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ComReg publishes first consultation on new spectrum award process

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1. ComReg has today launched its consultation process on the award of spectrum rights of use of the 2.6 GHz spectrum band (2500 – 2690 MHz) with the possible inclusion of the 700 MHz ¹, 1.4 GHz, 2.3 GHz and 3.6 GHz ² bands.
2. The 2.6 GHz band is widely used elsewhere in Europe and internationally for the provision of mobile and fixed wireless broadband connectivity, with many operators utilising LTE technologies in the band.
3. In Ireland, the 2.6 GHz band will become available for assignment in April 2016 following the expiry of all existing MMDS licences in the band. ComReg has previously indicated its intention to release this band through a competitive award process and this first consultation paper ([ComReg Document 14/101](#)) sets out ComReg's initial views on the proposed award process.
4. Amongst other things, the consultation paper considers other spectrum bands identified for the provision of wireless broadband services and assesses the suitability of those bands for release alongside the 2.6 GHz band. Based on its analysis, ComReg's preliminary view is that the proposed award process should include the following spectrum bands (should they be available for release at the time of award):
 - 2.6 GHz band (2500 -2690 MHz);
 - 1.4 GHz band (1452 – 1492 MHz);
 - 2.3 GHz band (2300 -2400 MHz);
 - 3.6 GHz band (3600 – 3800 MHz); and

¹ ComReg notes that the future of the UHF band in Ireland (470-790 MHz), which includes the 700 MHz band, is the subject of a separate consultation processes being conducted by both the DCENR and ComReg. Therefore, the in-principle views set out in this paper in relation to the 700 MHz band are wholly without prejudice to the outcome of those consultation processes, and any relevant policy statements, published by or on behalf of the Government or a Minister of the Government and notified to ComReg, to which ComReg is obliged to have regard.

² ComReg is aware that, unlike other bands being proposed for inclusion in this award process, the 3.6 GHz band is essentially 'brownfield' spectrum in that broadband access is currently being provided to 37,342 customers utilising licensed services in that band. ComReg also recognises the role played by such licensed services in the provision of broadband services to customers in certain parts of the State where there has been no alternative wire line provision of such services.

- 700 MHz band (694 – 790 MHz).
5. The consultation also discusses and sets out ComReg's initial views on other elements of the proposed award process including:
- award type and format;
 - key aspects of the award spectrum;
 - methodology for setting spectrum fees; and
 - high level discussion on potential licence conditions.
6. ComReg invites input from interested parties on all aspects of the proposed award process by 28 October 2014.