An Coimisiún um
Rialáil Cumarsáide
Commission for
Communications Regulation

The future use of the 1.4 GHz Band (1427–1517 MHz) in Ireland

Information Notice

Reference: ComReg 26/83

Version: Final

Date: 27/11/2026

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1 Future use of the 1.4 GHz band

1.1 This document sets out information on the 1427−1517 MHz frequency range (the "1.4 GHz Band") and, in particular, that ComReg will not accept new applications for fixed radio link licences in the 1.4 GHz Band from 30 June 2027 in preparation for the future use of some or all of the 1.4 GHz Band for wireless broadband electronic communications services ("WBB-ECS").

1.1 The 1.4 GHz Band is harmonised for WBB-ECS

1.2 The 1.4 GHz Band consists of 90 MHz of spectrum comprising:

- 40 MHz in the frequency range 1452 − 1492 MHz (the "1.4 GHz Centre Band"); and
- 50 MHz in the frequency ranges 1427 − 1452 MHz and 1492 − 1517 MHz (the "1.4 GHz Extension Bands").

1.3 Since 2018, the 1.4 GHz Band has been harmonised for WBB-ECS by way of Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2015/750[1] (as amended by Decision (EU) 2018/661)[2] (together the "1.4 GHz EC Decision"), where:

(a) the Annex to the 1.4 GHz EC Decision specifies:

(i) the mode of operation as base station ("downlink-only") transmissions. This means that spectrum rights in the 1.4 GHz Band can only be used for 'downlink' purposes (i.e. for transmitting data from a base station to a user's device), also called Supplemental Downlink ("SDL") when used by a Mobile Network Operator (MNO) in combination with other spectrum bands;

(ii) that block sizes shall be of 5 MHz or multiples thereof; and

(b) Article 2(3) of the 1.4 GHz EC Decision includes provisions in relation to existing use in the 1.4 GHz band, as set out below.

[1] Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2015/750 on the harmonisation of the 1452-1492 MHz frequency band for terrestrial systems capable of providing electronic communications services in the Union

[2] Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2018/661 amending Implementing Decision (EU) 2015/750 on the harmonisation of the 1452-1492 MHz frequency band for terrestrial systems capable of providing electronic communications services in the Union as regards its extension in the harmonised 1427-1452 MHz and 1492-1517 MHz frequency bands.

2(3). "If they designate and make available ***only a portion of the 1 427−1 452 MHz or of the 1 492−1 517 MHz frequency bands*** *in accordance with paragraph 2, Member States:*

(a) shall ensure that any existing use is maintained to the extent strictly necessary, and with the aim to progressively make these bands available for terrestrial systems capable of providing wireless broadband electronic communications services;

(b) shall ensure that such spectrum portion primarily constitutes together with the 1 452−1 492 MHz frequency band a contiguous frequency band;

(c) may allow, up to 1 January 2023, ***and longer if no national demand has been identified for wireless broadband electronic communications services*** *in accordance with Articles 3 and 6 of Decision No 243/2012/EU, the use of part of these bands for the continued operation of existing terrestrial fixed wireless services or of other existing use, which cannot share the use of these bands with wireless broadband electronic communications services."* (emphasis added).

1.2 Current usage of the 1.4 GHz Band for fixed radio links

1.4 In Ireland, six blocks[3] (i.e. 30 MHz) of the 1.4 GHz Extension Bands currently have active fixed radio links licences, and three of these six blocks[4] (i.e. 15 MHz) of the 1.4 GHz Extension Bands are currently open for new fixed radio link licence applications[5] as depicted in Figure 1 below.

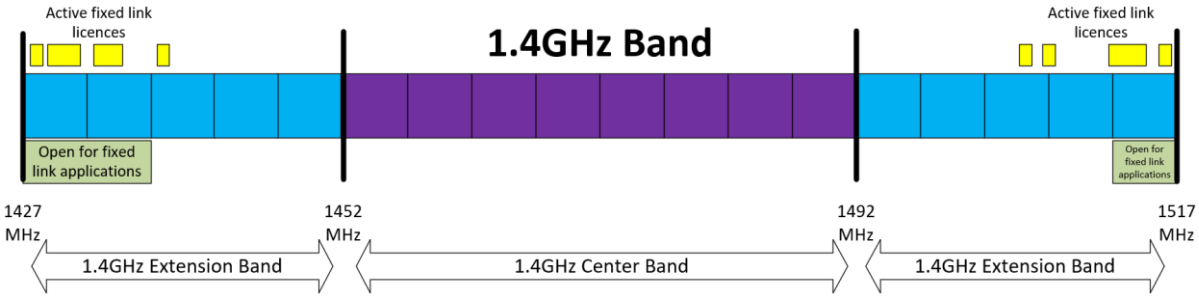

Figure 1: The 1.4 GHz Band plan and its current use

[3] The frequency ranges 1427 – 1442 MHz and 1502 – 1517 MHz

[4] The frequency ranges 1427 – 1437 MHz and 1512 – 1517 MHz

[5] See Annex 1 of ComReg Document 23/112, "Fixed Radio Links Licensing Guidelines", published 4 December 2023, available at https://www.comreg.ie/ which sets out available frequency bands that being 1.3 GHz, and 1.4 GHz:

- 1.3 GHz Fixed Radio Link band plan (1370 – 1375 MHz paired with 1512 – 1517 MHz); and
- 1.4 GHz Fixed Radio Link band plan (1375 – 1385 MHz paired with 1427 – 1437 MHz).

1.5 Over the last number of years, the number of active fixed radio link licences in the 1.4 GHz Band has decreased - from a peak of 121 in 2013 to 60 in 2025. Some users have vacated the band[6] due to changing technology and bandwidth needs[7]; however others have elected to remain – as is the case for Electricity Supply Board Networks ("ESBN") which, in its submission to ComReg's consultation on fixed radio links licensing in 2021, encouraged ComReg to preserve fixed radio link services in the 1.4 GHz Band in the long-term given its existing use.[8,9]

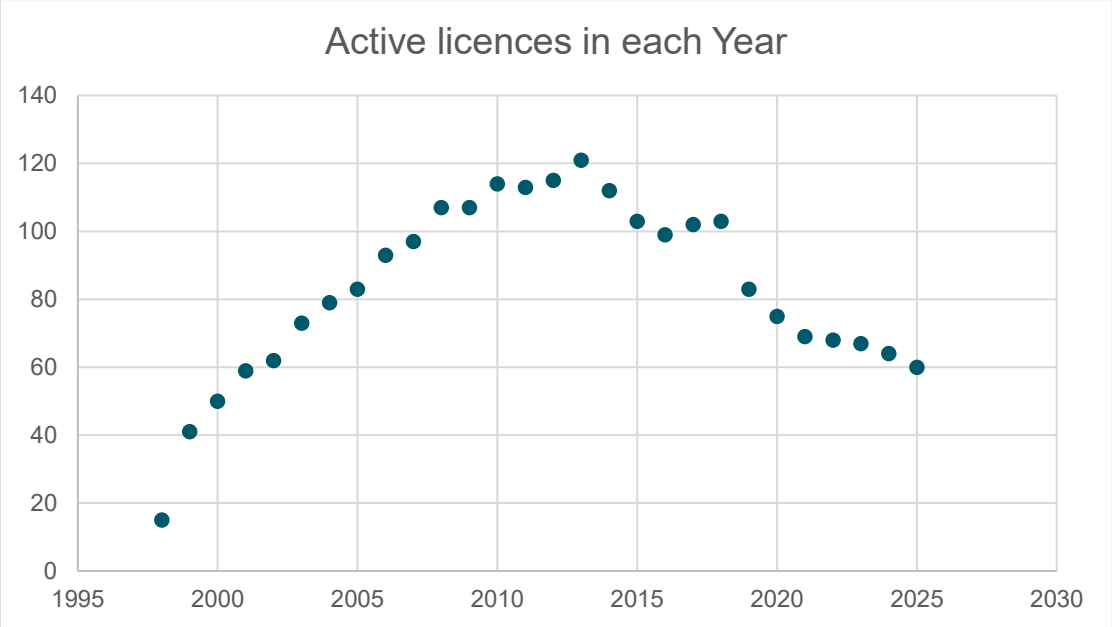

Figure 2: No. of active licences in the 1.4GHz band by year

1.6 As of September 2026, there were 59 active fixed radio link licences in the 1.4 GHz Band issued to various users including ESBN, the Defence Forces and radio broadcasters.

1.7 Of these 59 active licences, ComReg observes that:

- only 6 were issued in the last 5 years and, of those, 4 were re-applications of previously licensed links and 2 are new links. The

[6] Users such as An Garda Síochána, County Councils, some radio broadcasters including RTÉ, as well as Fire services, Ambulance and Lifeguard services have left the 1.4 GHz band in recent years.
[7] ComReg Document 23/119 – Fixed Radio Links Annual Report for 2023, para 3.6
[8] See para 3.130 of ComReg Document 21/134, "Review of the Fixed Radio Links Licensing Regime – Consultation and Response to Consultation", published 17 December 2021, available at www.comreg.ie
[9] See EMR Solutions, "ESB - Microwave connectivity for mission-critical SCADA", published January 2017, available at https://emrsolutions.com/

majority, 47, have been licensed for over 10 years, and 21 for over 20 years;

- 38 are held by ESBN which are spread across the 1st, 2nd and 3rd highest 5 MHz spectrum blocks in 1.4 GHz Band: 19 solely in the 1st highest block; 17 in both the 1st and 2nd highest blocks; 1 in both the 2nd and 3rd highest blocks, and 1 solely in the 3rd highest block; and
- 6 are uni-directional links (single frequency assignments).

1.3 Potential use of the 1.4 GHz Band for WBB-ECS

1.8 ComReg has considered the potential use of the 1.4 GHz Band for WBB-ECS in various consultations, and has collected further market information, as outlined below.

MBSA2 consultation (2018 - 2020)

1.9 ComReg previously consulted on the potential inclusion of the 1.4 GHz Band in the second Multi-Band Spectrum Award ("MBSA2")[10] process, but ultimately decided to not include the 1.4 GHz Band in that award process.[11]

1.10 Factors informing this decision included:

(a) **Device Ecosystem**: as at October 2020, there were 214 devices capable of operating in the 1.4 GHz Centre Band but only 1 device capable of operating in the 1.4 GHz Extension Bands;

(b) **Equipment Support**: existing base station equipment (base transceiver station and antennas) in MNOs' networks did not appear to cover the 1.4 GHz Band;

(c) **Harmonisation:** while both the 1.4 GHz Centre Band and the 1.4 GHz Extension Bands are harmonised in Europe for WBB-ECS for SDL, internationally the 1.4 GHz Band (i.e. the Centre Band and the Extension Bands) is also standardised on both a TDD and FDD basis for both LTE and 5G standards[12]. Given this, deferring the inclusion of the 1.4 GHz Band would allow international developments to be observed;

[10] See https://www.comreg.ie/industry/radio-spectrum/spectrum-awards/proposed-multi-band-spectrum-award/

[11] See Annex 3 and 4 of ComReg Document 20/122 and previous consultation documents including Section 4.3 of ComReg Document 18/60 and Section 3.4.4 of ComReg Document 19/59R

[12] See http://www.3gpp.org/

(d) **Awards in other European Countries**: this varied with some countries awarding the 1.4 GHz Band, others just the 1.4 GHz Centre Band, and some not awarding or proposing an award;

(e) **Existing licensees:** in the 1.4 GHz Extension Bands, as of 30 June 2020, there were 78 fixed radio links in this band – down from 92 in October 2019. Licensees included fixed radio links used by broadcasters, An Garda Síochána, Fire Service, and Electricity Supply Board Networks (ESBN). The 1.4 GHz Centre Band was unused.

Radio Spectrum Management Operating Plan 2025-2028 consultation (2024)

1.11 In its consultation on its Radio Spectrum Operating Plan ("RSMOP") 2025-2028[13] ComReg provided an update on the 1.4 GHz Band and, among other things, noted that:

- **Device Ecosystem** - had risen for both the 1.4 GHz Band and for the 1.4 GHz Centre Band. In July 2024 there were 1,147 devices available for 3GPP Band b32 (i.e. 4G in the 1.4 GHz Centre Band) and 113 devices available for 3GPP Band n75 (i.e. 5G in the 1.4 GHz band); and

- **Existing licences -** in the 1.4 GHz Extension Bands had decreased to 60 fixed radio link licensees as of 30 June 2024, being: ESB Networks (43 licences), local radio broadcasters (13 licences), the Defence Forces (three licences), and 2RN (one licence).

1.12 ComReg proposed and subsequently adopted two workplan items for the RSMOP 2025-2028[14] being to:

> *"paragraph 4.4, bullet (vi)* ***Investigate the potential for the existing fixed links licensees using the 1 427−1 437 MHz and 1 512−1 517 MHz frequency ranges of the 1.4 GHz band to migrate out of the band over time****, and take actions as appropriate (e.g. maintain status quo, set a date to close the band for fixed links usage, etc.)* ***having consideration to whether there would be market demand for MFCN services to use the full of the 1.4 GHz band in the future****." (emphasis added); and*

[13] ComReg Document 24/65," Proposed Radio Spectrum Management Operating Plan for 2025 – 2028", published 1 August 2024, available at www.comreg.ie

[14] ComReg Document 24/99a, "Radio Spectrum Management Operating Plan 2025 – 2028", published 13 December 2024, available at https://www.comreg.ie/.

*paragraph 4.4, bullet (ix) "**Consult, towards the middle of the 2025−2028 period, on spectrum for MFCN/WBB use**. Such a consultation would, among other things, consider the expiry of MBSA1 licences in 2030 and the multiple harmonised spectrum bands for MFCN/WBB use. **Spectrum in the 1.4 GHz** and 42 GHz bands **would be considered** and perhaps spectrum in the 26 GHz band should clear evidence of demand emerge."* (emphasis added)

Potential MNO demand for spectrum in the 1.4 GHz Band for WBB-ECS (June 2026)

1.13 In May 2026, ComReg issued a request to the three MNOs (Eir, Three and Vodafone) seeking information on their potential future demand for some or all of the 1.4 GHz Band for WBB-ECS in line with the 1.4 GHz EC Decision.

1.14 From their responses of June 2026, it appears that from 2030 onwards there may be material demand for spectrum in the 1.4 GHz Band although this may vary depending on whether it is for spectrum rights in the 1.4 GHz Centre Band or the 1.4 GHz Extension Bands, reflecting the varying maturity levels of equipment support and device availability in these bands.

Updated market information (November 2026)

4G/5G Device availability

1.15 Information from the Global mobile Suppliers Association's (GSA) GAMBOD[15] tool indicates that 4G/5G device availability for both the 1.4 GHz Centre Band and the 1.4 GHz Extension Bands have increased significantly over the last number of years, and is continuing to grow, as set out in the table below.

Table 1: Number of 4G/5G Device

Band	Dec 2020	July 2024	Nov 2026
1.4 GHz Centre (B32, SDL)	360	1,238	1,943
1.4 GHz Extension Band (B75, B76, SDL) (n75, n76 SDL)	-	140	519

Awards in other European countries

1.16 In addition, since ComReg's MBSA2 assessment in 2020 - when 6 European

[15] See https://gsacom.com/gambod/

countries[16] had completed awards for spectrum in the 1.4 GHz Band – ComReg observes that 7 additional European countries have now completed awards in the 1.4 GHz Band.[17]

1.17 In relation to these 13 European awards, ComReg notes that five awards were for spectrum in the 1.4 GHz Centre Band and eight awards were for spectrum in both the 1.4 GHz Centre Band and the 1.4 GHz Extension Bands.

Network Deployment

1.18 Information from the GSA's GAMBOD tool indicates that network deployments remain relatively limited in Europe, with operators in Italy, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom having launched commercial services.

1.4 ComReg will not accept applications for new fixed radio link licences in the 1.4 GHz Band

1.19 In light of the above information (including that the market conditions for WBB-ECS in the 1.4 GHz Band have changed considerably since consulted upon in the MBSA2 consultation process, and that the demand for new fixed radio links in the 1.4 GHz Band is low), ComReg considers that it is now appropriate to take steps to prepare the 1.4 GHz Band for its potential future use for WBB-ECS.

1.20 In this regard, from 30 June 2027, ComReg will no longer accept applications for new fixed radio link licences in the 1.4 GHz Band.

1.21 Note, this does not affect the licences of existing licensees in the 1.4 GHz Band which can continue operating in the 1.4 GHz Band in accordance with conditions of their licence until further notice.

1.22 ComReg observes that the above accords with Article 2(3) of the 1.4 GHz EC Decision where Member States are to ensure that any existing use is maintained to the extent strictly necessary, and with the aim to progressively make the band available WBB-ECS.

1.23 Additionally, ComReg observes that:

(a) any new demand for uni-directional links, typically used for radio broadcasting applications, can still be accommodated in the 1.3 GHz Band (1370-1385 MHz) portion of the 1.3/1.4 GHz fixed radio link band,

[16] Austria, Germany, Italy, The Netherlands, Switzerland and the UK

[17] Belgium, Denmark, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia. Information from Cullen International Spectrum Database

as the 1.3 GHz Band would remain available for new uni-directional fixed radio link applications; and

(b) any new demand for bi-directional links could be accommodated in the 2 GHz band fixed radio link frequency range (2025 – 2110 MHz paired with 2200 – 2290 MHz)[18] noting that ComReg's assessment of fixed radio links applications for this band provides a degree of flexibility[19] and that this band offers:

(i) broadly comparable propagation characteristics to the 1.4 GHz Band;

(ii) sufficient channel bandwidth for typical fixed radio link applications; and

(iii) availability for new link applications as only 5 fixed radio links are currently licensed in this band.

1.5 Next Steps

Updating of Fixed Radio Link Licensing Guidelines and eLicensing system

1.24 To implement the above, ComReg will update the Fixed Radio Link Licensing Guidelines (ComReg Document 23/112) and its eLicensing system[20], and will no longer accept applications for new fixed radio link licences in the 1.4 GHz band from 30 June 2027 onwards.

1.25 As outlined above, it will be possible to continue to apply for uni-directional links in the 1.3 GHz band beyond 30 June 2027.

Engagement with existing users in the 1.4 GHz Band

1.26 In line with Article 2(3) of the 1.4 GHz EC Decision, ComReg will engage with the relevant existing fixed radio link licensees to understand their uses and options for alternative spectrum for fixed radio link applications, should ComReg consider it necessary to clear some or all the existing fixed radio links usage in the 1.4 GHz Band in the future.

1.27 ComReg observes that this aligns with its proposed action in its RSMOP for the

[18] See Annex 1 of ComReg Document 23/112, "Fixed Radio Link Licensing Guidelines".

[19] ComReg will provide, where appropriate, flexibility regarding technical conditions as required, such as minimum bandwidth and minimum path length requirements on a case-by-case basis for use of the 2 GHz band.

[20] ComReg's dedicated online licensing portal available at https://elicensing.comreg.ie/

2025 – 2028 period,[21] being its intention to investigate the potential for existing licensees to migrate out of the 1.4 GHz Band.

Consultation on use of the 1.4 GHz Band for WBB ECS

1.28 In Q2 2027, ComReg intends to issue a consultation on spectrum suitable for WBB-ECS[22] which, among other things, would consider the expiry of existing MBSA1 licences (in 2030) and the 3.6 GHz Band licences (in 2032), and the various harmonised spectrum bands for WBB-ECS, including spectrum in the 1.4 GHz Band.

[21] See paragraph 4.4 (vi) of ComReg Document 24/99a - Radio Spectrum Management Operating Plan 2025 – 2028

[22] See AP-2627-P-051 "MBSA3 Spectrum Award" in "ComReg Action Plan for Year to 30 June 2027", available at ComReg-Public-Action-Plan_01.07.26_30.06.27-Final.pdf