



Office of the Director of  
**Telecommunications  
Regulation**

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**For Immediate Release**  
**Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> June 2001**

### **Regulator consults on New Opportunities in the Radiocommunications Market**

#### **A new national FWA licence and new possibilities for short range public access services using the latest wireless data standards**

Etain Doyle, Telecommunications Regulator today (Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> June 2001) issued a consultation paper on “New Opportunities in the Radiocommunications Market in Ireland”. In it she proposes the offering of a new national broadband fixed wireless access licence, extending the spectrum available for existing fixed wireless access licensees and considers the possibilities of enhancing public access telecommunication services by using the latest emerging wireless data standards.

These include “Bluetooth”, which is expected to become a ubiquitous technology for connecting a multitude of telecommunications and IT devices, and the global “IEEE802.11” and “HiperLAN” radio local area network standards, which offer the potential to transmit data at high speeds over short distances. The paper also addresses the opportunities offered by the very high capacity 40 GHz band.

Fixed Wireless Access ('FWA'), often referred to as Wireless in the Local Loop (WLL), is a way of connecting a subscriber to a telecommunications network using radio rather than traditional copper/fibre optic wires.

According to the Regulator “In a recent survey of broadband users in Ireland carried out by this office 71% of those surveyed believe their broadband requirements will increase over the next twelve. The availability of multiple platforms e.g. DSL, cable, satellite, and FWA for the delivery of broadband services throughout the country facilitates increased competition enabling more choice, better services and more competitive prices.”

She continued "I believe that there is an important opportunity for FWA in Ireland in meeting the current demand for broadband connectivity or high-speed access to the Internet and other interactive services. FWA has a vital role to play in Ireland's response to the rapid growth of the Internet and electronic commerce."

Six FWA licences were issued in Ireland last year on foot of a competition held by the Telecoms Regulator in 1999, four broadband (*eircom* plc, Esat Telecom plc., Chorus Communication Limited (previously Princes Holdings Limited) and Formus Communications Limited) and two narrowband (*eircom* plc and Chorus Communication Limited (previously Princes Holdings Limited)). Formus Communications Limited who received a broadband licence launched their FWA service in late 2000 but went into voluntary liquidation in March of this year. The Director has decided to revoke the licence granted to Formus Communications and proposes offering a new national broadband FWA Licence.

The Director proposes that this licence will comprise 26GHz radio frequency spectrum and where the successful applicant can demonstrate a need additional 10GHz spectrum will be made available. The proposed licence would be valid for 10 years.

In addition she is considering making available additional 10GHz radio frequency spectrum for assignment to suitably qualified existing FWA licensees. Again they will need to demonstrate a genuine need for the extra spectrum.

In this consultation the Director is also considering whether it is appropriate to offer further spectrum suitable for public access type services. She considers that there may be opportunities in other frequency bands, namely the 2.4 GHz and 5 GHz bands

allocated internationally to short range wireless data services. These services are suitable for use in homes, offices and other indoor environments as a complement to both fixed and mobile access networks. Internationally agreed standards such as “Bluetooth”, IEEE 802.11 and HiperLAN are among the technologies available for use in these bands and which may be suitable to deliver short range public access services."

The Director is also looking at the possibility of licensing localised or regionalised FWA services in rural areas that are not covered by the national FWA licences.

In conclusion the Director added, “ I am very keen to encourage innovators to test the market for new technologies, services and applications. Developments in technology suggest that the very high capacity 40GHz band, might soon be brought into use and I look forward to receiving suggestions as to the how best to utilise this band in an efficient and pioneering manner.”

The Director invites comments and expressions of interest from interested parties’ on this paper. The paper can be viewed on the ODTR website [www.odtr.ie](http://www.odtr.ie) . **ODTR 01/43 “ New Opportunities in the Radiocommunications Market: Fixed Wireless Access (FWA) Consultation Paper.”**

A second consultation paper was issued concerning **ODTR 01/44 “ New Opportunities in the Radio Communications Market: Public Mobile Data and Automatic Vehicle/ Location.”**

Public Mobile Data services provide packet switched data communication between individuals and groups of users and are primarily aimed at the transport, security, distribution and logistics sectors. Typical applications include the sending and receiving of short text or status messages, for example delivery instructions or stock information, between dispatchers and mobile personnel. Automatic vehicle location services use the mobile data network to convey information about the location and/or status of vehicles or other valuable assets at regular intervals to a central control point. The Director considers there may be benefit in licensing such networks in Ireland and is seeking views from interested parties.

**ENDS**

**Issued by**

Brigid Smyth  
Public Affairs Manager  
ODTR

Ph: 01 804 9639      Mobile : 086 8270905

**Note for Editors**

**“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.