



Media Release- 9 November 2007

ComReg publishes licence framework for Digital Terrestrial Television

The Commission for Communications Regulation (ComReg) today published its response to consultation on licensing Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT) and its licence framework for Digital Terrestrial Television.

ComReg has an obligation under the Broadcasting Amendment Act 2007, which came into effect in May of this year, to issue licences for DTT to RTÉ and the Broadcasting Commission of Ireland (BCI) in respect of digital television multiplexes.

The Consultation held in August invited comments on proposed licence conditions for fixed and portable reception of DTT. Some 20 submissions were received in relation to the proposals contained in the consultation.

ComReg has considered the issues raised and is now publishing, with the response to consultation, the licence it intends to award and the relevant technical conditions. It intends in the near future to issue one licence to RTÉ and three to the BCI to enable DTT services to commence in 2008.

Mike Byrne, Chairperson of ComReg, stated that “these licences will enable the evolution of full Digital Terrestrial Television in Ireland. DTT has the capacity to carry much more content than the current analogue signals thus enabling viewers to access additional content and to interact with programming.”

ComReg’s licences will be for a term of 12 years. The annual licence fee for a multiplex will be €114,000, but a 50% discount will be allowed in the start up phase to 1 July 2012. Thereafter the full fee will apply and will be indexed to CPI. The BCI will hold a competition for contractors to operate the multiplexes licensed to the Commission. ComReg will reflect any roll out arrangements arising from that competition in the licences to be issued to the BCI. RTÉ is required by the 2007 Act to provide a network equivalent to its current analogue network.

ComReg now intends to proceed with the finalisation of the first RTÉ licence and hopes to issue it in the first half of 2008. A request for licences from the BCI is expected in 2008.

ENDS

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