



## **ComReg announces next phase of Wireless Broadband Licensing Scheme**

The Commission for Communications Regulation (ComReg) today formally issued 38 Fixed Wireless Access Local Area (FWALA) licences to the CEO's of 8 successful companies. This follows a competitive process and signals the end of the first phase of the licensing scheme.

The scheme was devised by ComReg to offer a real alternative platform to broadband connectivity over DSL, cable or leased lines. Under this scheme, the licensees can provide broadband services to business and residential customers. Under the terms of the licence, licensees have 12 months to launch their services. However, the expectation is that consumers should start seeing the benefit of this wireless alternative much sooner as the newly licensed operators roll-out their networks. In addition to broadband service provision in the main urban centres, the majority of today's licensed operators will be offering services to customers in different regional towns and rural areas.

John Doherty, Chairperson of the Commission, said he was very pleased with the outcome of the competition. "Fixed Wireless Access will provide a real alternative to existing broadband providers and I'm very excited about the possibilities in terms of service and competition that this scheme will ultimately bring to consumers in all parts of Ireland".

Further licences will be offered as the scheme moves into its second phase.

Fixed Wireless Access (FWA) is a method of delivering electronic communications services to consumers without the requirement of wires or cables to the customer's premises. The connectivity is established by means of radio waves between a base-station (hub) and the customer's premises with one base-station being capable of providing service to numerous customers. The maximum range of these systems is about 15km which is significantly higher than the range achievable from a DSL enabled exchange (typically 4.5 km). However, FWA systems require 'line-of-sight' or 'near-line-of-sight' between the customer and the base-station.

The 3.5 GHz FWALA licensing scheme is used to licence regional FWA systems in the 3.5 GHz frequency band and has paved the way for competition in the broadband delivery market. The scheme started on 12 August '03 allowing operators to make FWALA licence applications for the first phase up until 12 September '03. A comparative evaluation of the applications was then conducted leading to the award of 38 FWALA licences to 8 operators.

All applications received after 12 September '03 have been held for inclusion in the second phase of the competition and will be evaluated on a first-come, first-served basis from that date.

Details of the licensees and locations of base-stations can be found on the ComReg web-site at [www.comreg.ie/fwabroadband/fwabroadband.asp](http://www.comreg.ie/fwabroadband/fwabroadband.asp)

**ENDS**

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