



Commission for
Communications Regulation

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ComReg Media Release

ComReg sets out decisions on the regulation of Next Generation Access for more high-speed Broadband

ComReg is today issuing new decisions for the regulation of the wholesale fixed broadband markets. These decisions create the framework, based on fair competition, transparency and certainty, to drive accelerated investment by operators in next generation broadband. Over €900 million is being invested by existing companies in this new technology.

Investment in next generation broadband should see up to one million customers having a choice of high speed broadband with access to speeds of between 30 Mb/s and 150 Mb/s. Next generation broadband services will play an important role in the development of the Irish economy and society, and will contribute to achieving the European and national targets for the EU Digital Agenda and National Broadband Plan.

ComReg has sought to strike an appropriate balance so as to promote competition across all platforms and foster the correct conditions for investment. This ComReg output provides a number of flexible regulatory measures designed to facilitate the investment decisions of both incumbent and alternative operators, in order to incentivise the broadest deployment of fibre possible.

ComReg notes that Eircom is upgrading its existing copper access network with a next generation access deployment, which will be delivered over a multi-year rollout. Eircom has announced that it is investing €400m in its fibre infrastructure which will be available to one million premises delivered over five phases. It will deploy fibre to the cabinet to achieve high speed broadband. A number of phases are now under way and there is a target of completing one million premises by December 2014.

ComReg is aware that there has been significant commercial activity in the fixed broadband market in recent years, reflecting increased competition and customer demand for faster data access. The cable operator UPC has seen strong growth and now has 27% of the retail fixed broadband market. UPC says that it is continuing with its €500m investment in its cable network, which should see 750,000 homes able to access services at data speeds of up to 150 Mb/s. Likewise the alternative fixed operators continue to invest in Local Loop Unbundling (LLU). BT Ireland now supplies broadband access to both Vodafone and Sky Ireland, and along with other operators is also investing in fixed infrastructure.

This Decision sets out measures following the designation of Eircom with significant market power ('SMP') in the markets for Wholesale Physical Network Infrastructure Access ('WPNIA') and Wholesale Broadband Access ('WBA') in ComReg Decision No. D05/10 and ComReg Decision No. D06/11. In those decisions, ComReg imposed SMP obligations for current generation and high level obligations for next generation WPNIA and WBA. After significant consultation with industry, ComReg now outlines Eircom's detailed obligations regarding next generation access.

ComReg's measures closely mirror the evolving European policy for next generation, which has been widely debated by the European Commission and the investment community. Our analysis has been assisted and critically assessed by Consultants Oxera, through two separate reports on the correct regulatory approach.

We would like to thank industry and all respondents to the Consultation for substantial contributions made as part of this process. ComReg welcomes the committed investment in fibre by fixed broadband operators and is optimistic that this will see significant benefits to consumers and business users through increased choice and availability of high speed broadband.

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