



Office of the Director of
**Telecommunications
Regulation**

MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday 20th February 2002

ODTR consults on new initiatives for fixed wireless broadband applications

The ODTR today (Wednesday 20th February 2002) issued a consultation paper on expanding opportunities for the development of broadband services using fixed wireless access type technologies. FWA is one of several technology platforms that can provide access to broadband public telecommunications networks. The proposals include a new licensing regime for local area FWA systems, further spectrum provision for licence exempt wireless access systems and measures relating to existing FWA licences, in particular the rationalisation of existing broadband FWA spectrum. The ODTR is seeking the comments of interested parties.

According to the Regulator, Etain Doyle “We have carried out an in depth review of the European FWA market and while evidence suggests that FWA has been slow to take off in Europe including Ireland, falling equipment costs mean that the technology remains well placed to support the roll-out of broadband services, especially in areas that cannot be readily served by other means. This latest package of proposals provide new opportunities for local roll-out of wireless broadband networks, using both licensed and licence-exempt radio spectrum.”

The ODTR is consulting on three proposals relating to FWA services in Ireland, namely:

- the licensing of local area FWA networks in the 10.5 GHz band; and
- the use of additional licence-exempt spectrum with higher power levels in the 5.725 – 5.875 GHz band to provide public access to data networks;
- measures relating to existing licences in particular, the rationalisation of existing spectrum assignments in the 26 GHz band to reflect the potential range of services that might be offered over FWA networks.

View on these proposals should be submitted to the ODTR by Thursday 28th March 2002.

The consultation document is available on the ODTR web site at www.odtr.ie.

ENDS

Issued By

Brigid Smyth

Public Affairs Manager

ODTR

Ph: 01 804 9639

Mobile: 086 8270905

Note to Editors

There are currently five FWA licences in Ireland, two narrowband (held by *eircom* plc, and Chorus Communication Ltd) and three broadband (*eircom* plc, Esat Telecom plc and Chorus Communication Ltd.)

Public access services can also be provided in licence exempt spectrum in the 2.4 GHz and 5 GHz frequency bands, subject to compliance with relevant European standards and regulations. Licence exempt spectrum is shared with other users such as private wireless local area networks (WLANs), short range devices and industrial, scientific and medical equipment. Unlike licensed FWA services, no protection from interference can be claimed for licence-exempt radio services. The ODTR has devised a proposal for the 5.725Ghz band, where it is expected that problems of

interference would be much less and so could operate more effectively than in the 2.4Ghz band.

“Bluetooth” is a standard that enables communication between devices via radio waves, sending data packets over short distances. In the future when it is in place in millions of devices, bluetooth will let these machines communicate without user intervention.