Suburbs	60 MHz	-	85 MHz	100 MHz	105 MHz	
Cork City and Suburbs	60 MHz	-	85 MHz	100 MHz	105 MHz	
Limerick City and Suburbs	60 MHz	-	85 MHz	100 MHz	105 MHz	
Galway City and Suburbs	60 MHz	-	85 MHz	100 MHz	105 MHz	
Waterford City and Suburbs	60 MHz	-	85 MHz	100 MHz	105 MHz	
Final Upfront Fees ¹	€ 7,556,700	€ 8,128,800	€ 11,498,400	€ 15,313,700	€ 17,968,712	
Total Spectrum Usage Fees ²	€ 2,078,550	€ 1,640,520	€ 4,163,610	€ 5,059,200	€ 4,765,320	
TOTAL	€ 78,173,512					

¹ Final Upfront Fees is contingent on any licence fee refunds in respect of delayed commencement arising from Transition Activities as detailed in the Information Memorandum.

² Spectrum Usage Fees will be indexed to CPI and paid annually over the duration of the Award. Figures presented do not assume any adjustment and are presented as indicative.

ENDS

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