



Commission for  
**Communications Regulation**

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## **ComReg launches consultation on the future use of Mobile Radio Spectrum**

The Commission for Communications Regulation (ComReg) has today launched a public consultation on the liberalisation of the GSM 900 MHz and 1800 MHz Spectrum Bands and the options available for making further spectrum available.

In the 900 MHz band, two of the current mobile network operators' licences expire in 2011 while the third expires in 2015. ComReg wants to provide stakeholders with early visibility of the market beyond the expiry of these licences. Furthermore, a mandatory European Commission decision is pending which aims to facilitate widespread deployment of third generation (3G) or compatible wireless services in these bands.

ComReg, as the National Regulatory Authority with responsibility for communications, must ensure that radio spectrum, as a finite and valuable natural resource, is used efficiently and in the best interest of all consumers. Accordingly, ComReg is setting out a number of proposals for public consultation:

- Removing restrictions on the technology and services permitted in the GSM bands subject to compatibility with existing services. This would provide existing and future licensees with the opportunity to bring new and innovative services into play, in keeping with international trends.
- Presenting a number of options for future licensing of the spectrum on a competitive basis and beyond the timeframes of current licences.
- Providing opportunities for new operators to enter the market.

This consultation addresses matters of considerable importance and therefore ComReg encourages interested parties to respond to this consultation. To enable full consideration of the issues, the consultation period will run for eight weeks, closing on 11 September 2008.

**ENDS**

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**Note for Editors**

Use of the radio spectrum underpins mobile communications. Without spectrum, there simply would not be any mobile services and no access for consumers to a facility that connects so many areas of commerce. It has become a vital part of how business, entertainment and personal communications occur in our society.

ComReg's Spectrum Strategy Statement (ComReg 08/50) conservatively estimated that the direct contribution of the radio spectrum to the Irish economy is 1.7% of total GDP. The mobile sector alone accounts for 51% of this contribution, representing a total of €1.4 billion in 2006. Further, these estimates do not take into account the contribution made by consumers through the use of mobile services or the utility of these services to a variety of diverse users.

The widespread use of mobile communication is fundamental to how Irish society communicates. This is evidenced by the extent of mobile use in Ireland, with penetration now at circa 120%. The last year has seen the take up of mobile broadband intensify and currently nearly 19% of all broadband subscribers are supplied by mobile broadband services, an increase of 46% over the previous quarter.