



Future strategy for MMDS and 3G in the 2.5 GHz Band

ComReg today issued its response to the consultation on ComReg Document 03/70 on Use and Development of Radiocommunications Services in the 2500 – 2690MHz (2.5 GHz) band which was issued in June 2003. The purpose of the consultation was to initiate a debate on a future strategy for the 2.5 GHz band in the light of developments within both MMDS services and 3G mobile communications. In the former case the MMDS operators are transitioning customers to digital services to improve the quality and range of services on offer and in the latter case the band has been identified within Europe as the main expansion band for 3G services from 2008 onwards.

Ireland is one of a small number of countries in Europe with MMDS services in the 2.5 GHz band. High quality, leading edge, mobile infrastructure and services are essential to Ireland's competitiveness. Therefore it is essential that ComReg and the industry develop a coherent strategy which will facilitate the development of 3G services in line with market demand and also seek to accommodate the requirements of MMDS operators and their customers.

Key decisions on the detailed frequency arrangements for 3G in the 2.5 GHz band are due to be made at the European level by the end of 2004, by which time further information should be emerging on the nature, extent and timing of 3G expansion requirements.

Therefore, for the time being, and mindful of the need to maintain a flexible approach in relation to the 3G expansion spectrum, the Commission proposes to maintain the current prohibition on the provision of MMDS services in the main urban areas of Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford. Early in 2005 the Commission will undertake a more detailed review of the 2.5GHz spectrum taking into account the very useful views and information already gleaned from this consultation. It would intend to repeat this review on a three yearly basis. MMDS operators are encouraged to provide the Commission with details of their ongoing spectrum requirements by end June 2004 and decisions will be taken after that as to the appropriate spectrum assignments going forward.

ENDS

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