



Office of the Director of
**Telecommunications
Regulation**

PRESS RELEASE

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REGULATOR INVITES EIRCELL AND ESAT DIGIFONE TO APPLY FOR ADDITIONAL MOBILE SPECTRUM

The Telecoms Regulator has invited Eircell and Esat Digifone to submit applications for GSM1800 spectrum. At present both operators use GSM900 technology. The successful applicants will be permitted to use both 900 MHz and 1800 MHz spectrum for a combined dual band mobile telephone service.

GSM1800 provides more call capacity and is more cost effective in urban areas, while GSM900 provides better coverage in rural areas. It is envisaged that dual-band mobile phones would be used by the majority of subscribers to the proposed service, which would take advantage of good GSM900 coverage in rural areas and good call handling capacity in urban areas, where there is increased traffic.

Amongst the criteria used to consider the applications will be an assessment of the expected benefits to consumers in terms of services to be provided, tariffs to apply and quality of service. Attention to environmental issues, deployment of new technologies and treatment of capacity hotspots will also be analysed.

“I am anxious to ensure that consumers will benefit as soon as possible from the deployment of GSM1800 spectrum” said the Regulator. “I recognise that network preparatory work will be necessary before the commercial launch of GSM1800 service and therefore I am prepared to issue test licences to the successful applicants following notification of results in order to facilitate preparations for effective roll-out of service”.

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Each applicant, if successful shall be required to provide a minimum coverage of one third of the population with GSM1800 service not later than 2 years after their licence is amended. In the interests of promoting further competition, such licence amendments will not be made before 1st January, 2000.

The closing date for receipt of applications from Eircell and Esat Digifone is Friday 28th May, 1999. It is intended to announce the results of the applications in June 1999.

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