



Commission for  
**Communications Regulation**

# Prospective inclusion of exchanges in the Larger Exchange Area

## EVDSL and the LEA

Information Notice

**Reference:** ComReg 15/85

**Date:** 30/07/2015

**An Coimisiún um Rialáil Cumarsáide**

**Commission for Communications Regulation**

Abbey Court Irish Life Centre Lower Abbey Street Dublin 1 Ireland

Telephone +353 1 804 9600 Fax +353 1 804 9680 Email [info@comreg.ie](mailto:info@comreg.ie) Web [www.comreg.ie](http://www.comreg.ie)

# 1 Introduction

1. This document provides an update on the prospective inclusion of a number of exchanges by the Commission for Communications Regulation (**'ComReg'**) into the Larger Exchange Area (**'LEA'**).
2. In 2013, in ComReg Decision D04/13<sup>1</sup> (**'Bundles Decision'**) ComReg identified two geographic areas with varying prospective competitive conditions. One geographic area, known as the LEA, where typically more than one competing infrastructure exists, and the balance being the more rural area (referred to as 'Outside the LEA') where infrastructure based competition does not exist to any appreciable extent.
3. The Bundles Decision set out the relevant criteria which ComReg would use to determine whether an exchange should be included in the LEA.
4. As set out in ComReg Information Notice 15/50<sup>2</sup>, ComReg has recently approved a request from Eircom to change the technical standards relating to the provision of broadband services using VDSL (Very high Speed Digital Subscriber Line).
5. VDSL is currently deployed from street side cabinets. The change allows VDSL to be used on lines that are not connected to a cabinet but are connected directly to an exchange. In this circumstance the technology is referred to as Exchange launched VDSL or EVDSL.
6. ComReg understands that EVDSL is being launched in broadly two categories of exchange areas. The first category is exchanges which are already currently included in the LEA by virtue of meeting criterion 4<sup>3</sup> (or will meet criterion 4 in the future). The second category is exchanges which prospectively qualify under criterion 5<sup>4</sup>. Based on the information received to date, while there may be a large number of individual exchanges proposed under the second category the total number of premises served by EVDSL will be relatively small (ca. 50,000 premises).
7. Furthermore, with respect to those exchanges which may prospectively qualify under criterion 5, ComReg understands that operator traffic from those EVDSL sites will be carried to NGN nodes over Eircom's Network. This would facilitate operators, utilising their existing investment in Virtual Unbundled Access, to utilise their own infrastructure to backhaul this traffic from these nodes thereby

---

<sup>1</sup> ComReg Document No. 13/14: Price Regulation of Bundled Offers: Further specification of certain price control obligations in Market 1 and Market 4 dated 8 February 2013 (**'Bundles Decision'**).

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.comreg.ie/\\_fileupload/publications/ComReg\\_1550.pdf](http://www.comreg.ie/_fileupload/publications/ComReg_1550.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> See definition of Larger Exchange Area in the Decision Instrument set out in the Bundles Decision.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*

avoiding Eircom wholesale backhaul charges which would otherwise arise from Eircom backhauling traffic from these NGN nodes.

8. Based on the fact that EVDSL will allow high speed broadband services to be made available to an additional 248,000 premises (which cannot currently avail of high speed broadband) and as it may also allow operators to use their own backhaul to provide additional competition in those areas, ComReg considers that the prospective inclusion of such exchanges in the LEA is consumer welfare enhancing and that the competitive dynamics of these exchanges would not be unduly impacted.
9. However, for the avoidance of doubt, any exchanges proposed for inclusion into the LEA would still require Eircom to submit a request for their inclusion to ComReg — including which LEA criterion it considers the exchange(s) to meet. As noted in the Bundles Decision, ComReg has the sole and absolute discretion to determine whether an exchange constitutes a Qualifying Exchange for the purposes of inclusion in the LEA.