



Commission for
Communications Regulation

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ComReg increases the availability of wireless Broadband

ComReg launched its initial wireless broadband scheme in 2003. This scheme promoted greater broadband competition and offered consumers greater choice in broadband provision. Today ComReg has published new guidelines which will allow existing wireless broadband providers to increase their service area to 20km in each fixed wireless area frequency band.

ComReg believes that by extending the service areas within which operators can provide wireless broadband many more people, particularly those living in rural areas, will now be able to get access to broadband. ComReg first launched its wireless broadband scheme in November 2003 and since then ComReg has issued over 214 FWALA (Fixed Wireless Access Local Area) licences to 15 companies operating throughout the country. ComReg estimates that there are currently in excess of 80,000 wireless broadband subscribers throughout Ireland.

All FWALA licensees will be permitted to implement these changes immediately but will still be obliged to comply with the existing field strength contours to ensure there is no interference to adjacent licensees. ComReg is also seeking views of interested parties on its proposal for Geographical Service Areas.

ComReg believes that the introduction of a Geographical Service Area into the FWALA licensing scheme will allow FWALA licensees to provide services in areas that previously were considered 'dead zones'. Over time, this could result in a greater availability of wireless broadband services throughout Ireland.

The consultation period will run from 15 May 2007 until 22 June 2007 during which the Commission welcomes written comments on any of the issues raised in the paper. The full paper ComReg 07/29 is available in the Publications' Section of the ComReg website www.comreg.ie

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Note for Editors

A Geographical Service Area (GSA) is an area where a licensee is allowed to deploy Fixed Wireless Apparatus (FWA) apparatus and provide FWALA services under defined operating conditions.